

APRIL 2014

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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



AMERICA AND RUSSIA:



ANOTHER COLD WAR?

**Scotland's
Independent Streak**

What the Privacy Debate
Reveals About Us

**Mexico: The New
Wild West**

Science Confirms the
"Give" Way of Life!

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VOL. XII | NO. 4 | APRIL 2014

A R T I C L E S

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Science Confirms the “Give” Way of Life!

Researchers have discovered what compels us to give. Yet what they found validates what was revealed thousands of years ago.

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FRONT COVER: The T-34 tank, which was heavily used by the Soviet army during World War II, was considered one of the most efficient armored vehicles of its time.

PHOTO CREDITS: All photographs courtesy of Thinkstock unless otherwise noted.

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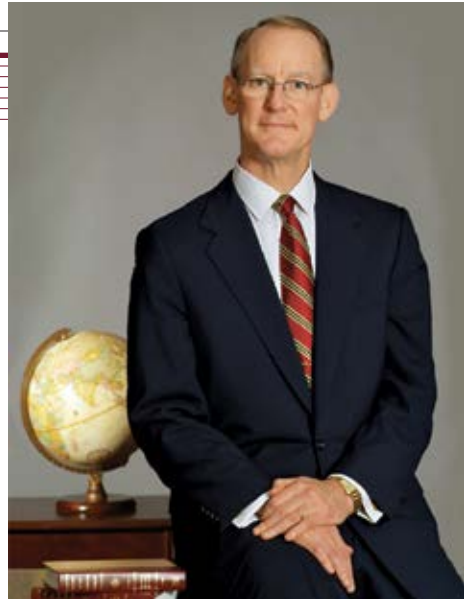
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



When Is a Christian “Born Again”?

MANY SPEAK OF having been “born again.” Millions of Protestants and tens of millions of evangelicals think that after becoming “believers” they have been “born again.” Having no idea what the term actually meant, they had been taught that “professing Jesus” was a kind of “new birth”—that they were in some mysterious way “born a second time.” It next became their Christian *duty* to bring others to this belief.

What does the Bible teach about this subject? And what did Jesus *really* say about it? It is far from what you have been taught. In this Personal, the truth about being born again will be made absolutely PLAIN! We will be thorough. And it will be impossible to misunderstand.

Almost none take the time to examine—to *prove*—what God’s Word says about being born again. If they did, they would be stunned—astonished—at what they found! In fact, this would apply to almost *any* Bible subject.

Most professing Christians assume the Bible says what they have been told it says. They have been taught

that being “born again” occurs in *this* life, upon “receiving Jesus.” But this is NOT what the Bible teaches. “Born again” has *nothing whatsoever to do* with “professing Jesus”—or “just believing in your heart”—or “giving your heart to the Lord”—or any so-called religious experience. This does not happen at conversion—but rather, the Bible teaches that rebirth comes *long after* this initial step in a new Christian’s life.

The popular concept of “born again” is based largely on ignorance of God’s Word, coupled with outright silly reasoning. Yet the deception that this one misunderstanding presents is even more important when considering how many *other* true doctrines fall like dominoes in its wake. God’s purpose for man, that He is expanding His Family, the true gospel, the kingdom of God, the meaning of being sons of God, character development, the pagan trinity doctrine, who is the antichrist—and many more Bible teachings—become impossible to properly understand.

Jesus taught, “Except a man be BORN AGAIN, he cannot see the *kingdom of God*” (John 3:3). This makes correct understanding of this subject vital. So few grasp Jesus’ words. Consider them carefully. Note what is at stake in just this single scripture. One’s ability to “see God’s kingdom” hinges *solely* on whether he is

“born again.” Obviously, one had better comprehend the enormous importance of how and when people are *born again!*

When Jesus said, “*Except a man,*” He left no room for misunderstanding. Keep this simple. Remaining deceived about being born again makes salvation impossible. I did not say this—Jesus Christ did! Certainly, *when* this occurs is inseparable from properly understanding *how* it happens or *what* it means. Also, if one believes conversion allows a person to “see the kingdom,” then he must believe the kingdom is here now. Thus it must be spread by individuals. Yet the Bible clearly teaches otherwise!

First Things First—Basic Scriptures!

Of the 12 rules of Bible study, the most crucial for proper doctrinal understanding is to start with the clearest scriptures on any subject. There are several plain verses about the born again doctrine that introduce everything that follows. Knowing and understanding them is the *only* proper way to approach the subject. The entire doctrine becomes quite easy to learn when you keep these few basic verses straight. Let’s examine three before reviewing Jesus’ “see the kingdom” statement.

First notice a startling scripture recorded by the apostle Paul. Recognize that the Bible always interprets itself—another great rule of Bible study—and to always accept what it says after it does. Now notice: “[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the *first-born of every creature*... And He is the head of the Body, the Church: who is the *beginning*, the *firstborn from the dead*; that in all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:15, 18).

This is a big key to seeing *when* one is born again. Jesus is *firstborn* FROM THE DEAD. Believe God, and fix this phrase in your mind. One’s new birth occurs *after death*—and involves returning *from the dead*. Again, accept what the Bible says, without adding to or subtracting from it. The phrase “firstborn of every creature” adds double emphasis to Paul’s statement—and the meaning.

Some dismiss this verse as merely a *title* given to Christ—“Firstborn from the dead.” This is silly—even foolish—and in fact dishonest. It is also easy to disprove!

Notice the phrase “who is *the beginning*.” This alone proves Jesus’ Resurrection from the dead refers to the order in time sequence that this occurs. He is the “beginning” of those *others* who will receive eternal life at His Return—when the Resurrection of the dead occurs. “Beginning” references who is *first*. The next passage builds on and helps explain this one.

Paul also recorded, “For whom [God] did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He [Jesus] might be the *firstborn among many brethren*” (Rom. 8:29). Grasp this! God intends to have *many* sons—Jesus’ brethren, born later in His Plan. If one is designated as *first*, others must follow, or *first* has no meaning. It *must* include more later. In the case of salvation, “many” will follow. This is further proof “firstborn” has nothing to do with any supposed title!

Jesus is not the only Son in God’s Plan. More will follow Him in the Resurrection. We saw He is firstborn of every creature—the other sons. These other brethren are those converted over the last 2,000 years (with a few in the Old Testament). These are called to become younger brothers and sisters *with* Jesus. If Jesus is *firstborn*, all others would be “second-born,” “third-born,” “hundredth-born,” and so forth.

A second verse confirms *when* Jesus was born again. The apostle John recorded, “...Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the *first-born out of the dead*, and the ruler of the kings of the earth...” (Rev. 1:5, *Young’s Literal Translation*).

Though the Authorized Version (*King James Version*) translates this as “first begotten,” virtually every other translation renders it “firstborn from the dead.”

These verses make absolutely plain one is born from the dead *at the Resurrection*. So then, only at that

point will—or *can*—anyone “see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Nicodemus Questions Christ

A series of verses in John 3 is commonly misunderstood by people who believe they can be “born again” in this life, as physical human beings, and, therefore, somehow “see God’s kingdom.” This misconception causes so much unnecessary controversy and confusion.

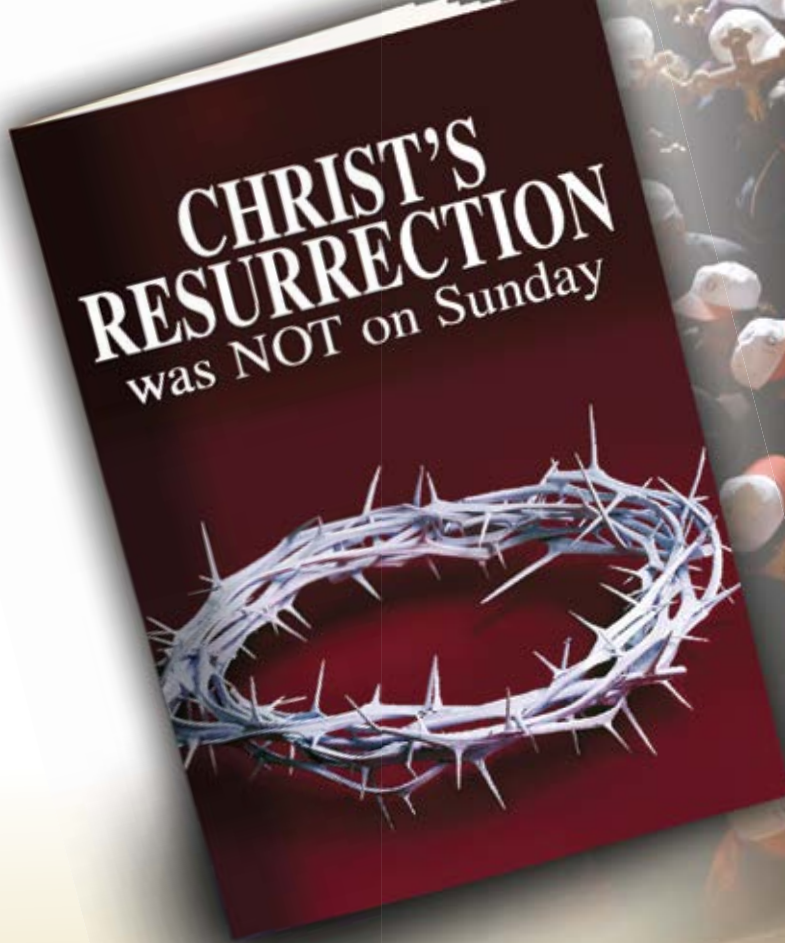
In this account, Nicodemus questioned Jesus, who answered, “Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Confused, Nicodemus replied, “How can a man be *born* when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered... Except a man be born of *water* [the first physical, human birth, but can also refer to baptism] *and* of the Spirit [later, at the Resurrection], he **CANNOT ENTER INTO** the kingdom of God” (John 3:4-5). To see and enter God’s kingdom, you must become *spirit*. This will be clear. But people are physical. Entering the kingdom is impossible for them because scripture states, “flesh and blood **CANNOT INHERIT** the kingdom of God” (I Cor. 15:50)!

While Nicodemus knew exactly what being born meant, he was confused about how it could happen again—a second time. This is why he asked about re-entering his mother’s womb. But ministers and religious leaders today are deceived and confused in a different way. They claim born again has nothing to do with an actual *birth*—that it is a feeling, an experience, conversion and the like.

Jesus explains what it means to be “born of water and of the Spirit” and why, if this does not happen, one “cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Yes, the kingdom is something that can be “entered into.” Jesus explains, “That which is *born* of the flesh **IS** flesh,” but also “that which is born of the Spirit **IS** spirit” (John 3:6).

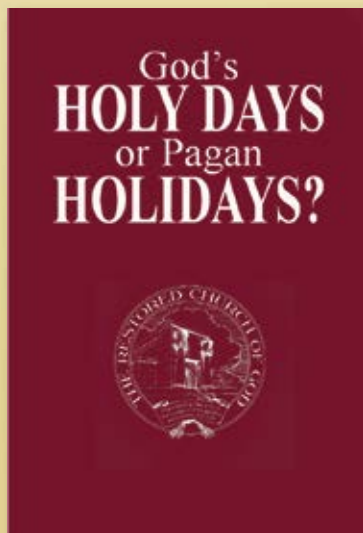
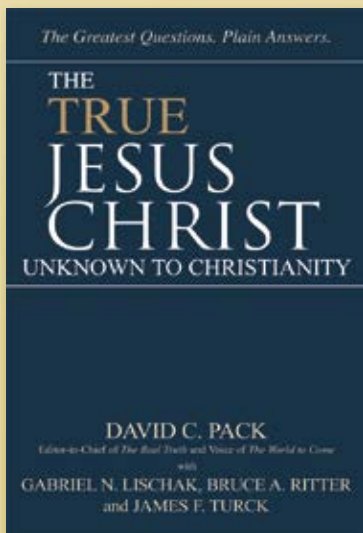
Of course it is. Flesh and blood cannot enter God’s kingdom. The point

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 29



NOT ON SUNDAY?

**Contrary to popular belief, Jesus was not
in the grave for 36 hours.**



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SCOTLAND'S Independent Streak

Why are the Scots considering pulling out of the United Kingdom?

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE



■ **A LOOK AT FREEDOM:** Thousands of pro-independence campaigners attend a rally on Calton Hill in Edinburgh, Scotland (Sept. 21, 2013).

PHOTO: JEFF J MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

SSCOTLAND: land of the charming accent known as a brogue, kilt-wearing bagpipers, distillers of world-class whisky, wearers of tartans and layers of thick wool, and home of Sir William Wallace, the sword-wielding landowner and knight's son heroically portrayed in the 1995 film "Braveheart."

This may be about all that the average person outside northern Europe knows about the Scots. So when this small nation in the north of the isle of Great Britain appears in headlines, as it has in 2014, many have little context.

The story at this time is the question of Scottish independence: whether Scotland should secede from the United Kingdom, reducing that group of nations from four to three (remaining would be England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

Voters will head to the polls on September 18 for a Yes/No referendum on this question. Currently, those in the Yes camp are in the minority, but it is a sizable one.

Rationale and Obstacles

The debate's historical roots run deep. Scotland and England's political union was formalized with the Act of Union in 1707, but the two nations (as well as the rest of the UK) have ties that go back much further.

In a speech during a Scottish Council for Development and Industry event in Glasgow, Scotland's Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon argued for independence. A document released by the government explained the five main reasons to split from the UK. Each point took the form of a question:

■ "How can we build a more sustainable economy better able to withstand the inevitable economic ups and downs?"

■ "How can we boost the number of people working in Scotland?"

■ "How can we protect, and improve, public services?"

■ "How can we protect pensions and the post-war welfare state from those at Westminster intent on dismantling social security?"

■ "Lastly, how can we improve living standards and reduce the gap between rich and poor so that we have genuine equality of opportunity for all children in Scotland?"

The implication was that continuing as a member of the United Kingdom is a hindrance to each of the goals above. Scotland perceives it is getting short shrift in a UK where resources are heavily weighted toward greater London. This has led many Scots to conclude, "We'd be better off on our own."

However, serious objections have been raised for a solo Scotland in both the north and south of the main British isle. In England, "UK Chancellor George Osborne has said a vote for Scottish independence would mean walking away from the pound.

"His statement came after the senior civil servant at the Treasury, Sir Nicholas Macpherson, said currency unions were 'fraught with difficulty'.

"Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond said the Westminster parties were trying to 'bully' voters ahead of the 18 September independence referendum.

"The Scottish government has argued that keeping the pound and the services of the Bank of England as part of a currency union under independence made sense for both Scotland and the rest of the UK.

"But Mr Osborne said there was 'no legal reason' why the rest of the UK would want to share sterling with an independent Scotland" (*BBC*).

Mr. Osborne's remarks regarding currency union had an immediate chilling effect, according to one poll cited in the *Guardian*: "The Scots are more anxious than the English and Welsh about the effect of independence on the United Kingdom as a whole, and also worry about Scotland in particular. That is the finding of new Ipsos Mori polling on both sides of the border..."

"...for the first time since December, Ipsos updated its polling on the independence referendum for Scottish TV, charting a very slight widening of the no campaign's advantage. Among voters who say they are certain to turn out in September's independence referendum, an unchanged 57% of Scots say they will vote no, but the proportion who say they will vote yes has dropped two points, from 34% in December to 32% [in March]."

On the European continent, EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso weighed in with another discouraging opinion: "[Mr.] Barroso told the Andrew Marr Show that member states seeking to prevent their own semi-autonomous regions from seceding would almost certainly block Scotland's membership. He said Scotland would have to apply for EU membership in the usual way.

"It will be extremely difficult to get the approval of all the other member states to have a new member coming from one member state," he said.

"We've seen that Spain has been opposing even the recognition of Kosovo, for instance, so it's to some extent a similar case because it's a new country and so I believe it's going to be extremely difficult, if not impossible, a new member state coming out of one of our countries getting the agreement of the other [existing member states]" (*Guardian*).

While a number of officials dismissed Mr. Barroso's statement out of hand (particularly the comparison to the Balkan region Kosovo), it did

have the effect of blurring the view of a clear path forward for Scotland.

A Battle-hardened Nation

Scotland is no stranger to national struggle. Its history, like that of many other European countries, is a yarn of battles and invasions. Scotland's official gateway website summarizes centuries of turbulence: "The first written records of Scottish history date back to the arrival of the Roman Empire in the 1st century AD. The Roman province of Britannia reached as far north as the Antonine Wall, which once ran across central Scotland from the River Clyde to the Firth of Forth. To the north lay the territory of Caledonia, which was ruled by the Picti people.

"Frequent battles with the Picts saw the Roman retreat to Hadrian's Wall—which spanned the north of England from Carlisle in the west to Wallsend in the east. By the 3rd century, the Romans had all but departed the land that is now known as Scotland.

"In the 5th century, the north-west of Scotland was raided and settled by Gaels (Scoti), originating from Northern Ireland. They later established the Kingdom of Dalriada in Scotland's western regions."

"At the end of the 8th century, all of Scotland's kingdoms were overthrown to some extent by marauding Vikings. Numerous defeats by the Norse raiders eventually forced the Picts and Scoti to end their long-held hostility towards each other and unite in the 9th century to form the Kingdom of Scotland.

"However, the Scottish battles for power did not end there. In the 12th Century, Anglo-Norman barons, including the Bruce family, laid claim to much of mainland Scotland. In exchange for land, these barons helped King David I to secure his claim to the throne and feudalise much of Scotland.

"By the 13th century, Alexander II and his son Alexander III were determined to bring all of the former Norwegian territories in the west of Scotland into their own territories. The Norwegian king, Hakon, sent a massive fleet to Scotland to hold on to his

territories. In September 1263, the two forces clashed at the Battle of Largs in Ayrshire.

“Three years later, with the conclusion of the Treaty of Perth, Magnus Hakonarson, King of Norway, gave up Scotland’s western seaboard to Alexander III.

“Scotland—whose throne passed through the control of the houses of Balliol and Bruce in the following years—had yet to win its freedom. The bloody wars of Scottish independence followed as the Scots tried to throw off the yoke of English influence” (*scotland.org*).

The prolonged wars of independence lasted from 1286 to 1328. This is the era when figures like William Wallace and Robert the Bruce became legendary.

Yes, British—But...

Obviously, Scotland’s relationship with the English has been rocky, both at the political and sometimes personal level. A famous story recounts a statement by James Boswell, biographer of the renowned 18th-century English writer Dr. Samuel Johnson, after Dr. Johnson learned Boswell was Scottish: “Indeed I come from Scotland, but I cannot help it.”

Dr. Johnson’s reply reflected his regard for the Scots, at the time shared by more than a few in England: “That I find is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help.”

By that time, open warfare was a thing of the past, but many English considered the Scots the “rabble” of the British Isles—lacking the refinement and dignity of which they considered themselves the standard bearers. Scottish lore partly fueled this perception: in armed conflict with the English, warriors would sometimes shock their rivals by parading onto the battlefield wearing nothing but a torc (metal collar or neck chain), as depicted by the well-known “Dying Gaul” sculpture, and swinging massive claymore swords

(a weapon eventually outlawed by the English).

Further, according to some sources, the derogatory terms “redneck” and “hillbilly” both have Scottish origins. The words first appeared in the United States’ Appalachia region, where descendants of many Scots-Irish (or more accurately “Ulster-Scots,” Scottish refugees who fled to Ulster, Northern Ireland, in response to persecution), settled.

While the average Scot would likely object to the “rabble” stereotype, he certainly sees himself as *different* from other Brits. The Scots have a unique Celtic identity that is distinct from Ireland, and even more so from England and Wales.

“With just over six months until the referendum on Scottish independence, the data shows nearly one in three people do not regard themselves as British in any way,” *The Courier* reported.

“Information released [February 27] showed 62.4% of Scotland’s 5.3 million population see themselves as Scottish only, while just 18.3% of people—fewer than one in five—feel they are Scottish and British.

“Young people are more likely to consider themselves to be solely Scottish than those in older age groups.

“Nearly a third of Scots, 32.4%, consider themselves to have a Church of Scotland identity...”

Some Scots still speak Gaelic, a Celtic language, and the nation prides itself on a unique strain of Celtic music that is an ingredient in American bluegrass.

Their love of their rugged landscape, which is prone to rapid shifts in extremes of weather, shines through in their Highland Games, which test competitors’ skill and strength in an outdoor venue. These have spawned spin-off competitions in North America and elsewhere.

The Scottish influence is strong in other places, such as Brittany, in Northwest France, and in Eastern Canada. Ontario’s Queen’s University, for example, continues the tradition of kilts and bagpipe music at its graduation ceremonies, and its athletic teams are known as the Golden Gaels.

And yes, Scotland’s namesake drink is more popular than ever: “Scotch...exports to many emerging markets have been rampant for close to a decade, driven by its desirability as a status symbol among rapidly growing middle classes.

“From Latin America to India, Sub-Saharan Africa, China and the Middle East, sales grow at such an unabated rate that suppliers closely regulate price to ensure they do not run dry. It’s a success story built on exclusivity and a sense of a certain kind of Britishness, which is bringing a much-needed boost to the UK economy.”

“In 2012, Diageo, the producer of Johnnie Walker, the world’s biggest-selling Scotch, announced a £1bn investment programme into its Scottish operations—including a new Johnnie Walker distillery in Speyside—to take advantage of an internationally-led ‘renaissance’ in the centuries-old industry. Last year, the company produced 50m cases of whisky and white spirits in Scotland—85 per cent of which was sold abroad” (*The Independent*).

What Next?

This magazine’s predecessor, *The Plain Truth*, filed a very familiar-sounding report in 1969. In an article titled “The Celtic Revolution,” it stated, “Scottish Nationalists seek ‘Home Rule by 1970,’ headlines a prominent newspaper.

■ **DISCOURSE:** British Prime Minister David Cameron delivers a speech on Scottish independence in the Olympic Park in east London (Feb. 7, 2014).

PHOTO: CARL COURT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



And no wonder! Scottish Nationalist party membership has zoomed from 2,000 to 128,000 in just seven years.

“Their claim? If they obtain a majority of seats in the next general election in 1970, they will take it as a mandate from the people to secede from the London-dominated Union of England and Scotland...

“Scottish Nationalists demand that Scotland become an independent nation within the British Commonwealth—as Canada, Australia and New Zealand.”

Despite an endorsement of independence by another famous Scottish export, actor Sir Sean Connery, a “Yes” victory seems unlikely with only one-third of poll respondents stating they intend to vote this way.

But, regardless of the referendum’s outcome, the bond between the British peoples predates even the earliest Roman records, and it will endure!

Ancient Roots

In Magnus Magnusson’s book *Scotland: The Story of a Nation*, the author quoted Scottish history lecturer Dauvit Brown of the University of Glasgow (emphasis added): “‘The earliest surviving text which propounds the idea, in all seriousness, of Scotland being two thousand years old was written during the 1290s, during the ill-fated reign of John Balliol. It is basically a king-list, but it also includes an account of Scottish origins, explaining that the original Scots were descended from Gaedel Glas and Scotla, and *came from Egypt* and eventually ended up in Scotland. The length of reigns in the king-list, we are told, added up to 1,976 years to the coronation of John Balliol in 1292.’

“‘It is noticeable that this text, elaborating in the rudimentary way the idea that Scotland was an ancient kingdom, was written when Edward I [of England] was knocking on Scotland’s door with a vengeance. This...gave the kingship of Scotland the authenticity of age which medieval institutions require, through a royal genealogy stretching all the way back to *Noah*...’”

Both the author and lecturer are incredulous at references in medieval

Scottish literature to places like Egypt and a person such as Noah. But this is not the only source that connects Scotland and Britain to biblical references.

Another link is found in a stone that once sat under the Coronation Chair of King Edward I. Called the Stone of Scone or Stone of Destiny, the large block of sandstone was taken from Scotland to England by Edward I, and a chair was built with an opening underneath the seat to hold the stone. It was upon this chair, with the stone beneath, that every British monarch since Edward II was crowned (with the exception of two who did not receive the crown), including Queen Elizabeth II in February 1952. The chair still sits in London’s Westminster Abbey, but now without the stone.

Encyclopaedia Britannica states, “According to one Celtic legend the stone was once the pillow upon which the patriarch Jacob rested at Bethel when he beheld the visions of angels. From the Holy Land it purportedly traveled to Egypt, Sicily, and Spain and reached Ireland about 700 BC to be set upon the hills of Tara, where the ancient kings of Ireland were crowned. Thence it was taken by the Celtic Scots who invaded and occupied Scotland. About AD 840 it was taken by Kenneth MacAlpin to the village of Scone.

“At Scone, historically, the stone came to be encased in the seat of a royal coronation chair. John de Balliol was the last Scottish king crowned on it, in 1292, before Edward I of England invaded Scotland in 1296 and moved the stone (and other Scottish regalia) to London. There, at Westminster Abbey in 1307, he had a special throne, called the Coronation Chair, built so that the stone fitted under it. This was to be a symbol that kings of England would be crowned as kings of Scotland also.”

While the Bible details human kingdoms and monarchs, its ultimate subject is the kingdom of God, which is to be established in the future. (See Mark 1:14-15, Luke 9:2, and I Corinthians 15:50). The United

Kingdom definitely is *not* the kingdom of God, nor was the British Empire. However, if Bible *history* references kingdoms and empires such as Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Rome and others, would not Bible *prophecy* describe other world-shaping powers?

The publishers of this magazine have long understood the following verse as a reference to the British royal line: “Thus says the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will *overturn, overturn, overturn*, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him” (Eze. 21:26-27).

History confirms that this line was moved—overturned—from one family line to another, three times, in its early history. Similarly, the Stone of Destiny has been “turned over” within the British Isles: from Ireland to Scotland, From Scotland to England, then back to Scotland in November 1996.

Other British-linked territories have had a history of north-south divisions: North America divided between the United States and Canada; the temporary Union-Confederate division within America; Ireland and Northern Ireland; even the British Commonwealth has its northern (the UK, Canada) and southern (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) sections. While political arrangements change over time, the ties of historical kinship remain, and come to the fore most clearly when members of the group are under threat from an outside force.

Ultimately, Scotland will soon find itself among a collective of brother nations that will face a time of severe testing, followed by the most prosperous time ever known.

To learn much more about the United Kingdom, and its unique role in end-time events, request David C. Pack’s essential book *America and Britain in Prophecy*, available at rcg.org/aabip. It will open your mind to an entirely new perspective on history—and the future! □



AMERICA AND RUSSIA: Another Cold War?

Russia and the United States continue to butt heads on nearly every international issue, hearkening back to the Soviet era.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER



FROM WORLD WAR II until the collapse of the Berlin Wall, mapmakers had it pretty easy. Just one new nation broke off from an existing one during that period—Bangladesh. A number of countries secured independence over those decades, but their borders generally remained the same.

Foreign affairs were also relatively easy to follow at the time, with global viewpoints dictated by the terms of the Cold War. You could either side with democracy, represented by the United States, or communism, the Soviet Union.

Everything changed with the dissolution of the USSR in December 1991.

Political columnist Richard Gwyn documented this tremendous shift in a 1992 article for the *Toronto Star*: “Suddenly, the rare has become the routine: More than 20 new countries have either already been carved out of existing ones, or soon will be.

“Last summer, the three Baltic states. On New Year’s Day, the remaining 12 members of the old Soviet Union. This week, international recognition is being accorded to the former Yugoslav republics of Croatia and Slovenia; two more, Macedonia and Bosnia-[Herzegovina], aspire to the same status. In Ethiopia, the Red Sea region of Eritrea has all but become independent.”

“This phenomenon is hard on mapmakers,” he continued. “It’s even harder on our inner, mental maps, which have suddenly gone all blurry.”

Over the coming years, the global landscape remained blurry. The West floundered without a clear foreign-policy goal. So did Russia (sometimes spelled *Rossiya*), which was beset by rampant political chaos, a weak economy, high inflation, hunger, war and crime throughout the 1990s.

The September 11 attacks in 2001 seemed to help bring the world into focus again. This time, America set out to eradicate terrorism. A year earlier,

Russia began to find its footing with the election of Vladimir Putin to the office of president.

At the time, *USA Today* wrote that Western nations hoped Mr. Putin would be both “businesslike and pragmatic” and “a modern politician the West can work with.”

These optimistic views, the newspaper continued, were tempered by the fact “that Putin, a former KGB operative, is a typically Russian enigma—a political phenomenon shrouded in mystery, whose true intentions about how he will lead Russia’s chaotic, fledgling democracy remain to be seen.”

Fast forward to the present. The war on terror has spawned an even more complicated worldview than before 9/11 and Russia’s enigmatic intentions continue to befuddle outsiders.

To make sense of the *still*-blurry global map, many have begun to view the world again in simpler Cold War terms. It is still Moscow versus Washington, but communism has been replaced with Mr. Putin’s perceived authoritarian leanings. Confrontations over how to handle the situations in Syria and Iran are perfect examples.

Viewing the modern world through the lens of the Soviet years appears to bring clarity to a tumultuous time. Could the world be entering another long-winded Cold War?

Crisis in Ukraine

The February 2014 ouster of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich brought Cold War themes to the fore. After turbulent protests and a violent government crackdown that left over 70 dead, the nation’s political future was uncertain.

Russia wants the former Soviet state to remain close to Moscow, as it was under Mr. Yanukovich. The European Union—and the West—want to welcome Ukraine into its fold.

The East-West tug of war over the country elicited Cold War headlines the world over. *The Telegraph* wrote, “Why Are We Trying to Start a New Cold War with Russia?” *The New York Times* printed, “A Cold War

Battle Heats Up.” *The Washington Post* mused, “Is Ukraine the Cold War’s Final Episode?”

Events of late seem to support this theory. The West is unhappy about Moscow continuing to side with Bashir al-Assad in Syria’s civil war and Iran on its nuclear program. Russia is miffed at the United States for its global spying tactics, a throwback to 1970s tensions. To demonstrate its displeasure, the Eurasian nation granted Edward Snowden temporary asylum after he leaked sensitive U.S. National Security Agency documents.

Another event in February 2014 seemed straight from the run-up to the Cuban Missile Crisis. *Agency France-Presse* reported: “A Russian warship was docked in Havana...without explanation from Communist Cuba or its state media.” Typically, the purpose of such naval tours are announced to the press.

Yet Washington has been trying to distance itself from the Cold War viewpoint. During the North American Leaders Summit in Mexico, U.S. President Barack Obama told the press that he does not view the Ukraine situation as part of “some Cold War chessboard in which we’re in competition with Russia.”

The U.S. later issued a sterner verbal warning when pro-Russian forces were activated in the Crimean peninsula in southern Ukraine. How Washington’s statement was received across the globe, however, demonstrated the stark differences between today’s situation and the USSR era.

Germany, which is no longer divided by the Iron Curtain, declared that it would not pursue sanctions, but rather a separate diplomatic solution.

China, which was until recently Moscow’s bitter rival, chose to edge closer to its northern neighbor. *The Telegraph* reported that Russia’s foreign ministry stated that the two nations have “broadly coinciding points of view” regarding the Ukraine situation.

Another towering difference between 20th and 21st century Russia is that of motives. The Soviet Union had a clear purpose: bring their brand

of communism to the entire world. With Marxist ideals off the table, the Cold War is not quite the right lens through which to view current Russian actions.

Confusing and Spectacular

Certain historical trends can be gleaned from the Soviet years but Russia's modern interests remain blurry in Western minds. This comes as no surprise because the nation has long perplexed Europe and America. Perhaps the most famous example of puzzlement comes from British statesman Sir Winston Churchill. During WWII, he stated: "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma..." (The Churchill Society).

This quote is just as true today, and was seen during the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi. An editorial published in *The Independent* labeled the opening ceremony "confusing and spectacular in equal measure."

The newspaper continued: "For some reason there were some giant horses being chased by what appeared to be a giant orange biscuit."

"There was a big inflatable bull. And an inflatable teapot. And an inflatable cathedral. And then they all floated up into the air."

"There was also a massive bear and at one stage the floor of the Fisht Stadium turned into a black and white depiction of the sea, complete with guys dressed as pirates."

Throughout the opening and closing ceremonies, Western commentators had to painstakingly explain what was taking place.

Time and again during the 16-day event, the host country exhibited a sense of grandeur and proud heritage. It showed it was a force of reckoning by taking home the most Olympic medals.

Yet the fact was clear: Russia remains utterly foreign to the rest of the world.

Hidden Motives

To begin to understand a nation that is "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma," one needs a firm grasp of its history.

Contrary to common belief, Russia's expansionist aspirations did not start under communism. Before Vladimir Lenin and Josef Stalin espoused statewide atheism, the nation set out to spread Christianity under the czars.

In his 1904 book *The Russian Advance*, American historian Albert

Jeremiah Beveridge attempted to explain the Russian enigma: "No matter how casual his observation, every traveller through Russia will run across evidences of Russian idealism. On the other hand, men who have given their lives to the study of this curious people declare that the Russian is, first of all, an idealist."



■ **A LOOK AT THE PAST:** Above, a car rides between U.S. tanks, across the border from the Russian sector, into the American section of Berlin (Oct. 1, 1961). Below, soldiers hoist the Soviet flag on the balcony of Hotel Adlon in Berlin after the Battle of Berlin in May 1945.

PHOTOS: (ABOVE) -AFP/GETTY IMAGES; (BELOW) BUNDESARCHIV_BILD_183-R77767/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Writing before the Soviet era, he felt he had pinpointed what drove this idealism: “Remember, now that even deeper than this idealism in the soul of this strange people is religion; and then call to mind its passion for order, its devotion to mere form; and, with this, recall again that, buffeted for centuries by Asiatics on the east, by other Asiatics

on the south, by warlike Europeans on the west, Russia has been compelled to develop a foreign statesmanship, unnecessary and unknown to any other nation, and a diplomacy skilful and resourceful beyond that of any other people of ancient or modern times.”

To Beveridge, it was Christianity that drove Russia toward expansionism.

Yet if he was alive today, he would have witnessed the rise and fall of the Soviet Union. He would have also seen modern Russia asserting its ideals on the global stage. Both times, Rossiya acted sans a religious motivation.

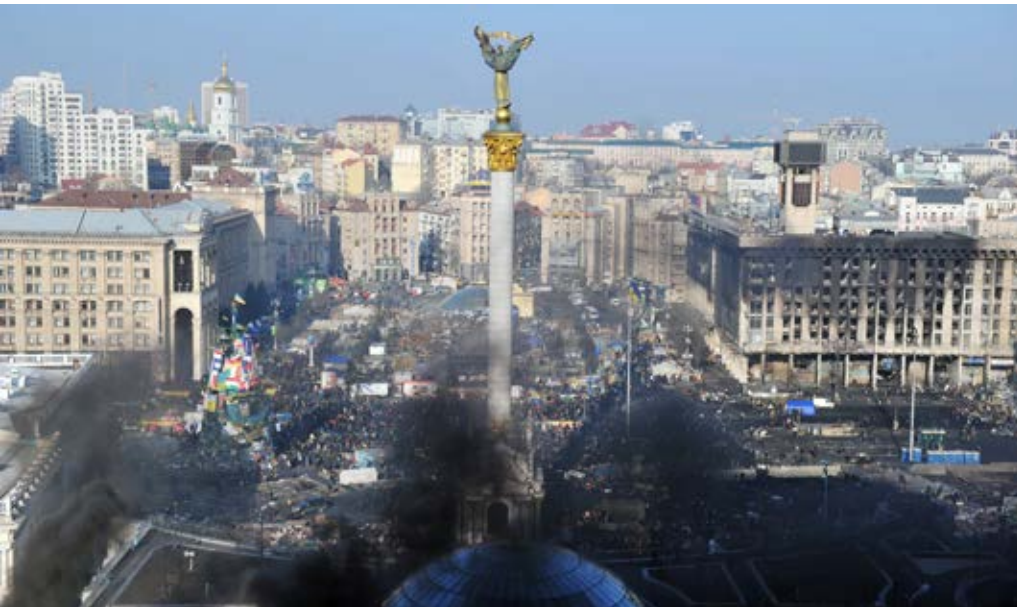
Yet the author did detail a driving factor of Russia’s idealism: “...namely, the preservation of order, form, and authority in civil affairs, and when the rest of the world shall have completed its circle of liberty, and then license, and finally anarchy (which is what the Russians believe we are doing), to restore to the confused, hopeless, struggling peoples of the earth those forms of social order and authority which the [Russian] thinks are, after all, the foundation-stones of civilization.”

Remove religion as the motivating factor and a Russian endgame begins to take shape. The nation is ready to swoop in and offer sure-handed solutions to vexing situations, particularly in the East and Middle East.

Much more can be gleaned from *The Russian Advance* when one realizes that religion was really just a vehicle to extend Russian ideals: “Incident to this last is the more immediate Russian idealistic purpose of spreading her dominions over all of Asia. To the Russian mind, China is to be Russian, Persia is to be Russian, India is to be Russian. It is Russian power which is to restore the cross to Jerusalem...So thinks the Russian.”

The motives for these expansionist ideals are not religious or communist. Instead, Russia has an utterly different view on how to resolve world problems.

Political thinkers have made the same observations today. In his 2001 book *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?* Henry Kissinger wrote: “Both Russia and the United States have historically asserted a global vocation for their societies. But while America’s idealism derives from the concept of liberty, Russia’s developed from a sense of shared suffering and common submission to authority...American idealism tempts isolationism; Russian idealism has prompted expansionism and nationalism.”



■ **UNREST AND CELEBRATION:** Above, smoke billows in Independence Square during an anti-government protest in Kiev, Ukraine (Feb. 21, 2014). Below, symbols of Russia’s Soviet past are displayed during the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia (Feb. 7, 2014).

PHOTOS: GENYA SAVILOV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (ABOVE); BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/MCT (BELOW)



Mr. Kissinger quoted what Mr. Putin wrote the day before taking on the responsibilities of Russia's presidency in early 2000: "It will not happen, if it ever happens at all, that Russia will become the second edition of, say, the United States or Great Britain...For Russians, a strong state is not an anomaly, which should be got rid of. Quite the contrary, they see it as a guarantor of order and the initiator and the main driving force of any change."

It is only when one realizes that the Russian mind is markedly different from the West that their actions begin to make sense. While the West often views Moscow's actions as severe,

Nazi invasion is considered a decisive turning point for World War II.

Yet understanding Rossiya's historical motivations paints only a partial picture of its future. There is another crucial key needed to clear up the blurred modern landscape.

Sharper Focus

In 1943, *The Plain Truth*, this publication's predecessor, asked the question, "Will Stalin Double-Cross and Invade Britain and America?" The piece, written by *Plain Truth* Editor-in-Chief Herbert W. Armstrong, proved beyond a doubt that the United States and United Kingdom would never suffer an invasion by the Soviets. A similar

tory and Bible prophecy. *The Plain Truth* followed this winning pattern for decades. Its track record regularly proved skeptics wrong. *The Real Truth* continues to do this today.

Real Truth Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack wrote in his book *The Bible's Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out*: "Approximately one-third of the Bible is prophecy—history written in advance. Over four-fifths of this future history is yet to be fulfilled. Tragically, most Bible readers are completely unaware of awesome, impending world events, soon to involve all nations. Vast sections of Scripture are hidden, and remain outside their understanding—completely lost to them. The result is that most simply have no idea what the future holds."

To truly understand world events, one must first prove that the Bible is God's Word. If you have not already done this, be sure to read *Bible Authority...Can It Be Proven?* available at reg.org/bacibp.

The prophecies of the Bible make it clear that the United States and Russia will not enter another decades-long Cold War. While there may continue to be friction between the two superpowers, Moscow's attentions will be fixed on alliances in the East and an increasing interest in the Middle East.

For a fuller picture of what the coming years hold for these two nations, read the two-part *Real Truth* article series "The Future of Russia" at the realtruth.org, and Mr. Pack's book *America and Britain in Prophecy* at reg.org/aabibp.

Both provide rock-solid historical and biblical proof as to the future of these former Cold War foes. In addition, they bring today's blurred political landscape into crystal clear view. □



■ **STRENGTHENING TIES:** Egyptian army chief General Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, second from the left, speaks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, third from the right, during talks in Novo-Ogaryovo, outside Moscow, Russia (Feb. 13, 2014).

PHOTO: MAXIM SHEMETOV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

most in the nation see it as the only solution for turbulent times.

Russians can argue that history is on their side. By uniting behind authoritative governments—the czars, the USSR, or a strong-arm democracy today—the nation has repeatedly expelled and repelled military advances from formidable foes such as the Mongols. They beat Napoleon. And the Soviet push-back against a

article titled "Why America Will Not Attack Russia!" was published posthumously in 1986.

What made Mr. Armstrong certain that the Soviets would not launch an attack on U.S. soil? What made him absolutely sure during the closing days of WWII and toward the end of the Cold War?

Put simply, he viewed the Cold War through the dual lenses of his-



What the Privacy Debate Reveals About Us

Surging technology and modern realities have converged to alter the current expectation of personal privacy. We can learn from the resulting struggle.

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIVE years later, the incandescent light bulb remains one of the greatest and most world-altering inventions in history. Thomas Edison's ability to perfect it for practical purposes

profoundly changed human interaction and activity. Its development and widespread use brought light into many previously dark places.

Further technological developments have had similar ground-

breaking effects and are playing an enormous part in the debate about personal privacy.

At the forefront of this global discussion is the data collection program by the United States National Security Agency (NSA). The actions of WikiLeaks and Edward Snowden (a former NSA contractor) brought to light the government's use of technology that gives it the ability to peer into the private lives of much of the global population.

Technology also empowers businesses. Retailers are cashing in, using

certain innovations to survive in the ultra-competitive retail environment. Their goal is to “get inside the heads” of consumers to customize and individualize marketing campaigns.

The average person can also encroach on the privacy of others using a smartphone, and even more with inventions such as Google Glass—a wearable device that allows one to record others without their knowledge.

Technological innovation continues as a “light”—revealing what previously could not be seen.

Interestingly, much of the information used to breach privacy has been provided, wittingly or unwittingly, by the people themselves. *PC Magazine* explained: “We confess our most private thoughts to search engines, broadcast our location for free drinks, [and] let our cars be tracked for an insurance discount...yet now we find ourselves suddenly howling with outrage over our privacy.”

Media theorist and author Douglas Rushkoff wrote in a *CNN* article about social media companies collecting data: “We Facebook users have been building a treasure lode of big data that government and corporate researchers have been mining to predict and influence what we buy and for whom we vote. We have been handing over to them vast quantities of information about ourselves and our friends, loved ones and acquaintances. With this information, Facebook and the ‘big data’ research firms purchasing their data predict still more things about us—from our future product purchases...to our likelihood for civil disobedience or even terrorism.”

Divulging key information about ourselves, along with the

ability to digitally archive this information for later use, has led to modern conveniences and an improved virtual experience. This stored data, however, linked with smartphones, surveillance systems, and supercomputers, also has the capability to negatively impact our day-to-day lives.

Personal privacy, as it has been known for the majority of history, is endangered. But the debate over it speaks volumes as to what makes man tick.

Which End of the Spectrum?

While personal information is gathered by social media providers, search engine sites, and technology companies, the debate largely centers on the role the government should take.

People want their privacy. Individuals, especially in Western societies, expect and feel they deserve a certain level of confidentiality. As far as they are concerned, the right to disclose certain information, including aspects of their private lives, should be up to them.

The desire for protection and the ability to operate freely and safely in

public is, like the desire for privacy, also a powerful motivator. These two goals are often seen as opposite ends of a spectrum: the ability to operate freely versus the desire for privacy and anonymity.

This concept has existed for decades. U.S. Founding Father Alexander Hamilton made the case that dangerous times soften even the staunchest advocates of civil liberties and freedom. The following is an excerpt from his essay in the *Federalist* papers: “*Safety from external danger is the most powerful director of national conduct. Even the ardent love of liberty will, after a time, give way to its dictates. The violent destruction of life and property incident to war...will compel nations the most attached to liberty to resort for repose and security to institutions which have a tendency to destroy their civil and political rights. To be more safe, they at length become willing to run the risk of being less free*” (emphasis added).

Ironically, these words come from a man who was working to build a nation based on the principles of inde-

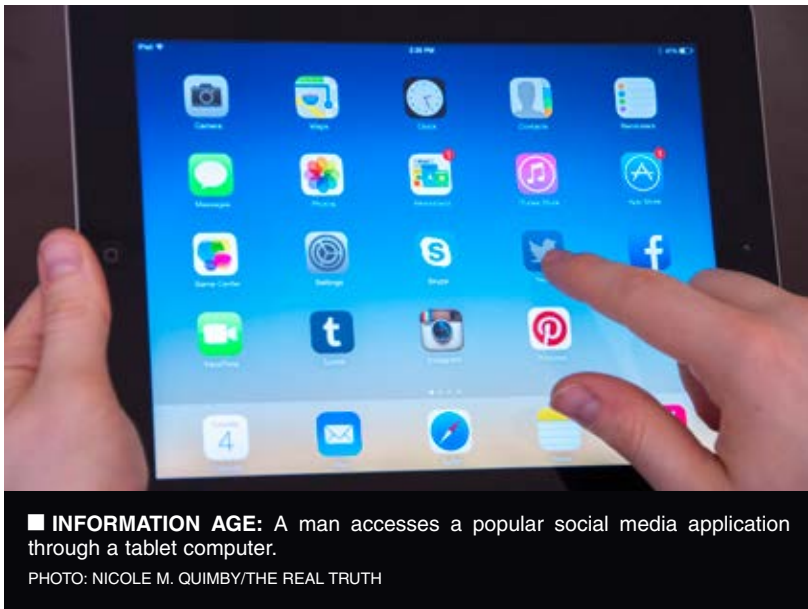


■ **INSTANT ACCESS:** An attendee uses a Google Glass during the White House Youth Summit in Washington, D.C. (Dec. 4, 2013).

PHOTO: JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

pendence and self-reliance, which had so recently separated from the rule of Great Britain. Hamilton knew the need to feel safe was a powerful incentive—even if it meant giving up some personal privacy.

In the modern age of terror attacks and online warfare, the peoples of the world must make an even more vital choice between national security and personal secrecy.



■ **INFORMATION AGE:** A man accesses a popular social media application through a tablet computer.

PHOTO: NICOLE M. QUIMBY/THE REAL TRUTH

polls showed that people generally agreed with Hamilton's assertion. They viewed the programs as a reasonable sacrifice for the greater good.

Pew Research Center and *The Washington Post* released a poll in June 2013 that showed 62 percent of Americans agreed that "it is more important for the federal government to investigate possible terrorist threats, even if that intrudes on personal privacy."

"Price of Admission"

Proponents of the NSA's data collection program, specifically the mass accumulation of the numbers from all telephone calls, say that concerns about this data gathering is overblown and not a true reflection of what is actually taking place.

An opinion piece in *The Washington Post* expressed this idea: "The widespread fear that NSA is recording the calls themselves is false," say the U.S. officials. "It would take 400 million people to listen and read' global traffic, estimates one official—obviously an impossibility."

Those in favor of data collection conclude that the programs suffer more from negative publicity than real issues. And, the thinking goes, the government does not have to try very hard to obtain most information.

An article in *The Christian Science Monitor* said that those who support this idea feel that "a large majority of Americans already voluntarily provide extensive information about themselves online. Facebook knows our birthdays, our family members, our friends, and our relatives. Google knows what we like to read, view, and buy. Wireless carriers know where we are at almost every moment. Why shouldn't the NSA collect all this data so as to create the biggest haystack possible in which to look for the needle of a terrorist suspect?"

Leonid Shtilman, an expert in cybersecurity, added in the same article: "It is somehow strange that certain people feel OK using Gmail, which analyzes every line of your correspondence and responds with appropriate ads, but feel uncomfortable with NSA's search of billions of emails with the words 'infidel' and 'martyr' (written in any language)."

He added that most do not understand how important combing the Web is for intelligence agencies, and concluded, "If this country is indeed in a war with extremists (and I believe it is) this is a legitimate action by the government."

Some NSA officials call their decryption methods the "price of admission for the U.S. to maintain unrestricted access to and use of cyberspace" (*USA Today*). In other words, the present dangers have reached levels at which electronic activities and communications *must* be monitored.

Government officials further argue that citizens will hold them just as accountable, if not more so, if another attack takes place. Therefore, if they are going to be criticized, it is better to err on the side of gathering more information.

Shifting View

After the government's collection activities became known, early American

In addition, 56 percent of respondents agreed that "tracking the telephone records of millions of Americans is an acceptable way for the government to investigate terrorism."

As more has come to light about the degree to which the government has been collecting data, however, people's view about the program is changing.

A January 2014 poll from *Pew* and *USA Today* revealed that support of the government's program has greatly decreased. According to the numbers, 53 percent of respondents now *disapprove* of the government's collection of telephone and Internet data as a part of anti-terrorism efforts, with only 40 percent in agreement. Just six months prior, this same question drew a 50 percent to 44 percent approval to disapproval ratio.

While poll results vary depending on how questions are phrased, *privacy* (at least for now) seems to be emerging as the primary winner over *protection*.

How Much Is Too Much?

For some time, privacy experts have warned that increased disclosure of personal information represents a slippery slope. They have cautioned that knowing and storing more information on people makes it increasingly difficult to control.

Please see **PRIVACY**, page 24



The New Wild West

Mexico's Escalating Drug War

The nation's drug war is being fought by a new force—vigilantes.
What could this mean for the country as a whole?



and murder. Throughout the dusty, tumbleweed-covered towns, there are good lawmen, bad lawmen, and some who are a little bit of both.

All because of a war to control the drug trade.

Australian media outlet *News.com.au* explained: “The war escalated in 2008, after police corruption was identified and a major battle took place between two of the major drug cartels. Then President Felipe Calderon called in additional forces which increased the level of violence between authorities and drug gangs.”

Headless corpses stuck with ice picks, bodies strewn across highways their limbs twisted and mangled, victims boiled alive in giant kettles, and al-Qaida-style executions in public squares all stand as warnings for any who cross the powerful cartels, which earn approximately \$19 billion to \$29 billion annually from sales of cocaine and other drugs.

Throughout Mexico, particularly in its rural outskirts, townspeople are subjected to brutal and bloody violence. “Horror stories of random shootings, mass beheadings and mass graves have become commonplace,” *CNN* reported. “Gunmen think nothing of mowing down a couple dozen teenagers in a disco with machine guns and tossing grenades indiscriminately into crowds during holiday fiestas. Mexicans have almost become immune to carnage, it seems.”

“Many of the dead were believed by authorities to have been connected to the drug trade, but others were innocent civilians—including women and children—who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

The government’s inability to control the situation has led to people tak-

DAILY LIFE IN Mexico in 2014 is reminiscent of an old American Western film. Outlaws extort money from busi-

ness owners and force farmers to sign over titles to their properties. Terrorized villagers live under the constant threat of kidnap, rape

■ **TURMOIL:** Opposite page top, members of a vigilante group pose for a picture at La Nopalera community, Michoacan state, Mexico (Feb. 15, 2014). Opposite page bottom left, a young man dressed in traditional attire holds an assault rifle during a ceremony in La Ruana community, state of Michoacan, Mexico (Feb. 24, 2014). Opposite page bottom right, two former “punteros” (informants) of the Knights Templar drug cartel pose during a news interview at La Nopalera community, Michoacan state, Mexico (Feb. 15, 2014). Above, relatives mourn next to a coffin at a funeral in Michoacan state, Mexico (Jan. 14, 2014).

PHOTOS: ALFREDO ESTRELLA/AFP/ (OPPOSITE PAGE TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT); HECTOR GUERRERO/AFP/ (OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM LEFT); ALFREDO ESTRELLA/ (ABOVE) GETTY IMAGES

ing matters into their own hands and creating their own version of justice.

Vigilantism is just the latest chapter in Mexico's drug cartel story, which has resulted in more than 60,000 deaths since 2006. According to statistics from *CNN*, Mexico is responsible for 90 percent of the cocaine that enters the United States.

Yet crime committed against one party often leads to the victim of that crime committing one in retaliation, which perpetuates the cycle—a pattern that has cropped up numerous times throughout history.

The New York Times printed a cautionary tale about vigilantism titled "Colombia's Warning for Mexico" by writer Hector Abad, whose father was gunned down in Medellin, Colombia, by a vigilante-turned-criminal gang: "Mexico, like several Latin American countries, is able to guarantee security and the rule of law only in certain zones. The lifeblood of law and order manages to flow near the heart of power, around the big cities, but the farther away we get, the weaker the pulse, and in some places there is none at all. Police officers are few and corrupt, judges live under threat from local despots and strongmen, and the legitimate authorities have been paid off by illegal ones. It's like the American Wild West, but with 21st-century armaments, private armies funded by the torrential flow of money from drug trafficking, and no prospect of a righteous sheriff riding in to restore calm."

What could such bleak prospects spell for Mexico's future?

From Drug Trafficking to Extortion

In the western state of Michoacan, a crew of vigilantes made up of farmworkers, ranchers, doctors and other professions, have banded together and formed a self-defense force. Its purpose: take back what the local drug gang known as the Knights Templar have stolen. Fed up with the Knights' brutality and the Mexican government's failure to resolve the situation, this ragtag group has waged a successful battle and regained control of about a third of the state.

The Knights Templar emerged in this Pacific Coast region known for its tropical climate and rich soil in 2010. This was after it broke from the paramilitary self-defense group-turned-organized crime syndicate La Familia.

Though the mountainous region is dotted with marijuana fields and methamphetamine labs, the Knights' reign extends beyond drug trafficking. *The New York Times* reported: "...The Knights Templar have added their own sinister complement to the panorama of local crime: systematic extortion on an unprecedented scale. Anyone who resists risks loss of property or life. The Knights squeeze homeowners, pharmacies, doctors' offices, schools, industries, gas stations, public services, even tortilla factories and growers of lemons. No one is safe."

In fact, according to an article in *The Wall Street Journal*, the Knights have made a significant profit off avocado exports to the U.S.

"One local official estimated that the Knights Templar, named for a medieval group of crusading warrior monks, made \$150 million a year extorting growers and packers, as well as selling avocados from the 5,000 acres they took from farmers."

In the eyes of villagers, many local police officials are in league with the Knights. They believe the government has failed miserably in its duty to protect its citizenry. Local police not on the Knights' payroll have been executed.

"One resident of the state, who did not wish to be named, told *The Independent*: 'I would say the authorities in Michoacan have long lost the right to claim they are protecting their citizens. I don't like to see people picking up arms, I deplore violence; but we have very little confidence in the police forces under the control of the Michoacan government.'"

The government has not been as successful as the vigilantes with retaking towns once held captive by the Knights. Federal police routinely watch from the sidelines or only lend backup support when needed.

One of the reasons for this is that federal officers from outside the region

are not as familiar with the territory as those fighting to protect it.

"When legions of federal police arrived...to take over Apatzingan, the farming region's main city and a Knights Templar stronghold, residents simply shrugged," an *Associated Press* article reported.

"'Police sent in from outside don't know where the criminals are,' said...a Roman Catholic priest. 'We know of 10 warehouses where they are hiding armed men. They aren't going to find them.'"

Rise of Local Heroes

The self-defense force's bloody, yet successful rout of the cult-like drug cartel has convinced a weary Mexican government to legalize the group. According to *The Associated Press*, "The Mexican military has a century-old tradition of mobilizing 'rural defense corps' manned by peasants to fight bandits and uprisings in the countryside."

The news outlet further reported: "To succeed, the government must enforce military discipline and instill respect for human rights and due process among more than 20,000 heavily armed civilians, then eventually disband them and send them back home in the western state of Michoacan.

"In other Latin American countries, similar experiments have created state-backed militias that carried out widespread human rights abuses as armed civilians turned to vengeance, or assisted in mass killings. The Mexican army itself has been accused of rights abuses during the more than seven-year war against organized crime that has seen it deployed as a police force in much of the country."

The state of Michoacan is not the only place in Mexico where such vigilantism is becoming commonplace. Neighboring Guerrero is also employing it, as reported by *Reuters*.

"Outraged at relentless extortion, kidnapping and theft as a wave of drug-related violence washes over Mexico, farmers, shopkeepers and other residents in the mountainous southern state of Guerrero are taking

the law into their own hands as ‘community police.’

“Both state and federal police as well as the military leave them to their own devices, manning checkpoints at entries to towns, but venturing no farther.”

While vigilantes in these two southern states are heralded as heroes, in other places it is the drug traffickers themselves who are romanticized.

Legendary Outlaws

Farther north, in the state of Sinaloa, the Mexican government has had its hands full with the Sinaloa cartel, a multinational operation that generates billions of dollars. It was once headed by the notorious drug kingpin, Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman. In February, Mexico—with assistance from the United States—arrested Mr. Guzman, who not only inspires loyalty among cartel members but the general population as well.

“...Mexican actress Kate del Castillo—who coincidentally was cast as a powerful female drug lord in Telemundo’s Spanish-language series ‘La Reina del Sur’—tweeted that she has more faith in Mexican drug kingpin Joaquin ‘El Chapo’ Guzman than she does in government,” reported *CNN*.

Mr. Guzman is known to help the poor and, unlike his counterparts in the Knights Templar, keep the peace.

One 21-year-old psychology student who lives in Sinaloa’s capital of Culiacan told *NPR* that “no one here is happy about Guzman’s arrest. Because of Guzman, she says, everything is under control—people don’t steal, kidnap or extort here...he helped the poor, paved roads, gave people jobs—the list of good deeds goes on.”

The article describes how she and her friends spent an afternoon at the tomb of her boyfriend who was killed in a shootout. The group spent hours drinking and singing *narcocorridos*,

popular songs that glorify the lives of drug traffickers in the country.

Much like Jesse James in the American Old West, Mr. Guzman has become a legend in his own time. Both are viewed as Robin Hood-like figures, whose criminal activities were to benefit the poor—a myth in both cases.

“From his naming on the *Forbes* magazine list of the world’s richest billionaires, to his frequent supposed sightings and magical escapes, Joaquin ‘El Chapo’ Guzman has been a larger-

was reported to have entered a fancy restaurant, ordered cellphones confiscated, dined lavishly, then picked up everyone’s check.”

Yet for Mr. Guzman, being benevolent toward the local population was just part of running an efficient operation. According to an article in *The New York Times*: “Unlike its rivals among the Zetas or the Gulf cartel, whose reach was extended almost entirely by brute force, the Sinaloa cartel more frequently operates on the thinking that too much violence is bad for business, analysts say.

“Rather than moving into an area and trying to displace local groups, Sinaloa turns them into partners, using their expertise on such subjects as physical terrain and local politics, said Steven S. Dudley, an analyst for InSight Crime, a research group.”

Still, to be the head of Mexico’s most powerful and most efficient drug operation, Mr. Guzman has had to shed some blood. *CNN* reported that he “surrounded himself with an army of ruthless guards and enforcers...”

History records that there is a fine line between folk hero and violent criminal. It also records that in Mexico

and other Latin America countries, vigilante groups can quickly transform into the type of violent gangs they were formed to fight.

History as a Guide

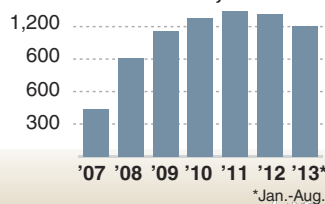
Mexico’s predicament harkens to the Reconstruction era following the U.S. Civil War. The mass production of guns during the war led to them being more available afterward.

As a result, a new society of gun-toting, justice-exacting lawmen who acted as judge, jury and executioner developed, as citizens lost trust in their government. This led to myths sur-

Kidnappings Again on the Rise

A problem in Mexico since 1970, kidnappings dropped at the turn of the century. Now crime groups see ransom money as alternative revenue to drug trafficking.

Reported abductions



States with the most kidnappings, Jan.-Aug. 2013



© 2013 MCT
Source: Citizens Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice, Mexico United Against Crime, ESRI

than-life drug lord who reached mythical proportions in Mexican ‘narco’ folklore,” *Los Angeles Times* reported.

“He rose from a simple low-level trafficker from Sinaloa, the cradle of Mexico’s opium and marijuana trade, to become the nation’s most powerful and elusive fugitive.

“For Mexicans, the capture of Guzman, reported...to have occurred in a joint operation by Mexican marines and U.S. federal agents in the Sinaloa coastal city of Mazatlan, is somewhat akin to Colombia’s killing of Pablo Escobar—or even the U.S. elimination of Osama bin Laden.

“His luxurious life on the run was the stuff of legend. More than once, he



Science Confirms the “Give” Way of Life!

Researchers have discovered what compels us to give. Yet what they found validates what was revealed thousands of years ago.

BY JUSTIN T. PALM

IT PERPLEXED Charles Darwin. *Why do we give?* If humans supposedly descended from animals, what compels us to act with concern for others? A *Wall Street Journal* article titled “Hard-wired for Giving” stated, “The question of why any creatures are altruistic at all obsessed Charles Darwin from the time he devised his theory of evolution...”

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines *altruism* as “feelings and behavior that show a desire to help other people and a lack of selfishness.” When people give with no direct personal benefit it runs contrary to evolutionists’ survival-of-the-fittest theory.

“The Darwinian principle of ‘survival of the fittest’ echoes what many people believe about life: To get ahead, you need to look out for No. 1. A cursory read of evolutionary doctrine suggests that the selfish individuals able to outcompete others for the best mates and the most resources are most likely to pass their genes on to the next generation...” (*The Wall Street Journal*).

Over 150 years after Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, scientists now understand more about why we act unselfishly. New brain-scanning technology reveals that human beings are actually *designed* to enjoy helping others.

Giving is in our DNA.

“You’re Not Going to Believe This!”

The Wall Street Journal article referenced above was excerpted from author Elizabeth Svoboda’s book *What Makes a Hero? The Surprising Science of Selflessness*. The article opens with, “Contrary to conventional wisdom that humans are essentially selfish, scientists are finding that the brain is built for generosity...New research shows that not only do humans have a generosity gene, but there’s a biological basis for why giving feels good...”

“Using tools like fMRI [which reveals blood flow in the brain], sci-

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DARNITRA D. JACKSON

entists are identifying the precise circuits within the brain that control these nurturing social impulses. Where once there was only speculation about the origins of the human desire to help others, a body of data is starting to fill the gap, revealing key workings of the biological hardware that makes altruism possible. This represents a new scientific frontier..."

The article quoted Jordan Grafman, the director of brain injury research at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, who began studying the characteristics of empathy and generosity in the mid-2000s. He stated that new technology made it "much easier to see which parts of the brain were engaged as people carried out various tasks."

Dr. Grafman's study involved 19 subjects positioned inside a brain scanner. Each individual was shown an extensive list of charities. "For each charity, they could choose to donate money, refuse to donate money, or add money to a separate reward account that they could take home at the end of the study. (In some cases, it was especially costly for subjects to make a donation decision, because doing so required them to draw from their own reward accounts)" (ibid.).

While studying the lab results, Dr. Grafman's colleague, Jorge Moll, approached him saying, "You're not going to believe this" (ibid.).

The study found that different areas of the brain light up when people give, including a release of the pleasure chemical dopamine.

The *first* discovery revealed unusually high midbrain activity. Our brains actually create a pleasurable response when we give: "The scans revealed that when people made the decision to donate to what they felt was a worthy

organization, *parts of the midbrain lit up*—the same region that controls cravings for food and sex, and the same region that became active when the subjects added money to their personal reward accounts" (ibid., emphasis added).

A *second* area of the brain—the subgenual area, part of the frontal lobes—also saw a rise in activity when those being tested gave to a charity: "The area contains lots of receptors for oxytocin, a hormone that promotes social bonding. The finding suggests that altruism and social relationships are intimately connected..." (ibid.).

A *third* area of the brain called the anterior prefrontal cortex was also activated in this scenario. This part of

Addicted to Giving?

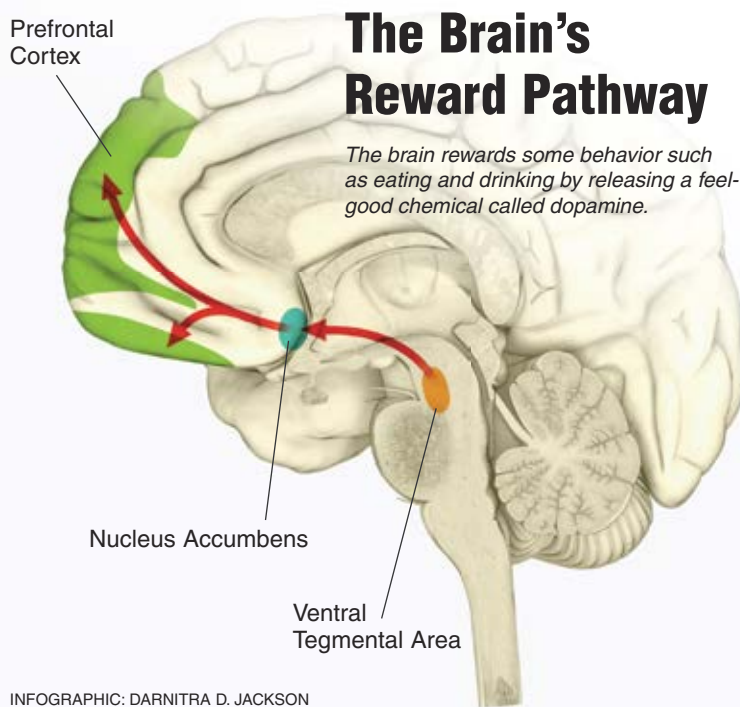
Another researcher found a *fourth* area of the brain—called the nucleus accumbens—lit up when subjects gave. University of Oregon economist Bill Harbaugh conducted a study tracking people's donations to a food bank from a \$100 account they were given. His findings matched Dr. Grafman's study: "When subjects decided to give to charity, areas of the brain associated with the processing of unexpected rewards, such as the nucleus accumbens, lit up. The nucleus accumbens, which contains neurons that release the pleasure chemical dopamine, 'is almost like the common currency of the brain. It keeps track of rewards, whatever kind they are,' Dr. Harbaugh says. 'There's some primary reward people get from seeing money go from themselves to provide to other people'" (ibid.).

Sure, the pleasure chemical dopamine is released when we eat a chocolate bar, drink an alcoholic beverage or win a prize. But writing a check to charity?

"Dr. Harbaugh's study indicated that giving to charity is, surprisingly, neurologically similar to ingesting an addictive drug or learning you've received a winning lottery ticket. It seems clear, then, that people give to charity not only because they think it's a good thing

to do but also because giving makes them feel good, in addition to the particular benefit they're bestowing on the recipient..." (ibid.).

"While we are hard-wired to 'do unto others' in a multitude of ways, we also have power over whether to take advantage of those natural capacities or let them wither away. One way to strengthen these capacities may involve giving in strategic ways



the brain controls our ability to make complex judgments and decisions.

Surprisingly, the subjects gave to charities when it came from their personal reward accounts: "These subjects were willing to give even when they knew it would cost them, indicating that this segment of the brain may help us decide to behave generously when doing so runs counter to our immediate self-interest" (ibid.).

to reinforce the existing generosity pathways in our brains...Ultimately, we might not only be able to get hooked on self-sacrifice, but also be able to learn to love the entire process” (ibid.).

The facts are incontrovertible: giving makes us *happier!*

Key to Happiness

Research has shown that giving money is not the only thing that brings psychological rewards. Giving time or support to others also brings happiness. The journal *Psychological Science* reported on a study about this topic in an article titled, “Providing Social Support May Be More Beneficial Than Receiving It” (emphasis added throughout): “Results...indicated that *mortality was significantly reduced* for individuals who reported providing instrumental support to friends, relatives, and neighbors, and individuals who reported providing emotional support to their spouse. *Receiving support* had no effect on mortality once giving support was taken into consideration. This pattern of findings was obtained after controlling for demographic, personality, health, mental health, and marital-relationship variables. These results have implications for understanding how social contact influences health and longevity.”

Psychological Science cited a number of studies that show that helping others provides physical benefits such as reducing stress and improving health.

But positive effects did not stop there: “Moreover, *volunteering has beneficial effects for volunteers*, including *improved physical and mental health* (Omoto & Synder, 1995; Wilson & Musick, 1999). Even perceptions that are likely to be associated with giving, such as a sense of meaning, purpose, belonging, and mattering, have been shown to *increase happiness and decrease depression* (e.g., Taylor & Turner, 2000; see Batson, 1998, for a review).”

The study concluded: “Giving support may be an important component of interpersonal relationships that has

considerable value to health and well-being...If *giving*, rather than receiving, promotes longevity, then interventions that are currently designed to help people feel supported may need to be redesigned so that the emphasis is on what people do to help others...”

In a 2004 study titled “Is Volunteering Rewarding in Itself?”, researchers from the University of Zurich found: “Volunteering constitutes one of the most important pro-social activities...helping others is the way to higher individual well-being... We find robust evidence that volunteers are more satisfied with their life than non-volunteers.”

All of this research appears revolutionary. But the hard scientific evidence is simply a validation of a principle that was revealed thousands of years ago.

Give Versus Get

What today’s researchers are discovering can be summarized in the phrase “the *give* way of life”—expressed through outgoing concern for others. In contrast, the “*get* way of life” is ruled by selfishness and greed. These two opposing ways of life have existed since Adam and Eve.

Mankind has generally followed the “*get*” way of life. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve chose to take to themselves knowledge when they ate of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” This led to a self-centered way of life that produced a vicious cycle of violence, covetousness, misery and greed.

But God always intended His Creation to experience lives of peace, abundance and happiness.

Throughout the Bible—which can be likened to mankind’s Instruction Manual on how to live—one finds evidence of how giving makes us happier—much more than what scientists and authors have discovered.

The knowledge found in this Book has been generally disregarded, yet the brain research now *proves* what the Bible has maintained for millennia.

Consider. Over 2,000 years before scientists discovered that giving brings joy, Jesus Christ confirmed this in

the Bible when He stated, “It is more blessed to *GIVE* than to receive” (Acts 20:35). The Greek word for “blessed” can also be translated “happy.”

This verse fits perfectly with what scientists have discovered about our brains! We are happier when we give than when we receive.

Jesus Christ created our minds, with God the Father guiding the process. They understand that giving was designed to be an inherent part of our lives.

Abundant Rewards of Giving

Most would be surprised by how much the Bible contains about the give way of life. One of the clearest statements Jesus made about giving comes from Luke 6: “*Give* to every man that asks of you...as you would [wish] that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise...*do good*, and *lend*, hoping for nothing again; and *your reward shall be great*... (vs. 30-31, 35). This is the famous “Golden Rule”—treat others the way you would like to be treated. Jesus said that when we do this, our “reward shall be great.”

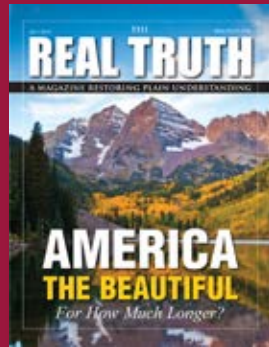
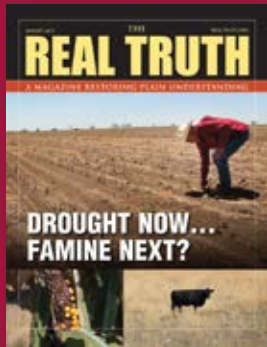
Verse 38 adds more corroboration about what happens when we give: “*Give*, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and *running over*, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

When we give in this manner, much more than what we initially gave comes back to us. We reap abundant rewards. This principle is also described in Ecclesiastes, where King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, wrote, “Cast your bread upon the waters [give to others]: for you shall find it after many days” (11:1).

Sooner or later, giving pays off.

Proverbs 11 states: “There is that scatters [gives], and yet *increases*; and there is that withholds more than is meet [gets for himself], but it tends to poverty. The liberal [generous] soul shall be made fat: and he that waters shall be watered also himself” (vs. 24-25).

A WORK BASED ON GIVING



THE *REAL TRUTH* magazine is produced by The Restored Church of God, a nonprofit organization devoted to practicing God’s way of life—the way of give, of outgoing concern for others. We are dedicated to teaching Christ’s true gospel—the good news of the coming KINGDOM OF GOD (Mark 1:14-15)—to “all the world for a witness unto all nations” (Matt. 24:14).

The Restored Church of God operates the largest biblically based websites on Earth, offering a vast array of tools to guide people seeking plain answers to the greatest questions.

Unlike other religious organizations, there is nothing to buy. Following Christ’s instruction, “Freely you have received, freely give,” we offer everything free of charge.

This is made possible by tithes and offerings given by members and freely given contributions from many other supporters of our international Work. The Bible teaches, “Buy the truth, and sell it not...” (Prov. 23:23). Accordingly, we do not, and will never, solicit donations from the public. In faith, we believe that Christ will always provide for the Work that He is doing through His servants. All of our donors give as they feel compelled.

This magazine, through the publishing power of the Internet and other means, is spreading the gospel at a rate and efficiency the world has never seen. Every week, hundreds of thousands of people can learn as much as they want, when they want.

Through *The Real Truth*, every nation and territory has access to learning sound, proven principles, which is helping many to live happier lives. □

Those who give to others actually receive more in the end! No wonder humans were designed to give—it feels good to help others. In doing this, the Bible and science make clear that we also reap rewards for ourselves. As the saying goes, it is a “win-win” situation.

Central Bible Theme

When Jesus conducted the first New Testament Passover service, which involved a foot-washing ceremony, He stated: “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another’s feet.

For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you... If you know these things, *happy* are you if you do them” (John 13:14-15, 17).

By focusing on the needs of others, Jesus set the example for His disciples. He stated that serving others (in this case, through washing their feet) would lead to being “happy.”

Two verses from the Proverbs expand this topic: “He that has a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he *gives* of his bread to the poor” (22:9), and, “He covets greedily all the day

long: but the righteous *gives* and *saves* not” (21:26).

Notice another passage from II Corinthians 9. It shows that if one gives (“sows”) a little, he will receive little. If one gives much (“bountifully”), he will receive much: “He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and *he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully*. Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him *give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for *God loves a cheerful giver*. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you,

always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (vs. 6-8).

During His ministry, Christ told His disciples, “*Freely you have received, FREELY GIVE*” (Matt. 10:8). And in verse 39, Christ instructs this: “He that finds [the Greek can also mean “gets”] his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life [gives it up] for My sake shall find it”.

If a person selflessly gives up his or her life in the service of others, they will actually gain much more in the end. In contrast, those who hold on to their lives—out of selfishness—will ultimately lose what they tried to keep.

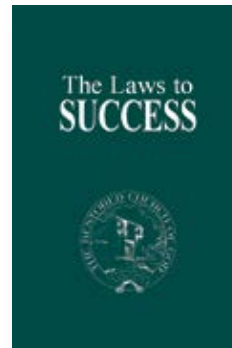
Live the “Give” Way!

Giving leads to happiness. The Bible shows that simply having money does not. Many scriptures reveal that living the GET way of life, accumulating riches and assets, only leads to sorrow.

Notice just two examples of wealth bringing unhappiness. The first is a warning from I Timothy: “But they that will be *rich* fall into temptation and a snare, and into *many foolish and hurtful lusts*, which drown men in *destruction and perdition*. For the love of money is [a] root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with *many sorrows*” (6:9-10).

Another comes from Proverbs: “So are the ways of every one that is *greedy of gain*; which takes away the life of the owners thereof” (1:19). (Also notice James 1:10-11 and 5:1-3.)

God’s Word brings a message of tremendous GOOD NEWS including the



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benefits of giving—and these are validated by science.

Some claim they cannot afford to give. But research shows we cannot afford *not* to give! (To learn more about the way of life outlined through the pages of your Bible, request our free booklet *The Laws to Success* at rcg.org/tlts.)

Become addicted to giving to others. Focus on

ways you can help—whether financially or through other means of support. Seek out friends and family members and see where you can build up relationships by focusing on their needs.

Strive to live the give way of life and follow Jesus’ teaching that it is more blessed to GIVE than to receive. You will love the results! □

PRIVACY

Continued from page 15

To them, the argument that much of the data was given voluntarily by individuals in the first place should not matter. While information about the private lives of citizens is readily available, that should not automatically mean it should be accessed without notice to the individual.

A person giving their information consciously decides to disclose it and generally does so in exchange for products or services. In this arrangement, privacy proponents point out, the person is aware of who has the information and generally how it is being used. This is much different than another party, unknown to a person, using it for their own purposes.

As certain security measures have become known, the world has been taken aback by the sheer amount of data being accessed. *Time* explained: “[Disclosures] revealed a massive, secret U.S. national-security state—\$52.6 billion a year, with more than

30,000 employees at the NSA alone—struggling to come to grips with this new surveillance potential in the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks...The challenge, explained one NSA document made public...was to ‘master global networks and handle previously unimagined volumes of raw data for both passive and active collection.’

“So new databases were built, and ground was broken on a massive classified data center in the Utah desert that will need as much as 1.7 million gal. (6.4 million L) of water a day just to keep the computer servers cool. And the data was collected. Since 2006 the U.S. government has gathered and stored transaction records of phone calls made in America. For a time, the government sucked up similar metadata on Internet traffic as well. Cellular location data, mostly from foreign-owned phones, has also been collected, with some 5 billion records a day absorbed by databases that can later be used to reconstruct a person’s movements or find out who joins a meeting behind closed doors.

“One NSA document released... estimated that 99% of the world’s

Internet bandwidth in 2002 and 33% of the world’s phone calls in 2003 passed through the U.S....”

Time continued, stating that this “gold mine” of data was obtained “with or without the cooperation of American companies. The agency hacked overseas cables and satellites and surreptitiously sucked information transiting among foreign cloud servers of U.S. technology companies like Google and Yahoo. It harvested and stored hundreds of millions of contact lists from personal e-mail and instant-messaging accounts on services like Yahoo and Facebook. A program called Dishfire sucked up years’ worth of text messages from around the world, and a database by the name of Tracfin captured credit-card transactions.”

Add to these accusations the charge of spying on foreign leaders and the lack of oversight in administering these programs and it becomes quite evident why, both domestically and abroad, individual privacy is a focus for so many.

Privacy proponents have grown in number, with most no longer buying the “security” argument made by



■ **POWERFUL TOOL:** The NSA Data Center in Bluffdale, Utah, is viewed by many to represent the incredible surveillance capabilities of the United States government (Oct. 8, 2013).

PHOTO: GEORGE FREY/GETTY IMAGES

the government. They see these programs as jeopardizing the core values of a democratic society.

Foreign and domestic security, however, is not the only front in the privacy debate.

Pursuit of Profits

Today's customers want discounts and customized service. Companies want profits. This has led to a tidal wave of information sharing that has become a booming business.

Businesses, in many ways, have been trailblazers in the acquisition of personal data, in this case that of current and potential customers. Some of the government's data collection methods pale in comparison to the extent some retailers are willing to go to acquire and analyze data.

And customers are much more willing than they have been in the past to share their personal information, especially when it is tied to a discount or some other exchange. The company initially gather-

ing this information not only profits directly, but also routinely sells it to other businesses, which creates an additional income stream.

With everything from a discount card on a person's key chain that tracks buying habits, to the data compiled from information voluntarily given when people sign up for a "free car" drawing, businesses are in hot pursuit of otherwise private information.

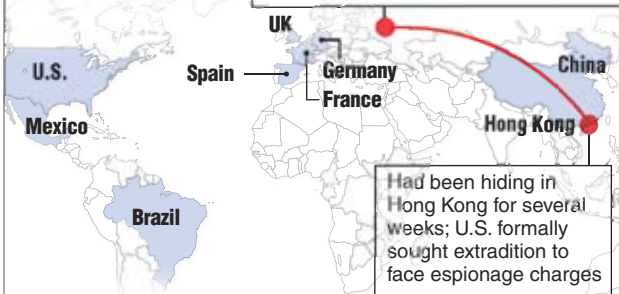
Technology is making this transfer of information more seamless.

One emerging trend is based on cellphone technology. An increasing number of retailers now have the ability to track customers anonymously as they walk into their locations. Without any action on the part of the customer, they can track an individual's movements as long as their cellphone is on. Marketers use this information to count how many people enter a store and to determine things such as which displays attract the most attention and

NSA Leaks

Materials leaked by Edward Snowden, a former CIA technical worker and National Security Agency (NSA) contractor, allege that the U.S. government conducted widespread surveillance of its own citizens and of other nations.

Selected countries mentioned in Snowden leaks



June 13: Mr. Snowden says the U.S. government has been hacking computers in mainland China, Hong Kong.

June 16: The *Guardian* reveals the U.S. and the UK spied on foreign leaders and diplomats at the 2009 G20 summit.

June 29: Germany's *Der Spiegel* reports the U.S. bugged EU offices in Washington and at UN headquarters.

Mid-Sept.: U.S. accused of spying on Brazilian and Mexican leaders, based on documents leaked by Mr. Snowden.

Oct. 21: French newspaper *Le Monde* claims NSA eavesdropped on millions of phone calls in France.

Oct. 24: German media reports that the U.S. was bugging Chancellor Angela Merkel's phone for more than a decade.

Oct. 28: Spanish media report NSA secretly monitored 60 million phone calls in Spain in one month.

Source: AP, BBC, Reuters

Graphic: Melina Yingling

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how customers navigate throughout the location.

The next level of disclosure occurs, though, when a customer decides to log onto a retailer's Wi-Fi signal. Once he connects, he is no longer anonymous and the business then has access to specific details about a person, including demographic information and past purchases. The technology even allows one to receive offers and coupons while in the store.

Retailers are now exploring the use of facial recognition technology to further individualize a person's shopping experience. This technology has been used in the past to identify shoplifters but may soon be used to pinpoint certain customers, namely those who have previously been identified as willing to spend more money.

Using special cameras and software, once a person enters a given establishment, he is recognized digitally. Without any notice to him, a communication is sent to store staff alerting them of his presence along with a picture and biographical information. This ability to identify and track people anonymously and from a distance worries some who see it as significantly crossing the line of privacy.

An extreme consequence of this technology is the ability to take a photo of an individual unknown to them and match it to an online social media profile photo. This would obviously be a real threat to public anonymity and to privacy overall.

Google Glass can be used to take pictures secretly and gives this picture-taking ability to anyone and only serves to bolster such concerns. Imagine a person looking over your shoulder and secretly recording your PIN number, or snapping a photo of your credit card.

Convenience aside, privacy advocates are troubled by these trends. What began as the ability to retain and store information has now become an almost uncontrollable problem.

With so many aspects of a person's life available in electronic form, key information can be stored and later made available to almost anyone. This has severely threatened personal pri-

vacancy and compromised man's natural desire to disclose information on his own terms.

"Nature" of Privacy

The deeper we drill into the privacy debate, the more twists and turns appear. For every advocate of requiring the government to fully disclose when and how personal data will be used, there is someone else pointing to how this will jeopardize our domestic security and leave the United States vulnerable to attack.

For every shopper who is crazy about the idea of receiving a discount coupon on his smartphone as he stands in front of a matching store display, there is someone else reminding us of the latest big-box retailer that has to explain to customers why credit card data has been compromised.

The privacy debate may not reveal hard and fast solutions to the overall problem but it does reveal a lot about people.

can be summed up in two words—human nature. The privacy dispute reveals much about this aspect of man's character.

Understand. Human nature is an overall description of many characteristics that describe mankind in general. Sadly, most of these characteristics are less than noble.

Human beings naturally want things done according to their own terms. Man generally resists change and usually wants to be left to his own devices unless he decides otherwise. These tendencies are evident to varying degrees throughout the privacy discussion.

But there is one trait of human nature that is evident as one wades deeper into the argument and emerges on the other side—mankind has a tendency to hide behavior.

From the government to the people to the businesses, on all sides of the debate, everyone seems to have something to hide. There is an almost innate



■ **CONNECTED:** A Wi-Fi logo is pictured during the 2014 Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain (Feb. 26, 2014).

PHOTO: JOSEP LAGO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (TOP)

People are different. Some are tall, others are short. Some are extroverted, others are introverted. Some are more lighthearted, while others are more serious. People are all unique in many ways.

Yet as different as we are, we all share certain attributes. These qualities

unwillingness to be open and forthright about certain matters.

This statement is not meant to advocate carelessness with information. A suitable level of propriety is appropriate and wise, especially given the need for protection against those out to harm and take advantage of others.

Instead, this assertion is meant to describe a characteristic of mankind that runs much deeper.

Any one discussion about human nature has to start with defining what it is. Unknown to most, the Bible is *the* handbook for describing human nature—detailing the innermost motives of mankind. For example, Galatians 5:19-21 represents a partial list of human attributes. The description is not pretty.

Jesus Christ explained man's natural desire to conceal matters: "...men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:19-20).

These verses show that man naturally covers behavior that is contrary to the "light," revealed to be Jesus Christ and the Word of God (John 8:12; Psalms 119:105). Man not only avoids the light, but also hates it.

Similar to a light bulb, the words of the Bible—spiritually speaking—show what was formerly concealed by darkness. Once a person's deeds have been illuminated and seen in the context of what God expects, they then open themselves up to be "reproved" or held accountable for their choices.

The explosion of immoral (and increasingly *amoral*) behavior in modern society should make the reason for man's natural desire for privacy even more evident. (For more information on this subject read our trend report *The Immorality Explosion!* available at rcg.org/trends. It paints a picture of how quickly mankind is descending toward absolute disobedience of God's Law.)

The Bible definition for sin is "the transgression of [God's] Law" (I John 3:4). Though sin comes in all shapes and sizes, it is summarized by the breaking of the Ten Commandments. It is the transgression of these and other commands of God that represents the "evil deeds" mankind is so eager to keep in the dark.

In the Beginning

The tendency for mankind to hide his behavior is further demonstrated by the

actions of the first man ever created, Adam. He was placed in the Garden of Eden and given clear directions by God as to what was expected of him.

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17). Adam gave no indication that these instructions were not clear to him.

Despite understanding how he was supposed to act, it is well-known that Adam disobeyed what God told him to do. To make matters worse, Scripture reveals that unlike his wife Eve, Adam was not deceived by the serpent (I Tim. 2:14). In other words, his decision was a willing act of disobedience!

After his actions, Adam had every opportunity to admit his mistake and ask for forgiveness. He had the choice to allow the light of God and His instructions to shine on his dark behavior.

But he chose not to go to God. Instead, he began the pattern of hiding by concealing certain aspects of himself. He and his wife sewed fig leaves together and covered their nakedness (Gen. 3:7). Verse 8 makes it clear that both Adam and Eve then attempted to further hide from God "among the trees of the garden" as He called out to them. Man hiding his "evil deeds" was fully manifested from the beginning.

Notice that God had to seek out Adam since he chose not to seek God. Yet in seeking him, God still gave Adam a chance to admit his wrong when he asked, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9). Obviously, an all-knowing God knew where both Adam and Eve were, but gave Adam an opportunity to own up to his mistake.

In the end, Adam was not as forthright as he should have been and even blamed Eve—and God!—as the reason for his poor decision (Gen. 3:12). How difficult it can be for man to be accountable for his wrong choices!

Breaking the Cycle

How can mankind overcome this aspect of human nature that has plagued it for millennia?

To break the pattern of hiding sinful behavior—as well as all human nature characteristics—man must repent. This simply means to change.

Repentance is the first step toward becoming what the apostle Paul described: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

Christianity requires a man to go from old to new. This process is known as conversion.

Many in professing Christianity have heard of a person "being converted" or perhaps more commonly "being saved," but few know what it actually means, let alone how and when it takes place.

The ministers of this world have deceived billions of followers when it comes to true conversion. They leave people utterly confused concerning many questions: What exactly *is* conversion? *When* does it occur? What *is* a Christian? *How* does one receive God's Holy Spirit? *What* is the overall purpose of Christianity?

In the booklet *What Is True Conversion?* (available at rcg.org/wite), *Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack addresses these fundamental questions along with much more. He states that "truly deep conversion does not occur overnight."

Rather, Mr. Pack states, "Slow, steady growth, through daily practice, produces progress in the life of the person who is copying Christ. The new Christian sincerely strives, from the heart, to be different—to turn around and go the other way—the way of God—for the rest of his life!"

Hiding behaviors contrary to God's Law is rooted in deception and is a major stumbling block to turning your life around and coming closer to the "light."

Determine to be open before God about any weaknesses or aspects of your character that are holding you back. Admitting that you make mistakes and having a desire to change is the first step to overcoming—and experiencing lasting benefits! □

WILD WEST

Continued from page 19

rounding well-known criminals including the James brothers, Wyatt Earp, and John Henry “Doc” Holliday.

In the book, *Gun Violence in America: The Struggle for Control*, under a chapter titled “Reconstruction, Cheap Guns and the Wild West,” author Alexander DeConde wrote: “In the post-Civil War years, firearms became more accessible, more lethal, and subject to greater willingness by Americans to use them in homicides than in the past. As one observer commented, ‘The increase of crimes of blood has been beyond all comparison to that of the years previous to it. The war, in effect, demoralized and changed the habits and sentiments and conduct of thousands of the men who engaged in it on either side.’ Many, ‘reckless of life and hardened to the terrors of death,’ used their guns for personal violence. Crime and disorder rose throughout the nation at an unprecedented rate.”

Some of those who fought in the Civil War in various anti-government militia groups later went on to become famed outlaws of U.S. Wild West culture.

The book further stated: “Writers for pulp magazines romanticized gunslinging sheriffs, praised them for upholding a kind of order out of a gun barrel, and embellished their activities with myth. Dime novelists depicted other gunslingers such as Jesse and Frank James, who were former confederate guerrillas and murderers, James Butler ‘Wild Bill’ Hickok, Wyatt Berry Stapp Earp, and William Barclay ‘Bat’ Masterson as men of heroic stature primarily because allegedly they could shoot straight... Earp and Masterson augmented their incomes as gamblers and procurers. As lawmen and gamblers, Earp and John Henry ‘Doc’ Holliday robbed a stagecoach of eighty thousand dollars and murdered the driver and a passenger.”

While the Reconstruction era shares little in common with modern-day Mexico other than lawless violence, this time in American history illustrates that

those with a mindset that they are above the law often go on to have a skewed sense of justice.

It is, however, understandable that ordinary Mexicans would want to protect their families and livelihoods. Many of those affected by the situation are striving to make an honest living. They truly want to see peace return to their country. Fighting back may seem to be the only option. Still, anyone who perpetrates violence of any kind—either offensively or defensively—inevitably ends up in a worse state than where they started.

Any crime-for-crime situation always leads down a dangerous path.

Violence Begets Violence

Whether it is due to the tit-for-tat that vigilantes are embroiled in (they execute cartel members without the benefit of a trial, then the cartel strikes back in brutal fashion), or the feeling of wielding power even over the Mexican government, vigilante groups have a history of becoming an area’s next criminal element.

Think La Familia and its offshoot Knights Templar.

“Mexican analysts believe that La Familia formed in the 1980s with the stated purpose of bringing order to Michoacan, emphasizing help and protection for the poor. In its initial incarnation, La Familia formed as a group of vigilantes, spurred to power to counter interloping kidnappers and drug dealers, who were their stated enemies,” according to the International Relations and Security Network.

As with those who epitomize the Wild West, there is a very real concern that members of Michoacan’s self-defense force, who “kill without qualms and take enemies to improvised jails,” will find it difficult to relinquish power when the time comes.

According to *The Sunday Telegraph*: “In Colombia, which was similarly overrun by out-of-control [drug] cartels, [self-defense] groups...committed massacres and trafficked drugs before they were disbanded in 2006. ‘It is very easy to fall into this type of model where a Frankenstein, with no government

controls, is created,’ said Jose Miguel Vivanco, Americas director of Human Rights Watch.”

Ultimately, violence leads to more violence, and suffering to more suffering.

Mr. Abad expressed this in his essay published in *The New York Times*: “...these wars to the death always fail. What they generate is local powers defending themselves by arming to the teeth, and outlying territories turning into battlefields where life is impossible for defenseless civilians. The legitimate economy and tourism disappear, death tolls soar...and the final winner, inevitably, is not the state but some local narco-dictator with his own army of mercenaries.

“This is what we learned in Colombia: When the state is not present, it is local tyrants who take power and brutally impose their rules, which are nothing more than the defense of their privileges. The old Hobbesian concept, that the natural state of mankind is that man is a wolf to man, seems confirmed in these involuntary Latin American anarchist experiments. The strongest and richest wolf (from trafficking drugs or illegal mining) dominates the other wolves.

“Of course, every country is different. But I fear that today Mexico is making the same mistake Colombia did a quarter of a century ago. The vigilantes appear to be a cure—they are seen as saviors—but in reality they are part of the illness, one more illegal army, acting without restraints and financed by dirty money.”

It appears that Mexico is now on a path to repeating the mistakes of the past, which speaks to the general ineptitude of man to solve his problems. Even though it seems to be a hopeless situation, Mexico *will* one day find peace. Yet it will not be brought by the government, the drug cartels, or vigilantes trying to defend their territories.

To learn why peace is so elusive today, read *A World in Captivity*, available at rcg.org/awic. This booklet delves into how the cycle of violence will soon be stopped and provides hope to those who eagerly await that day. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

is that *spirit* CAN! Human beings are made of dust, not spirit. Those who are born again are composed of—made of—spirit.

When born as humans, we are delivered from a *physical* mother. When born of spirit, we are delivered from a *spiritual* Mother, the Church. (Carefully read these verses: Galatians 4:26; II John 1:1, 13; Revelation 12:1-5; Hebrews 12:23.)

People are destined to be born as spirit—*like Christ was*—as surely as they are born physically of a human mother—*like Christ was*.

This will become plain.

Because Jesus wanted no room for misunderstanding, He likened spirit to wind. Wind, like spirit, is invisible. It cannot be seen. He told Nicodemus, “The wind blows where it [does], and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes, and where it goes: *so is everyone that is born of the Spirit*” (John 3:8). Those born of spirit will be like wind—they will be invisible! But human beings are flesh and blood, and can be seen.

See how simple this is?

Another comparison is important. Wind often demonstrates enormous POWER. While invisible, its effects are readily seen. The force of hurricanes, typhoons, tornadoes and straight-line winds can be tremendous. But people possess relatively little power. Wind power vastly exceeds that of the strongest human being—or thousands together!

So, there is a limitation on who can actually *see* and *enter* the kingdom. Anyone can see physical things. Therefore, the kingdom cannot be something physical, or everyone could see it. Understand these critical points Jesus made. You must be spirit to see the invisible kingdom of God!

Grasp this about the John 3 account! Jesus was making an exciting *announcement* about the kingdom of God coming to Earth—and that people can enter it. But His message was

received as a threat to religious leaders. They saw themselves losing power to both this kingdom and Jesus because of His influence over the people.

Nicodemus acknowledged, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God” (John 3:2). He admitted that he knew who Jesus was and that God had sent Him. Notice Nicodemus was speaking for more than himself. He said, “*we* know.” He was a Pharisee, and was referring to himself and the other Pharisees who understood who and what Jesus was. These religious leaders well understood that Jesus’ authority to teach the truth and perform miracles came from God. They could not deny God’s power evident in the miracles He performed. But they still resented Him, and called Him a blasphemer, drunkard, heretic, seditionist, bastard, ignorant, demon-possessed, false prophet—and crucified Him!

The Romans usually installed the Pharisees into positions of rulership under their occupying authority. This gave the Pharisees important status and made life generally better for them than the admiring multitudes for whom Jesus taught, healed, cast out demons, and performed other miracles.

Exactly like the Pharisees, many today see the obvious truth of the Bible, yet *choose* to ignore it in order to hold to their own traditions and ideas—and sometimes religious *status*! Many ministers today are no different. The Pharisees felt threatened by the potential for immediate loss of personal power to this new kingdom. This is why Jesus spoke so bluntly when He said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

When Was Jesus Born Again?

Despite the plainness of these verses, some still dispute them. They reject the obvious meaning, claiming that upon “accepting Jesus,” one sees the kingdom in his *mind’s eye*. In addition to ignoring that the kingdom must be entered, this conclusion brings them another serious problem.

If Jesus was not born again when He was “born from the dead,” then

WHY DO YOU EXIST?

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when *else* could He have experienced this? Remember, professing Christians believe one is born again upon conversion.

When did *Christ* experience conversion? When did He repent and accept *Himself* as Savior? No one can explain this!

Since Jesus had the Holy Spirit from begetting in Mary's womb, again, when was He converted? Understand! The Bible clearly teaches the Holy Spirit is given *at conversion*. Yet Jesus had God's Spirit from conception. Would any suggest He could see the kingdom from inside His mother's womb? Did He give His heart to the Lord—meaning to Himself!—as an embryo?

These questions take on greater significance for another reason. True Christians *copy* Christ. The apostle Peter wrote, "Christ...leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (I Pet. 2:21).

It is impossible for Christians to follow Jesus' example of rebirth at conversion because He was never converted in the human sense. He had God's Spirit from the moment His physical existence began.

We have learned another important point about being born again that applies here. Remember, Jesus said, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). This reinforces the earlier verses about Him being born *from the dead*. After His Resurrection and return to heaven, Jesus was *composed of Spirit*—He had become like wind.

You must grasp this! The example that Jesus set—which Christians must follow—is that He was born—again—*from the dead*, not at conversion. Like Christ, we will *also* be composed of spirit—and be like wind.

Christ's Advance Announcement

Before we can delve more deeply into *when* one is born again, some background is needed as a foundation for understanding the big picture of this doctrinal teaching.

Like a newscaster ahead of his time, wherever He went, Jesus continually announced the kingdom of God. It was the subject of most of His parables.

He came announcing a total change in the way the world would be governed at the establishing of God's kingdom. With this change would come unprecedented world peace, happiness and prosperity.

The prophet Malachi spoke of two messengers. Notice: "Behold, I will send MY messenger [John the Baptist], and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord [Jesus], whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even THE Messenger of the covenant [Jesus], whom you delight in..." (Mal. 3:1).

Jesus came as the Messenger. When He commissioned the 12 apostles and sent them to preach, the only instruction He gave was to preach about the kingdom of God. When He later sent 70 more disciples, He also commanded they preach the kingdom.

The terms "kingdom" and "kingdom of God" are found throughout the New Testament. Yet it is astonishing how nearly everyone has lost the knowledge and *meaning* of what they refer to! Like the truth of born again, this understanding has been suppressed for 2,000 years!

What IS the Gospel?

The word "gospel" comes from the Old English term "god-spell" or good news. The word "kingdom" also derives from an Old English term, and simply means "government." In other words, Jesus preached "the good news of the GOVERNMENT of God." World peace, happiness and prosperity for all *will* be *good news* for a mankind that has not known them for 6,000 years!

Jesus came saying, "Repent you, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). But what *is* the true gospel? The *truth* of the gospel has been hidden from the vast majority of professing Christians. Ever since the first century, there has been a conspiracy to deceive would-be Christians about the meaning of the gospel. However shocking, this is true!

Most believe the gospel is about the Person of Jesus. Certainly Jesus *is* an important subject, but He is *not* the gos-

pel. The Bible shows He is preached in conjunction *with* the gospel.

Now notice: "Now after that John [the Baptist] was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the *kingdom of God*" (Mark 1:14). This is the gospel Jesus preached, saying, "Repent you, and *believe the gospel*" (vs. 15). What gospel?—the kingdom of God. Verse 1 refers to, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ..." (Mark 1:1). Jesus' gospel is about the kingdom of God! One must believe *that* gospel to be saved. Counterfeits will not do.

No wonder Jesus answered Nicodemus as He did. Everything He said and taught He tied to the kingdom of God! We have seen Christians will be born again so they can see—or *inherit*—God's kingdom. This much should now be obvious.

The Kingdom of God Explained

But what *is* the kingdom of God? The term has no meaning if it cannot be understood. If Christians inherit it, they should know *what* they are inheriting. Let's make this impossible to misunderstand. In this life, people are born into: (1) a human *family*, and (2) any one of many earthly *kingdoms*. A kingdom is comprised of a nation of people under a government that *rules* the nation.

It is the same with God. At the Resurrection, humans are born into: (1) the God FAMILY, which is also (2) the KINGDOM of God. These are essentially one and the same. The parallel is perfectly clear when comparing the human physical pattern to the divine Spirit pattern.

God has a throne in heaven, from which He rules His kingdom. (Read Isaiah 66:1 and Revelation 3:21, among other verses.) He literally rules the entire universe with Christ. When Christians are born again, they enter *this* kingdom—God's ruling, governing FAMILY!

Are you beginning to see God's awesome purpose for *your* life—what can be *your* inheritance? Our book—*The Awesome Potential of Man*—tells a story that *is* incredible for those who

will simply believe God's Word. Read it online or order your free hardcopy version at rcg.org/tapom.

Daniel Understood

The prophet Daniel understood the kingdom of God involved a *literal* government that would one day rule *real* people and *real* nations on Earth. He held no illusion that this kingdom was merely sentimental fluff or a "warm feeling in the hearts of men." Through a series of dreams and visions, God used him to explain much *special* understanding about how and when His kingdom would come to Earth.

All that Daniel was shown was to be "closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Dan. 12:9). We are now in that time, and there are many proofs of this. To examine just some, read the booklet *Are These the Last Days?* at rcg.org/attld. Daniel's message is for us—today. He reported tremendous news that will affect *you* in your lifetime. Daniel understood and spoke the same gospel Christ preached. It is vital we understand what he said!

Carefully read Daniel 2:28-44. This astonishing, detailed prophecy reveals many things about God's Plan to restore His government to Earth—including the *time sequence* in which this will happen.

It describes a giant man: "This image's head was of fine *gold*, his breast and his arms of *silver*, his belly and his thighs of *brass*, his legs of iron, his feet part of *iron and part of clay*" (Dan. 2:32-33). The construction involves four distinct parts. Next comes a large "stone that smote the image [and] became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (vs. 35). Note that this stone "was cut out *without hands*" (vs. 34) because God, not men, formed it.

The stone shattered the image and replaced it, eventually encompassing the entire Earth. This is obviously the government of God coming to Earth. Daniel is announcing the same gospel—the kingdom of God.

These verses show a succession of *world empires*—kingdoms—depicted by different metals of which

the giant statue was made. First, the Chaldean-Babylonian Empire of *gold*—second, the Medo-Persian Empire of *silver*—third, the Greco-Macedonian of *brass*—and fourth, the Roman Empire of *iron* mixed with clay. The message from history is that these four kingdoms once governed vast areas, with the fourth kingdom largely ruling the whole world just before the kingdom of God is established.

Saints Enter the Kingdom

Daniel wrote much about God's kingdom—and the saints' role in it. He offered a direct connection to *when* Christians will be born again.

Chapter 7, verse 13, speaks of Christ's Return. Just before this, God officially grants Him the authority to rule all nations: "*And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed*" (Dan. 7:14). The apostle John, in Revelation, wrote of this time. Notice: "*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever*" (11:15).

More verses in Daniel 7 are critical. Remember that God's kingdom is foretold to replace the four world-ruling kingdoms of chapter 2: "These great beasts, which are *four*, are *four* kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But *the saints* of the Most High shall *take the kingdom*, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever" (7:17-18).

The ultimate calling of Christians is to join Jesus Christ and share *rulership* in the kingdom of God over all nations and peoples. Truly, Christ is "*King of kings and Lord of lords*" (Rev. 19:16). This includes anyone willing to accept God's *terms* for entering His kingdom.

Verses 19 to 20 shed more light on what happens when the saints return with Christ. Their first responsibility is to replace the "fourth beast," which

rules with the assistance of a "little horn." This is a small, but powerful, religious kingdom—and it is the Babylonish whore who rides the Beast of Revelation 17. This kingdom has ruled all the previous revivals of the Holy Roman Empire. Another vital booklet, *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?* is available at rcg.org/wowitbor. I urge you to read it.

Now notice: "*...the same horn made war with the saints* [the work of the Babylonish woman of Revelation 17:5-6, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came [Christ], and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom]" (Dan. 7:21-22).

Finally, verse 27 confirms what lies ahead for all true Christians: "And the *kingdom* and dominion, and the greatness of the *kingdom* under the whole heaven, *shall be given to the people of the saints* of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

This is the kingdom of God! What could be more plain?

No wonder Jesus taught, "And He that overcomes, and keeps My works unto the end, to him [not others!] will I give *power over the nations*: and he shall *RULE* them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father" (Rev. 2:26-27), and also, "To him that overcomes [no one else!] will I grant to sit with Me *in My throne...*" (3:21).

"In My throne" is used because Christ knew His throne will be on Earth, unlike the Father's, which is in heaven. Luke 1:32 shows Jesus Christ will sit in Jerusalem on David's throne. Many more verses show that the saints will rule with Christ from Jerusalem!

There is still much, *much* more to learn about the truth of when and how one is born again. Read my booklet *What Does "Born Again" Mean?* at rcg.org/wdbam for additional information.

You do not need to be lost in confusion and deception as with so many millions today. You *can* understand. □

ECONOMY & PERSONAL FINANCE

Report: Almost Half of Americans Live Paycheck to Paycheck

A large segment of the American public lives with little or no savings, according to a report by the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED). The findings have raised concerns about the nation's future fiscal condition as poor domestic spending habits could put large numbers of United States households in precarious financial positions.

"...most American families no longer live in fear of losing their jobs or their homes. Yet, these families continue to exist in a state of persistent financial insecurity, making it difficult to look beyond immediate needs and plan for a more secure future. While indicators like unemployment, foreclosure and credit card debt show a slow but steady decline, the percentage of people who do not have a personal financial safety net hasn't budged. Nearly half (44%) of households in the United States are 'liquid asset poor,' meaning they have less than three months' worth of savings—conservatively measured as \$5,887 for a family of four, or three times monthly income at the poverty level," the report stated.

"Liquid asset poverty means there is no 'slack' in a family's budget. If a liquid asset poor family faces an unforeseen expense, such as a broken down car or a medical bill, they have to borrow to cover the tab. For the 56% of consumers who have subprime credit scores, the only option may be to take out a high-cost—often predatory—loan, which can create a cycle of debt and worsen financial insecurity."

"As a nation, we are setting ourselves up for disaster," *Hawaii Tribune-Herald* reported. "With an aging population who has little or no savings, an uncertain economy that relies almost exclusively on consumer spending, and an explosion of welfare spending that has increased, rather than decreased, poverty rates, we are facing a tsunami of the destitute without the means to provide for themselves in later life." □



■ **HARD TIMES:** Above, people wait in line for CAMBA's Beyond Hunger Emergency Food Pantry in the Brooklyn borough of New York City (Feb. 18, 2014). Below, a volunteer gives a man groceries at Curly's House Hope Relief Food Bank in Miami, Florida (Jan. 8, 2014).

PHOTOS: SPENCER PLATT; JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

HEALTH ISSUES

WHO Warns of Global Cancer Upsurge

The World Health Organization (WHO) predicts up to a 70 percent increase in different types of cancer cases across the world within the next 20 years, according to *World Cancer Report 2014*, a publication released by the WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer.

The report "predicts new cancer cases will rise from an estimated 14 million annually in 2012 to 22 million within two decades. Over the same period, cancer deaths are predicted to rise from 8.2 million a year to 13 million" (CNN).

"The latest World Cancer Report says it is implausible to think we can treat our way out of the disease and that the focus must now be on preventing new cases," the *Guardian* stated.

"Even the richest countries will struggle to cope with the [spiraling] costs of treatment and care for patients, and the lower income countries, where numbers are expected to be highest, are ill-equipped for the burden to come."

According to the agency, half of all cancer cases are preventable.

"The World Cancer Research Fund has observed an 'alarming' level of ignorance when it comes to the role of diet in developing cancer," *International Business Times* wrote.

Referencing the report, the article added that "smoking, infections, obesity, alcohol, air pollution, [and] radiation are said to be the major sources of 'preventable' cancer."

Rising Cancer Rates

Cancer rates worldwide are rising, but more than half of projected cases could be prevented by changes in eating, smoking and drinking habits, according to a new report.

Cancer cases

Estimated number of new cases per year, in millions



Cancer deaths

Estimated number of deaths per year, in millions



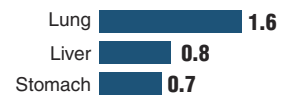
Most diagnosed

In millions, 2012



Most deadly

In millions, 2012



Incidence rate, by sex

Rate per 100,000, 2012



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Source: International Agency for Research on Cancer, World Health Organization
Graphic: Pat Carr

"The rise of cancer worldwide is a major obstacle to human development and well-being," Dr. Christopher Wild, director of the International Agency for Research on Cancer and co-editor of the publication stated in a release. "These new figures and projections send a strong signal that immediate action is needed to confront this human disaster, which touches every community worldwide, without exception." □

SOCIETY & LIFESTYLES

Belgium Legalizes Euthanasia for Children

Belgium is the first country to allow euthanasia for patients of any age. In February, the Chamber of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to extend the country's already existing euthanasia law to children under the age of 18.

"Brussels Archbishop Andre-Joseph Leonard, head of the Catholic Church in Belgium, asked at a prayer vigil...why the state wanted to give minors such responsibility when they had to wait until 18 for many other legal rights," according to an article in Australia's *Canberra Times*.

"The law says adolescents cannot make important decisions on economic or emotional issues, but suddenly they

have become able to decide that someone should make them die,' he said."

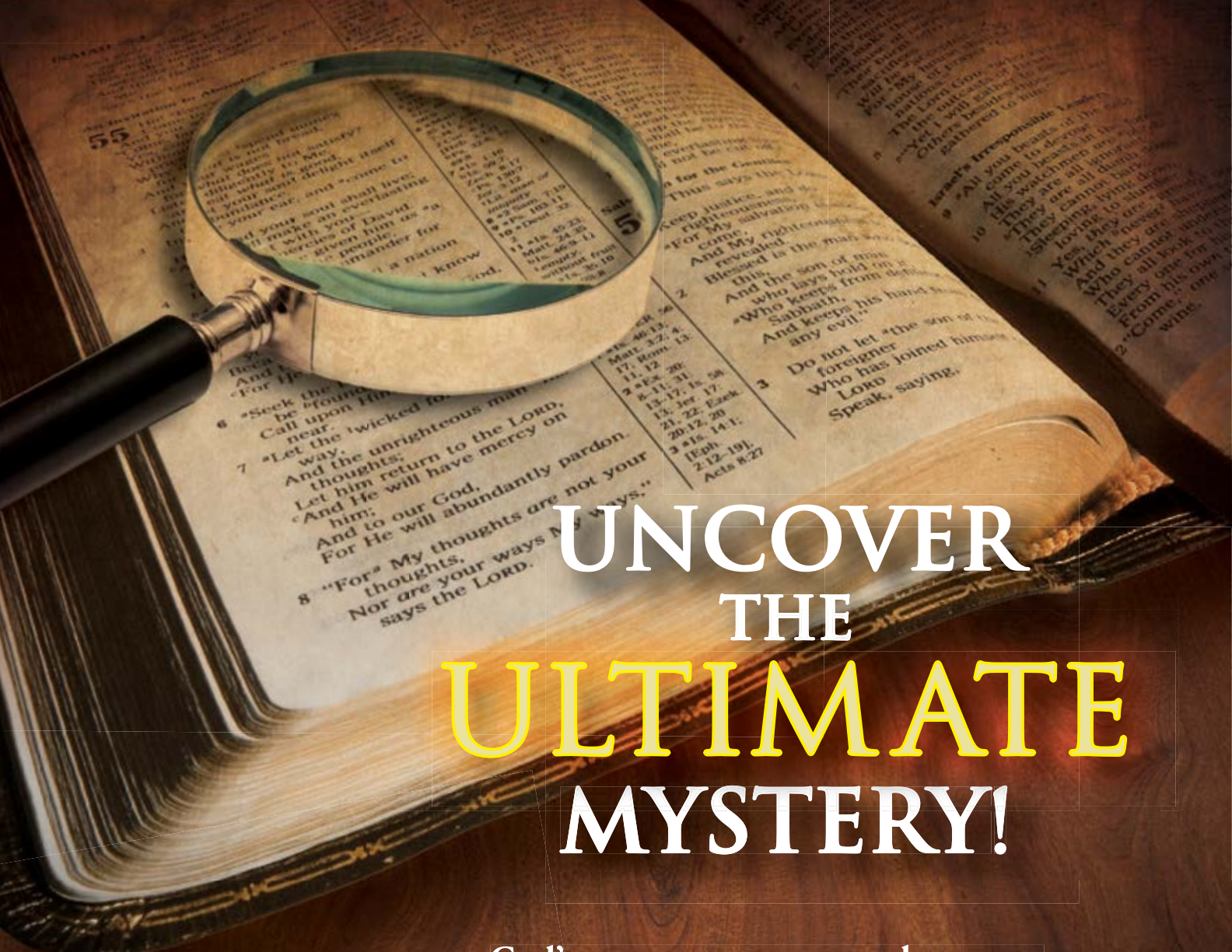
House members voted 86 to 44, with 12 abstentions, to allow children who are terminally ill and suffering great pain the choice of being put to death. Until this point, only adults have had this option. The amendment requires that both parents consent, and that a team of doctors and psychologists verify a child is mature enough to comprehend the meaning of it.

Though the law in Belgium does not specify at what age a child can ask to be put to death, it is not the only country to offer the option to minors. Children as young as 12 can request assistance to end their lives

in the Netherlands, reported *The Independent*.

Dr. Stefaan van Gool, a pediatrician at the University of Leuven, was one of 170 pediatricians who signed an open letter that urged parliament to postpone its vote. He told the newspaper that the law amounts to "giving lethal injections to children."

"I have never had such a type of question [from a child] so I don't see the urgency," he told *The Independent*, adding that he also feared that vulnerable children could become victims of misinterpretations of the law: "If one opens the door, you have no control any more of what is going through this door." □

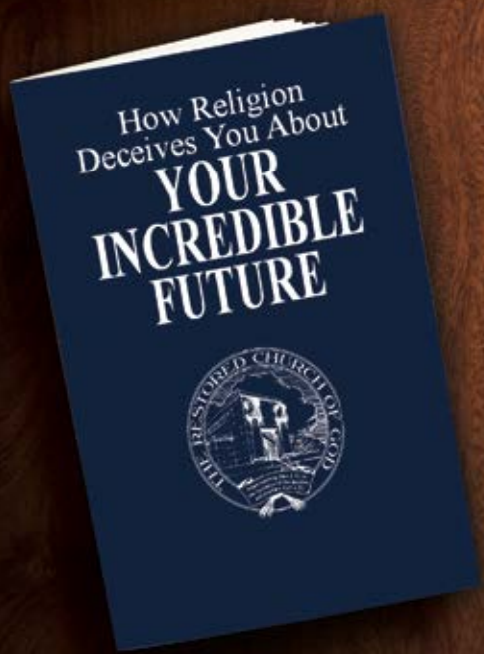


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