MAY-JUNE 2017

THE

REAL TRUTH™

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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

BROKEN NEWS

Who Can You Trust in a Post-truth Era?

Why Stopping Terrorism Is Harder than You Think

Brexit's Two-year Countdown

The Fight Against Famine

Should You Ask the Public for Prayers?

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REAL TRUTH™
A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

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A R T I C L E S

■ **PREPARING FOR A SPLIT:** European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker shakes hands with Commission Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier ahead of Brexit talks in Strasbourg, France (April 5, 2017).

PHOTO: SEBASTIEN BOZON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Brexit's Two-year Countdown
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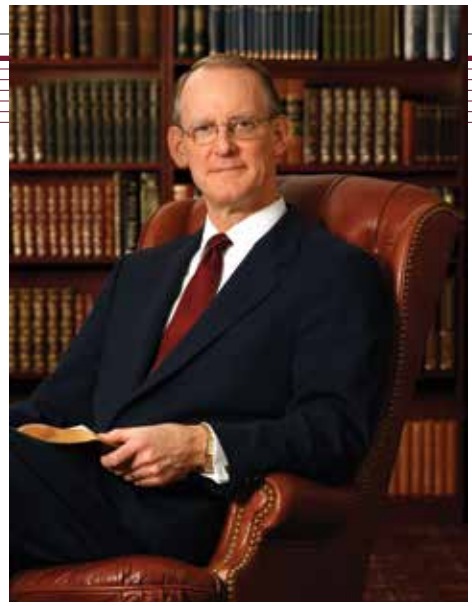


Revelation—A Book of Mystery Revealed!

UNREST GROWS daily around the world. Terrorism is mounting. And bad news increases, while good news is *scarce*. Conditions worsen almost daily!

Man has tapped the power of the atom. Science and technology have run amok, producing more horrific new inventions. More and more countries possess weapons of mass destruction. This danger is compounded because mistrust and strife between nations has never been greater.

Also, human decadence and immorality, poverty, famine, disease, ethnic rivalries, crime and violence are exploding. Where are these trends leading? Will human life survive?

What does the future hold? Everyone wants to know. Many have opinions, but few recognize where to find the answers. Others *think* they understand the prophecies of the Bible—including the book of Revelation. Yet all popular human interpretations of this book, at best, border on ludicrous. They are a complete jumble of ideas in which a little truth is mixed with much error! Some are almost painful to read—yet major magazines report that great numbers do believe these dangerous, counterfeit scenarios.

What is the *truth* about prophecy? Sobering world conditions make this question loom larger than ever. Nothing that has occurred over the past 6,000 years even remotely compares to what is yet to come upon this world!

The Bible does foretell a time of world peace, happiness, abundance and universal prosperity. Many may think there is no hope for this world—but there is! Wonderful good news lies beyond today's bad news. The great Creator will soon intervene and save humanity from itself. But just beforehand, and lasting through the initial phase of the intervention, world trouble will greatly increase—eventually intensifying to staggering proportions. Unexpected and cataclysmic events will *shake* the entire world! Civilization will change forever.

But understand: Contrary to the assumptions of millions of people who do not understand Revelation, the *next* time of trouble—which Christ described as "*great* tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21)—is *not* the time described in Revelation! Virtually no one knows this. The prophet Jeremiah calls this imminent time that of "*Jacob's* trouble" (Jer. 30:7). Jacob consists of the modern tribes of

Israel (Gen. 32:28)—primarily the English-speaking peoples of the West. (My book *America and Britain in Prophecy* offers extensive proof regarding national identities. It can be read at *rcg.org/aabibp*.)

While all nations are involved—the awesome power and deception of the antichrist worldwide is what will come *first*. Jacob's punishment is God's focus beginning immediately after. It will be the worst time of all time for a *specific group of nations*. Almost no one knows there are *two* great times of punishment coming, with the first centered on those descended from the patriarch Jacob with punishment soon after on all nations. The second overall time of punishment is entirely on all nations of the world. Revelation clearly shows events that strike the whole world from the beginning. This will become plain.

God has not left mankind without a SOURCE of answers that reveals in detail what lies ahead. Tragically, believing things will eventually "turn out all right," many hide their eyes, ignore God's words, and choose to pursue pleasure and the accumulation of material goods. But for the short-term, things will *not* turn out all right. World conditions are—and will become—far more serious than any could realize.

God understands human nature and where it always leads when left to its own devices. This allows Him to know, and to *guide*, the awesome future events that will occur from now on!

Timing

It has become God's time to REVEAL what lies ahead—short- and long-term. The stage is set—and He has lifted the curtain on the future. Revelation describes terrible plagues and Earth-shattering events!

But careful study reveals they *follow* a long period of God's Kingdom on Earth. A just God would not bring such undiluted punishment on an entire mankind who did not first have opportunity to learn and practice His way of life.

After the above-described "great tribulation" afflicting the modern descendants of ancient Israel, the territory of God's Kingdom will spread to encompass the whole Earth, ushering in unprecedented worldwide peace *in our time*. (My booklet *How God's Kingdom Will Come – The Untold Story!* makes clear God's Kingdom arrives long before the events of Revelation. Read it at *rcg.org/hgkwc*.)

During His Kingdom, God will give mankind *everything*—peace, prosperity and happiness. But after generations of reaping these blessings, vast numbers will choose their *own way*, turning their backs on God. The punishment detailed in Revelation results, and sweeps away all rebels ahead of the next phase of God's plan—His 1,000-year (millennial) reign (Rev. 20:4).

However, terrible times do now lie just ahead, again, first descending on all nations through the rise of a counterfeit god called the Man of Sin. (See II Thessalonians 2:3-12 and all of Habakkuk 2.) But make no mistake! The monstrous antichrist is *not* punishment on the scale of Revelation.

With this in mind, recognize that the events of Revelation described in this Personal are *far in the future*. But they can be understood NOW!

A Mystery Book

Signs, seals, symbols, vials, visions, trumpets, thrones, plagues, angels, beasts, heads, horns, witnesses, woes, wars, numbers, multitudes, messages and *mystery*! Revelation contains all of these terms. But what do they mean? Crucial background is necessary to set up all there is to be learned.

Most believe Revelation is sealed, *closed* from understanding. It is called a MYSTERY BOOK *without meaning*. Yet it is filled with meaning and answers.

You will be intrigued—even fascinated—by the clarity of what can be known from Revelation. Its terms *can* be unlocked—if you have the necessary *keys*!

One-third of the Bible is PROPHECY—the future written in advance! The Bible is approximately 750,000 words, with about 250,000 devoted to many, many prophecies. Almost half the books of the Old Testament are included in either the so-called *major* or *former* prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) or the *minor* or *latter* prophets (Daniel, Hosea, Joel and 10 others).

The apostle Paul explained that the New Testament Church was "built on the foundation of the apostles *and prophets*" (Eph. 2:20). Since the Church stands partly on the words of the prophets, Christians are to understand prophecy. If God commands men to "live by EVERY WORD of God"—and He does (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; Deut. 8:3)—He would not *exclude* a third of it!

The prophet Daniel spoke of a time when "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (12:4). This has happened! Speaking of the end time, he wrote, "…*the wise shall understand*" (vs. 10).

Understand. God has opened up—REVEALED!—to His servants what lies ahead. He may want *you* to understand. He does not want those who obey Him confused, ignorant or fearful of the future.

So then we ask: What are the wise to understand? What KEYS *open up* the Bible? The world knows nothing of them! Thus, millions claim the meaning of Revelation cannot be explained. How could they understand without the keys?

Imagine. 42 percent of Americans actually believe they can consult *the dead* about matters involving the future. But mankind refuses to seek and consult GOD. Only He can reveal the future. Mankind cannot, through intelligence, human reasoning, or scientific discovery, know or discern events to come. And many "religious" people believe the book of Revelation offers no help anyway because it cannot be understood.

God is working out a Master Plan involving every human being. But Daniel adds, "*none* of the wicked shall understand" (12:10). God will

Please see ***PERSONAL****, page 28*

Did God Throw Out the Ten Commandments?

You can know for sure! Order your free copy of the book *The Ten Commandments – "Nailed to the Cross" or Required for Salvation?* at *rcg.org/syottc.*

BROKEN

Who Can You Trust in a Post-truth Era?

Fake news. Political bias. Relative truth.
The media landscape is more confusing than ever.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER AND DAVID J. LITAVSKY

"WHAT IS truth?" Pontius Pilate asked this question to Jesus Christ hours before His crucifixion. The gospel of John records that the Roman governor, who ruled Judea from AD 26 to 37, walked away immediately after he stated this.

Pilate's hasty exit meant either he did not want to hear the answer—or that he did not think there was one.

Sounds like today, doesn't it? We live in a "post-truth" age. The term was even Oxford Dictionaries' 2016 word of the year. It means "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief."

If it *feels right*, the thinking goes, it must be true.

"Post-truth" provides the perfect description of today's social landscape. Many do not want to hear the truth if it challenges their beliefs. Others think truth can change depending on an individual's perspective and beliefs. Most everyone, though, is dead certain they are right and the other side is utterly wrong.

The result is a mess of obstacles that genuine news watchers must navigate to get the whole story.

Look at "fake news." The term is bandied about constantly—both by the left and right sides of the political spectrum—to point out perceived or actual media bias.

The debate over fake news goes all the way to the White House. President Donald Trump has labeled a number of news outlets "fake" because of what he sees as vitriolic bias against him. The mainstream media fires back dissecting, attacking and rebutting every comment and action by the commander-in-chief.

Adding fuel to the fire is that news organizations, government officials, and individuals refuse to admit their own biases.

Reputable, long-standing newspapers and magazines have been caught reporting partially or wholly false information. Objectively, a news reader can know these organizations work hard to fact check and vet their articles. But seeing them oblivious to their biases and twisting facts to support their own agendas—seemingly more and more—makes it difficult to know who and what to believe.

Case in point: When researching for this article, we typed "trust in news media" into the Google search bar. A result from Gallup stated this: "Americans' trust and confidence in the mass media 'to report the news fully, accurately and fairly' has dropped to its lowest level in Gallup polling history, with 32% saying they have a great deal or fair amount of trust in the media. This is down eight percentage points from last year."

This seemingly cut-and-dried case quickly becomes confusing when reading further down in the search engine results. Just look at the title of two articles from prominent news outlets that appeared side by side:

- "Poll: More Americans Trust the Media Than Donald Trump"
- "Trump Administration Seen as More Truthful Than News Media: Poll"

Confusing, right?

The discrepancy between these two results could be for a variety of reasons. *NPR* dissected the differences and posited that it might be because the questions were worded differently and the polls occurred on separate days. Ultimately, they stated, it is poll *trends* that matter, not one result.

Yet many news organizations tend to zero in on the latest isolated statistic that proves their point—often sidestepping contrary studies. This means readers get a skewed version of the truth.

Cherry-picking facts is just one symptom of the post-truth world in which we live. There is also sloppy reporting, demonizing contrary viewpoints, and outright fake news stories.

Pilate's question is more relevant today than ever before: "What *is* truth?"

What Is Fake?

Take another look at fake news, this time in its purest sense: articles that are completely fabricated. These are posted to websites that appear legitimate and saturate Google, Twitter and Facebook.

Such stories are always dramatic and often heinous. Take for example headlines leading up to the last presidential election: "Clinton's inner circle includes child traffickers, pedophiles and…members of a sex cult." Shortly after the election, claims against Mr. Trump included that he planned a military invasion of Mexico.

Many buy into these stories completely. One fake-news author, when told by a *60 Minutes* host during an interview that his stories were false, replied, "They're definitely not fake."

"They're not lies at all. 100-percent true."

The interviewer asked, "Do you believe that, or do you say that because it's important for marketing your website?"

He answered: "Oh, I believe it. I don't say anything that I don't believe."

While fake news is often ridiculous, it has a lot of traction in society. Reputable news agencies even mistakenly post fake stories to the web, only to be forced to issue retractions later—or simply change their stories online without anyone knowing.

The reason fake news or half-fake news is not going anywhere is that it usually gets clicked, shared and retweeted more often than your average story—and much faster too. Also, in the internet age, the ability to "scoop" a story is more difficult than ever. To beat other outlets to the punch, news agencies will sometimes post a sentence on social media about the "news" or even just the headline. No further context is given.

News releases strive for emotional impact over factual content, and thus are often inflammatory or controversial. Yet when looking deeper into the content "above the fold"—the term used to describe the eye-catching material placed in the upper half of the newspaper—factual information is often lacking.

But not all news is *completely* false.

Another common tactic, and what *The Observer* considers "the biggest problem the media currently faces," is to select certain statements or information and take them out of context to fit a narrative.

Usually these narratives involve commonly heard, dramatic themes that elicit emotional responses. In a post-truth world, when feelings matter more than facts, this is a powerful tool.

An example is when one of America's top 10 newspapers reported that Russia cyber-hacked an electricity grid in Vermont. While it was based on an event that did happen, any involvement by the Russians has since been disproved, including by the power facility in question. Yet it continues to be believed by some.

The *Observer* reported that this is "an example of *extremely* sloppy reporting that appeared to support… much of the mainstream media's narrative about Russia."

A problem for news watchers is that there *is* good reporting out there. Yet interlaced in some of the best reporting is also bias—*everywhere*. Even newspapers that claim to be unbiased or purveyors of truth employ many of the same methods of fake news writers—omitting the full story, painting the other side in a negative light, refusing to admit their own deficiencies, and only using examples that make their side look right and the other wrong.

Political bias is nothing new—it has long been a facet of the news. But outlets used to be upfront about their political and moral beliefs. In fact, "In the nineteenth century, most newspapers were explicitly linked to a particular political party and the economic interests of the publisher," the Hoover Institution, a public policy think tank based in Stanford University in California, reported.

Traditionally, newspapers overtly ascribed to a politician or party. Yet

competition between newspapers of equal standing and credentials ensured both viewpoints were represented.

Today, we are moving back to this old model of bias in reporting, with one major difference: few want to admit it.

The Hoover Institution noted another change to the industry that began in the 1960s. At that time, most journalists began attending universities where they were almost exclusively spoon-fed progressive political ideology. From this birthed the idea that journalists were there to shape public thinking and push agendas rather than simply report the facts.

As a result, there is decreasing value placed on presenting news with *clearly stated bias*. In other words, news media will not admit their biases and instead try to pass themselves off as neutral, objective and politically centered.

The Hoover Institution stated: "The end result is the mainstream media today: for-profit businesses that think of themselves as morally and intellectually superior not just to other businesses, but to the organs of government and the mass of gullible voters who put politicians in office."

While this plain-spoken language makes a valid point, most journalists are not malicious. They sincerely feel what they believe is right and want to help others to see it their way too—often in an attempt to fix problems in the world. Both liberal and conservative writers fall into this trap.

The problem is that debate never ends up being noble or courteous. Instead, it caricaturizes and villainizes the other side. This "stab in the back," "how could anyone believe them," kind of reporting can seem like fun and games—were it not for the consequences that have befallen society because of it.

Polarized People

The cut-throat partisanship that fills news media drives a wedge among the people it is supposed to inform.

According to "the National Election Study, a long-running survey that tracks Americans' political opinions and behavior…until a few decades ago, people's feelings about their party and the opposing party were not too different," *The New York Times* reported. "But starting in the 1980s, Americans began to report increasingly negative opinions of their opposing party."

"Since then, that polarization has grown even stronger. The reasons for that are unclear. 'I suspect that part of it has to do with the rise of constant 24-hour news,' [Sean Westwood, a Dartmouth professor,] said."

Mr. Westwood also found that "in the modern era we view party identity as something akin to gender, ethnicity or race—the core traits that we use to describe ourselves to others." He said this extends to the point of selecting relationships with people who are in the same political party.

Last year, Pew Research Center conducted a poll of Democrat and Republican party members, and found that "views of the opposing party are now more negative than at any point in nearly a quarter of a century."

"For the first time in surveys dating to 1992, majorities in both parties express not just unfavorable but *very* unfavorable views of the other party. And today, sizable shares of both Democrats and Republicans say the other party stirs feelings of not just frustration, but fear and anger."

Stunningly, nearly all the statistics reveal that "negative feelings about the opposing party are as powerful—and in many cases more powerful—as are positive feelings about one's own party."

One of the figures focused on how party members view their own party versus how they view the other party. Pew reported, "Fully 70% of Democrats say that Republicans are more closed-minded than other Americans," while Republicans say "Democrats are more immoral (47%), lazier (46%) and more dishonest (45%)."

The tangible result in society has been that each side cannot work with—or even develop relationships with—the other. In fact, most will not even accept that the other side's viewpoint is legitimate.

This is reflected by the fact that even many romantic relationships run along party lines. According to a Stanford University study, most marriages are between two individuals of the same political identity and only 9 percent of marriages are between a Democrat and Republican.

Why Is This Happening?

One of the greatest reasons the world is more divided than ever before is the internet, which allows something called "confirmation bias" to run amuck.

"It is a universal element of the human condition that we seek out individuals who are similar to ourselves," *Financial Post* explained. "People who share our values, traditions, culture, religious beliefs, political leanings, and even entertainment preferences.

"The upside of this type of behaviour is that we tend to lead more enjoyable lives and feel more fulfilled because we are surrounded by others who validate our existence.

"The downside is that we lead more sheltered lives with little adventure since we don't feel the need to broaden our horizons or seek better alternatives to common challenges."

This confirmation bias—the tendency to seek and accept information that supports pre-established beliefs and to avoid anything that counters them—comes in many forms. The notion, *I am right, and people agree with me*, triggers a feel-good response.

"…people are prone to believe what they want to believe," *Psychology Today* reported. "Seeking to confirm our beliefs comes naturally, while it feels strong and counterintuitive to look for evidence that contradicts our beliefs. This explains

why opinions survive and spread."

Confirmation bias also determines each person's political identity and how they watch news. Naturally, people are driven to hear stories reflecting their own pre-established political viewpoints.

Tom Nichols, an author and professor at the U.S. Naval War College in Rhode Island described this process in an article for *MarketWatch*: "Take, for example, a fairly common American kitchen-table debate: the causes of unemployment. Bring up the problem of joblessness with almost any group of ordinary American voters, and every possible intellectual problem will rear its head."

In this scenario, he said, one person would ascribe to the belief that unemployment is purely the result of laziness encouraged by providing benefits. Another would firmly believe it is the result of a corrupt system and economic inequality that could only be fixed through wealth redistribution.

Each person's viewpoint would be backed by personal experiences confirming what he believes.

"There's no way to win this argument because in the end, there are no answers that will satisfy everyone," Mr. Nichols stated. "It's true that unemployment benefits suppress the urge to work in at least some people; it's also true that some corporations have a history of ruthlessness at the expense of their workers, whose reliance on benefits is reluctant and temporary. Unable to cope with this level of nuance and unwilling to see their own biases, most people will simply drive each other crazy arguing rather than accept answers that contradict what they already think about the subject."

Confirmation bias is why fake news and media bias is so dangerous.

Jeff Green, a CEO for an advertising firm that helps companies stay away from fraudulent sites, has examined several fake news claims. *60 Minutes* reported that Mr. "Green's analysis showed fake news consumers tend to stay in, what he calls, Internet echo chambers, reading similar articles rather than reaching for legitimate news."

Even if there are hundreds of reports written that prove otherwise, a person who already believes in some-

thing will latch on to *one* website, article or even just a headline or out-of-context quote that goes along with what he already feels.

And with mediums such as Facebook, which gives users control over what they can access, people are being driven deeper into their biases.

"Unlike…real life—where interaction with those who disagree with you on political matters is an inevitability," *The Guardian* reported, "Facebook users can block, mute and unfriend any outlet or person that will not further bolster their current worldview.

"Even Facebook itself sees the segmentation of users along political lines on its site—and synchronizes it not only with the posts users see, but with the advertisements they're shown."

In addition, since social media sites base their news posts on algorithms—the number of people who click—others are more easily galvanized into stories that seem popular. When a piece has lots of clicks, it seems much more likely to be legitimate.

All of this traffic is a major bonus for news writers as it generates revenue as well as a following. It also validates fake news writers' and biased reporters' jobs since they feel as though they are doing society a noble service by delivering information people feel they *need* to receive.

But the consequence for those who linger too long in a "bias bubble" has the effect of, as one opinion writer put it in an article published by *The Huffington Post*, making one "think that people who don't share your beliefs are clearly idiots."

Confirmation bias is natural, and necessary to prevent us from having to constantly question and requestion everything. Yet it is difficult to work against this tendency when we must face facts that go against our preconceived notions.

How can you know whether you have the truth when the authenticity of the information out there is so questionable?

The Source

Go back to Pontius Pilate speaking to Jesus. The governor was interrogating Christ regarding charges of plotting against Rome, which were falsely brought against Him by the Jewish elite.

Just before Pilate's sarcastic questioning of truth, he had asked Jesus if He was really a king.

Christ's response is found in John 18: "You say that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, *that I should bear witness unto the truth*. Every one that is *of the truth* hears My voice" (vs. 37).

The first half of this verse is Jesus saying that He would one day be a king. In fact, He spoke constantly during His ministry about the "gospel of the Kingdom"—His soon-coming Kingdom. But He was also saying that He came to teach the truth and that people can be "of the truth."

One chapter earlier, Jesus had already given the answer to Pilate's question in a prayer to the Father: "Your word"—the Bible—"is truth" (17:17).

These are all bold statements! If true, they would mean God's Word is THE definitive source of truth.

Yet Jesus Christ does not want people to blindly follow Him, or the beliefs of those who claim to represent Him, without proving His Word is truth.

Notice the command in I Thessalonians 5:21: "PROVE ALL THINGS; hold fast that which is good."

Millions claim they believe the Bible, but do not base their religious beliefs and traditions on a sound understanding of God's Word. Yet this verse is a challenge to prove it for yourself.

One of the greatest ways to verify the Bible's validity is through fulfilled prophecy, which requires placing the record of history next to Scripture. Over and over, God has said He would do something ahead of time—and then has brought it to pass.

Prove this for yourself! The booklet *Bible Authority…Can It Be Proven?* will walk you through this process so you can have bedrock certainty that God's Word contains *the* truth. Read it at *rcg.org/bacibp*.

You Can Know

Not all of prophecy is about specific events. Much of it is about *trends* that will occur at different time periods. Numerous verses even speak to our time now—the next few years!

Many prophetic conditions ultimately culminate after ratcheting up. This is happening with the "post-truth" trend.

Isaiah wrote of a time when "judgment is turned away backward, and justice stands afar off: for *truth is fallen in the street*, and equity cannot enter" (59:14).

Truth has fallen! Few even yearn for truth in news reporting anymore—let alone God's truth.

Read verse 4: "None calls for justice, *nor any pleads for truth*: they trust in vanity, and *speak lies*; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity."

As we plunge deeper into the mire of the post-truth age, honesty will disappear until, as verse 15 states, "truth fails."

Ask yourself, how much longer until this occurs? We already live in a time when people use "their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words" (Psa. 64:3).

Think of the hateful sound bites, scathing headlines, and vicious social media posts you see every day. These are all meant to gut their victims or pierce them through with bitter words.

But there is one place you can get the news filtered through the lens of the Bible: *The Real Truth* magazine.

As this age grows darker, we will continue to produce articles that rise above political debates and personal opinions. We will bring you God's mind on subjects to better help you understand the world today.

In addition, The Restored Church of God, which publishes this magazine, has the largest biblically based websites on Earth—all designed to help you live God's Way. Visit *rcg.org* to delve deeply into His mind on almost any subject.

You can know the TRUTH! □

Brexit's Two-year COUNTDOWN

THE RELATIONSHIP between the United Kingdom and the European Union will be tested throughout the next two years as they work together to make Britain's transition out of the EU as smooth as possible.

Since Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty was invoked at the end of March, which officially started the countdown to the UK's EU departure, it is clear this will be a long and difficult road.

"For the next two years, there will be discussion, debate and most probably disagreements as EU and UK negotiators attempt to reach an agreement on the country's relationship with the bloc," *The Week* reported.

Negotiators for each side will attempt to cut a deal that will meet both of their needs.

"Unpicking 43 years of treaties and agreements covering thousands of different subjects was never going to be a straightforward task," *BBC* reported.

"It is further complicated by the fact that it has never been done before and negotiators will, to some extent, be making it up as they go along.

"The post-Brexit trade deal is likely to be the most complex part of the negotiation because it needs the unanimous approval of more than 30 national and regional parliaments across Europe, some of whom may want to hold referendums."

For her part, Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May has already made clear what her nation's priorities will be.

In a January 2017 speech, she laid out 12 points indicating Britain's desire to establish independence from the bloc on issues such as immigration, lawmaking and trade. She stated: "Brexit must mean control of the number of people who come to Britain from Europe," "Leaving the European Union will mean that our laws will be made in Westminster, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast," and, "It is time for Britain to

■ **THE VOTE:** European Parliament members take part in a voting session regarding Brexit negotiations in Strasbourg, France (April 5, 2017).
PHOTO: SEBASTIEN BOZON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Article 50 Triggered: What Brexit May Look Like

The Norway Model: Norway is in the European Economic Area, allowing it partial access to the EU's Single Market. Norway also contributes financially to the EU and is part of Europe's open-border area.

Bilateral Agreement: The UK could negotiate its own trade agreement with the EU, like Switzerland, Canada and Turkey, with varying amounts of integration.

WTO Membership: If no specific agreement is reached, the UK would trade with the EU through the World Trade Organization, without any of the special privileges of EU membership.

● Full Participation
◐ Partial

	Vote on EU Law	Tariff-free Trade	Customs-free Trade	Level Playing Field Regulations	Shared Law Enforcement Programs	Free Movement of People	Schengen Border-free Area	Financial Contribution to EU	Eurozone (Euro as Currency)
Current UK EU Membership	●	●	●	●	●	●		◐	
Standard EU Membership	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Norway		◐		◐	◐	●	●	◐	
Bilateral Agreement									
Switzerland		◐		◐	◐	●	●	◐	
Canada		◐		◐					
Turkey		◐	◐	◐		◐			
WTO Membership									

Source: Her Majesty's Government

Graphic: Tribune News Service

get out into the world and rediscover its role as a great, global, trading nation."

Other points indicated that Mrs. May intends to maintain strong ties with the EU: "We will pursue a bold and ambitious Free Trade Agreement with the European Union," "We will welcome agreement to continue to collaborate with our European partners on major science, research and technology initiatives," and, "We will continue to work closely with our European allies in foreign and defence policy even as we leave the EU itself."

In a separation letter sent to European Council President Donald Tusk in March, Mrs. May added that the EU and the UK must maintain a "deep and special partnership." While she said the move was made "to restore, as we see it, our national self-determination," she also emphasized that "we are not leaving Europe—and we want to remain committed partners and allies to our friends across the continent."

Long Process

Now that the article of the treaty has been invoked, the UK and EU are expected to reach an overall agreement by March 2019.

One of the first areas in which they will need to reach a consensus is the matter regarding outstanding payments. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker expects the UK to deliver 50 billion British pounds to the Union before talks can continue. The EU has already allocated these funds for future spending.

Yet Brexit secretary David Davis told the *BBC* that the UK would "meet our international obligations, but we expect also our rights to be respected too."

"I don't think we're going to be seeing that sort of money change hands," he said.

Other major areas in which the two will have to reach a consensus are the status of EU nationals living in the UK and the UK's future trading relationship with the European power bloc.

"The treatment of EU nationals post-Brexit will be one of the first, and potentially most controversial, parts of the eventual talks," *The Week* reported, as "neither [side] will want to be seen as persecuting people who have made their life in another country."

The European Commission "said it was presumed that UK promises to protect the rights of EU nationals already in the country would include the right for those who have previously lived there to return, and for current and future spouses and dependants to join those already in the country," *The Guardian* stated.

Regarding trade, Mrs. May "has said Britain aims to leave the single market and most of the customs union in favour of agreeing a bespoke free trade deal for individual industrial sectors such as the automotive and pharmaceuticals industries" (ibid.).

However, EU guidelines state a non-member "cannot have the same rights and enjoy the same benefits as a member" and "there can be no 'cherry picking.'" This would prevent the UK from making trade deals with individual member states.

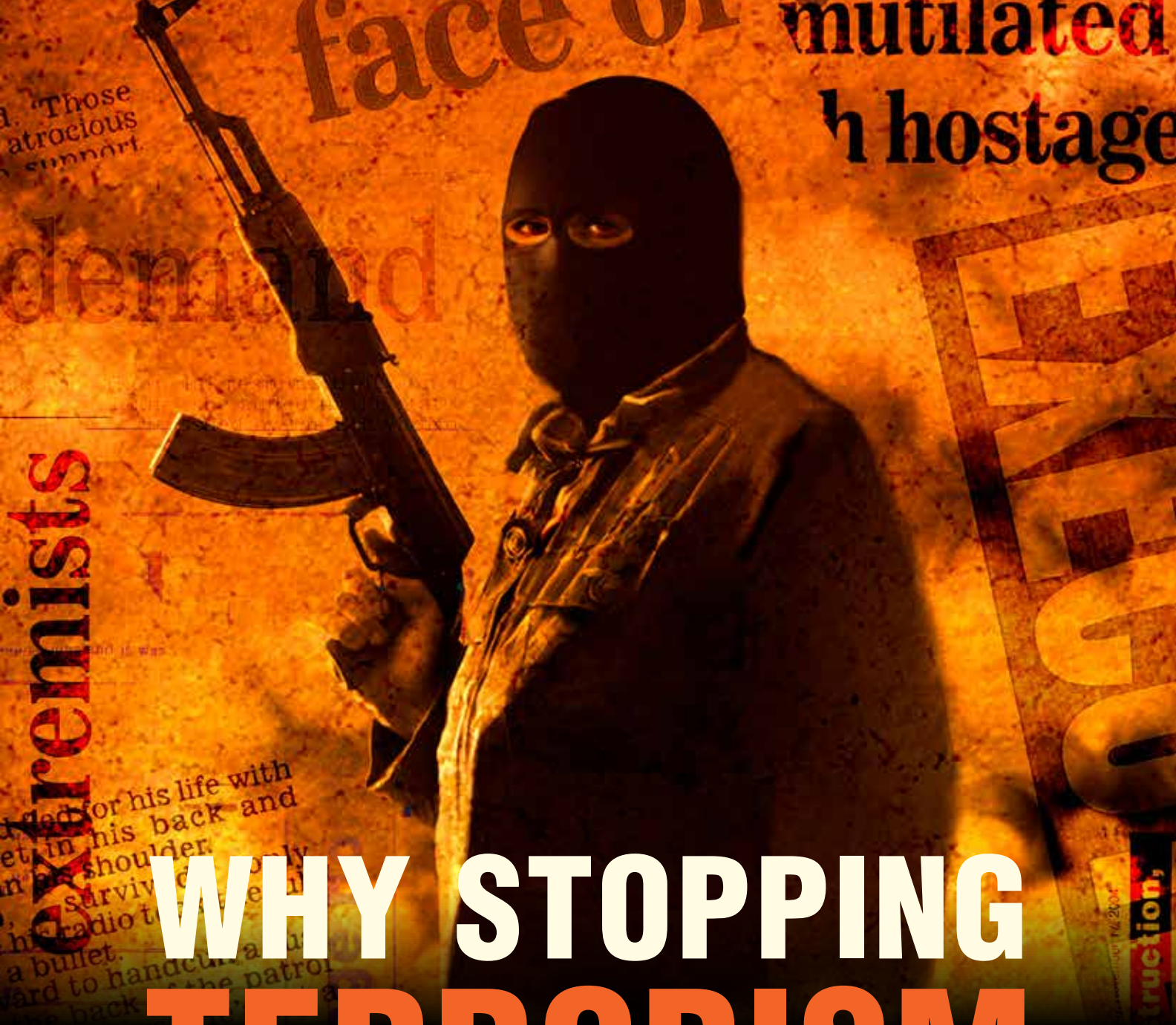
At the end of April, President Tusk convened and chaired a meeting of the EU's 27 prime ministers and presidents to establish the EU's position before talks with the UK.

During the next nearly 24 months, EU law will still stand in the United Kingdom until it ceases being a member. In addition, Britain will continue to abide by EU treaties and laws, yet not take part in any decision-making.

The UK will officially separate from the EU on March 29, 2019. Both parties, along with each EU member state, must formally agree to the terms within that time.

Mr. Tusk stated that talks would be "difficult, complex and sometimes confrontational," but that the bloc would not seek to punish Britain.

"The task before us is momentous but it should not be beyond us," Mrs. May stated in her letter to Mr. Tusk in March. "After all, the institutions and the leaders of the European Union have succeeded in bringing together a continent blighted by war into a union of peaceful nations, and supported the transition of dictatorships to democracy. Together, I know we are capable of reaching an agreement about the UK's rights and obligations as a departing member state, while establishing a deep and special partnership that contributes towards the prosperity, security and global power of our continent." □



WHY STOPPING TERRORISM IS HARDER THAN YOU THINK

Despite intense worldwide focus and attention, the fight against terrorism drags on. A conversation with a terrorism expert reveals the complexities of the issue.

BY DR. JAMES F. PASTOR, PH.D., J.D., AND EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

Boston. San Bernardino. Paris. Orlando. Berlin. Istanbul. Fort Lauderdale. London. Saint Petersburg. Stockholm. No longer just locations stretching across the globe, these cities now call to mind tragedy. Each fell victim to a terror episode, leaving them to be associated with carnage, controversy and confusion as to why it happened, how it could have happened, and who caused it.

Since the attacks of 9/11 in New York City—when many awoke to the reality of terrorism—authorities have endeavored to prevent the next attack. Though law enforcement can almost certainly claim victories in thwarting numerous plots—people only remember the occasional failures. Billions of dollars are being poured into prevention efforts yet terrorists seem to remain one step ahead. Terrorism is rampant, unpredictable and destructive—and we are virtually helpless to stop it.

To shed more light on the issue, *Real Truth* managing editor Edward Winkfield spoke with Dr. James Pastor, a *Real Truth* contributor and terrorism expert. Dr. Pastor spent nearly four decades of his career in law enforcement and dealt personally with the issues and effects of terrorism. The first part of the discussion is presented here, with a second part to follow in the coming months.

Edward Winkfield: Thank you, Dr. Pastor, for taking the time to speak with me. We have wanted to pick your brain on this difficult yet pervasive subject for our *Real Truth* readers for quite some time. I know that terrorism is a subject we all hear about, especially after a tragic event. However, I also think it is a complex and widespread topic that is difficult for the layperson to fully wrap his mind around.

Dr. James Pastor: You're welcome, and I'm honored to help in any way that I can. Yes, terrorism is complicated. I have dedicated a significant portion of my career to the subject and though I'm clearly not in the mix in the way I used to be, there are fundamental principles that have not changed and I hope to shed some light on them.

EW: Our audience is of course familiar with your work on several *Real Truth* articles such as "Gangs in America – A Deadly Game," "One Nation Under Terror," and more recently "Shake-up: Will World Order Soon Collapse?" In this latest effort, you alluded to your background in law enforcement. Can you give our audience a more detailed explanation?

JP: My background has a number of interesting twists and turns. I have a combination of academic, tactical and legal experience, all with a common theme of public safety and security. I am the author of three books, and hold

a Ph.D. in public policy analysis, a juris (law) doctor degree, and a master's degree in criminal justice, having done my master's thesis on terrorism. I also have a law enforcement and sociology bachelor's degree, which was a double major. I was a professor and have written numerous articles.

I started my law enforcement career working the streets in the Chicago Police Department's Gang Crime Enforcement unit. Using my experience as a police officer, I then worked as a department advocate, which is an attorney who deals with police disciplinary and policy matters. Later, I was an attorney for two police unions and several security firms.

I eventually started moving away from my law practice into a consulting practice, where I did security consulting as well as worked as an expert witness in about 25 cases. It was while establishing my career as an expert witness that I became a member of the Church [The Restored Church of God, which publishes this magazine].

EW: That is quite an extensive law enforcement background. How did you become interested in terrorism and eventually become what many consider to be an expert on the subject?

JP: I developed a fascination with terrorism 40 years ago as a college student in the late '70s during the Iran hostage crisis. That whole situation intrigued me. Even as I sat 7,000 miles away from the action, in Macomb, Illinois, with my college roommates, I was captivated, along with the rest of the U.S. population.

Day by day, events played out and terrorism became the cause celebre [a controversial issue or incident that attracts a great deal of attention]. *What is the U.S. going to do? What's our next move? What's happening? Are they going to let the hostages go?* It was a fascinating thing to watch for 444 days.

The study of law enforcement and sociology in school connected really well with the subject of terrorism. Terrorism is a crime that involves deviant behavior. Sociology has a whole host of literature about radicalized individuals, including why and how they become radicalized.

I also tell people that my interest in the subject can be traced back many, many years ago when I woke up on a Saturday morning to a voice saying, "The world will not end in nuclear holocaust!" and, "Russia will not attack the U.S.!"

I initially thought I was dreaming. Turns out it was the voice of Mr. Herbert Armstrong on the radio and I came to learn that my brother had set the alarm to the station. I was already developing a fascination with geopolitical events, and this happened right after the Iran hostage crisis when I graduated from college.

As far as being considered an expert on the subject, I'm humbled. In my view, what makes an expert in this field is that you have to be street smart as well as book smart. You need the practical and tactical

■ **AFTERMATH:** Left, a man is loaded into an ambulance after he was injured by an explosion during the Boston Marathon in Boston, Massachusetts (April 15, 2013). Center, a man lights a candle at a memorial near the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, France, one year after Islamic State terror group militants killed 130 people in coordinated attacks (Nov. 13, 2016). Right, an injured man is in shock after two explosions rocked the metro system in Saint Petersburg, Russia (April 3, 2017).

PHOTOS: JIM ROGASH/ (LEFT); JOEL SAGET/AFP/ (CENTER); ALEXANDER BULEKOV/AFP/ (RIGHT); GETTY IMAGES

experience of dealing with extremist mindsets, but also a grasp of the literature because the sophistication of the issues associated with terrorism is astounding.

There are scores of substantive disciplines affected by terrorism—anywhere from insurance policy, to immigration policy, to national security. A practical understanding of the law is also critical. Banking law. Constitutional and criminal law. At some level, even *sharia* or Islamic law is needed to understand the extremist mindset. The underpinnings of society and the disciplines related to a society's institutions are all touched by terrorism.

EW: How has terrorism changed over the 40 years since you became interested in it?

JP: Forty years ago, most of the terrorist activity was essentially from Marxists. You had the Red Brigades in Europe. The Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany. In the United States, you had the Weather Underground. FALN [Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional, which is translated Armed Forces of National Liberation] was active, as well as the Black Panthers. These leftist-oriented groups were largely the main cause of terrorist activity.

But the Iran hostage crisis, I think, brought the religious component into terrorism in a bigger way and we have seen that increase over the last four decades.

The tactics of Marxist and religion-based terrorists are similar in some ways, but religious terrorists are definitely more committed. Partially because their cause is larger. There is a difference between wanting to overthrow a government to assert some Marxist/Leninist orientation versus overthrowing a government to provide for "what Allah requires," as in the case of an Islamic terrorist. A willingness to die and undergo great hardship to assert an agenda caused a dynamic shift in the war on terror.

■ **LIVING WITH TERROR:** A Yemeni man looks at a burning vehicle following a suicide car bombing in Huta, Yemen (March 27, 2017).
PHOTO: SALEH AL-OBEIDI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

EW: There are many labels used (or not used) by the media and others when reporting on or discussing terrorism. Some are quick to use terms while others seem to avoid them no matter what—especially when Islam is involved. We often hear terms such as terrorist, extremist or radicalism.

JP: There is a certain level of semantics involved. However, there are also legal statutes that define these labels. For instance, a terroristic act is separate and distinct from extremism. There is not, to my knowledge, a law against being an extremist.

Extremism is an overarching term. It is related to a person holding views outside the norm, with that person engaging in or advocating extreme action. It is a very broad term. Radicalism is similar in that it is related to a person having extreme views.

Terrorism, on the other hand, falls under extremism. It is essentially the use of force or violence, or threat of violence to cause a political, religious or ideological end. It is designed to create fear in the larger populace.

The terrorist label obviously carries a negative connotation with it. Once you become a "terrorist," you are generally considered to be "bad." Therefore, some are reluctant to use it—even after a blatant attack. One of the political debates over the last number of years has been, "What do we call these people who want to kill us?"

If we call them terrorists, we now have put a normative label that a lot of people want to avoid. But again, a terrorist is generally someone with extreme views who is willing to kill and die for those views—you can't be a terrorist without being an extremist but you can be an extremist without being a terrorist.

EW: Staying on the subject of the media, you made the point in one of your books that "terrorism and the media are tied at the hip" and that they have a "symbiotic relationship."

Even more curious is your assertion that "each need each other," and "each fuels the interest of the other." What did you mean by this?

JP: I will begin to answer that question with a question. If a bomb blows up in Sri Lanka and the media doesn't cover it, did it happen? Of course, it did. But consider the implications of media coverage.

Terrorism is primarily theater. The people who die in most terrorist attacks are largely irrelevant to the attack itself. The attack is designed to speak to the people who are watching that attack. They think, "That could be me, and maybe *will* be me, in the future."

There is a phrase used by terrorism experts called "the propaganda of the deed." The "propaganda" is the message that is conveyed from a specific direct action. If the media does not cover the direct action, the message loses resonance or perhaps is not even communicated. So, when the separatists in Sri Lanka blow up a building and the media doesn't cover it, their message isn't conveyed.

From the perspective of the media, their operational framework is, "If it bleeds, it leads." Big events, gory events, dramatic events, chaotic events, are therefore "perfect"—if I can use that word—for their bottom line. A terrorist event facilitates the media response. And, the reality is people like to see the traffic accident and slow down to watch. Terrorist acts are essentially these "traffic accidents."

EW: Typically, the media is how we learn about the vast majority of terrorist attacks. Could you give us your opinion on how the media is doing on the issue of terrorism?

JP: I think it is a mix. For instance, the *Frontline* documentary "Terror in Europe" was a classic example of how, after the fact, the media can do an excellent job reciting the circumstances and playing out the facts that led to a series of events and describe how they played out in very poignant terms.

But let's face it. Where was the media during the months and years when these heinous acts were being planned? More specifically, what would have been the media response if they knew certain people were under surveillance or being questioned about their activities?

I'd venture to guess that the same media would complain about authorities "harassing" young Muslims in Paris yet later describe how these monstrous people shot and blew up individuals after the fact.

When it comes to the treatment of suspects, there is a tendency for the media to err on the side of, "Why are you messing with these people?" And then on the back end, after a terrorist event has taken place, the tendency of the media then is to say, "How come law enforcement missed this?" "How did the intelligence community miss this?"

Well, they partially missed it because of the fears of being accused of harassment and putting undue pressure on certain "profiled" groups. This reluctance leads to officials backing off and being particularly careful, which then leads to things falling through the cracks and bombings and attacks later occurring.

Consider the threats facing Western nations. At any given time, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals being assessed by law enforcement and intelligence. The vast majority of these cases do not involve demonstrably illegal activities. Typical cases involve actions that could be characterized as "suspicious," but are also legal. These include visiting extremist websites, making hateful or provocative statements on blogs, taking photos of buildings or other structures, traveling to foreign countries known for Islamist violence, and buying legal weapons. Interpreting these actions within the legal concept of the "totality of the circumstances," one *may* conclude that criminal activity is afoot. Do these mean that police have the legal authority to intercede? Maybe, but if they are wrong, know that undesirable media coverage is a predictable result.

Now multiply this case by hundreds or thousands. One can understand why cases "fall through the cracks." This is why it is extraordinarily difficult to intercede *before* the attack occurs. Police and intelligence officials are often reduced to "playing probabilities." They often have a good sense that a particular suspect is up to no good, but they usually do not know when the suspect will cross the line into illegal acts. If police act too soon, they risk negative media and legal consequences. If they act too late, they failed to do their duty to the public. In the anti-police and anti-authority environment that exists in many Western countries today, where do you think the line will most likely be drawn?

The bottom line in my mind is the mainstream media has a huge role in communicating the threat as well as communicating the balance and/or the implications of terrorism. The media essentially has it both ways. They are experts on the back end and they are particularly accusatory on the front end. Or maybe they're politically correct before the attack and they're politically expedient after the attack.

EW: Is there some other way for the mainstream media to approach the issue? It seems to me as if they are painted into a corner.

JP: Perhaps they are painted into a corner, though I am not particularly sure I could conclude that. I do have sympathy for the extraordinarily difficult balance they, along with law enforcement, have to apply to these matters.

Most journalists are schooled with the mindset that the government is to be checked. That the requirement of a legitimate, objective press is to keep the government from becoming unduly harsh or repressive. There's a tendency of the media to err on the side of protecting the helpless—protecting the underclass or the people who have been oppressed. And there's certainly

*Please see **TERRORISM**, page 26*

The Fight Against Famine

Millions go hungry every night even though billions of dollars are poured into global food distribution.

More than 795 million people across the globe—one in nine—suffer from chronic undernourishment, yet food is plentiful throughout the world.

According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, which ranks levels of hunger across the world, three factors have been driving food insecurity this year.

The organization reported that "persistent conflict is disrupting livelihoods, limiting trade, and restricting humanitarian access across many regions, including the Lake Chad Basin, the Central African Republic, Sudan, South Sudan, the [African] Great Lakes Region, Somalia, Yemen, Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. A second important driver is drought, especially those driven by the 2015/16 El Niño and the 2016/17 La Niña. In Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa, significantly below-average rainfall has sharply reduced crop

■ **IN NEED:** South Sudanese refugees stand in a food line run by World Food Program in Kuluba, Uganda (Feb. 24, 2017).

PHOTO: DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

harvests and severely limited the availability of water and pasture for livestock. In Central Asia, snowfall to date has also been below average, potentially limiting the water available for irrigated agriculture during 2017. Finally, economic instability, related to conflict, a decline in foreign reserves due to low global commodity prices, and associated currency depreciation have contributed to very high staple food prices in Nigeria, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, and Yemen."

For the first time since 2011, famine was officially declared in parts of South Sudan—where more than 40 percent need urgent food assistance. Three other nations—Somalia, Yemen and Kenya—have been classified as being on the brink of famine.

"When you declare a famine, bad things have already happened," Arif Husain, the chief economist for the World Food Program (WFP) in Rome, told *The New York Times*. "People have already died."

According to the outlet, "Famine… is declared after three specific criteria are met: when one in five households in a certain area face extreme food shortages; more than 30 percent of the population is acutely malnourished; and at least two people for every 10,000 die each day."

Just to avert the current crisis in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and parts of Nigeria, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a press briefing that it would "require more than $5.6 billion this year," with $90 million having been "received so far—around two cents for every dollar needed."

Why in a "world of plenty," as Mr. Guterres put it in a speech after returning from a trip to an area where 20 million people face famine, is this occurring?

Not So Simple

Famines often emerge in the wake of natural disasters, crop blight, and severe weather patterns. In the case of South Sudan, however, the famine there is not due to scarcity of food, but rather to an ongoing civil war, which resulted in the United Nations officially declaring it a disaster area, according to *National Public Radio*.

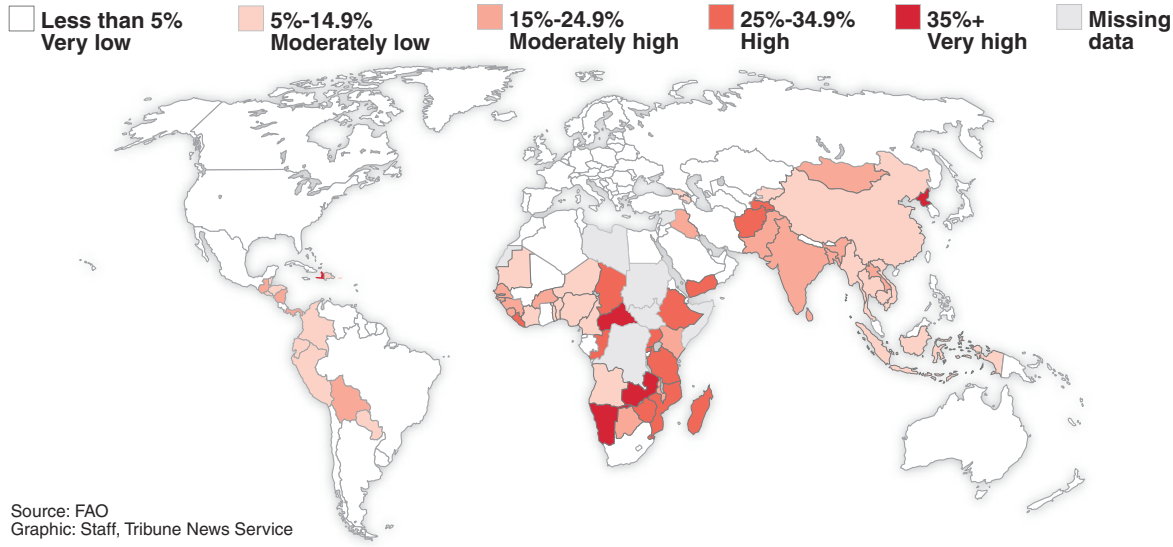
"This famine is man-made," WFP Country Director Joyce Luma said in a statement on the organization's website. "WFP and the entire humanitarian community have been trying with all our might to avoid this catastrophe, mounting a humanitarian response of a scale that quite frankly would have seemed impossible three years ago. But we have also warned that there is only so much that humanitarian assistance can achieve in the absence of meaningful peace and security, both for relief workers and the crisis-affected people they serve…"

The organization continued: "Across the country, three years of conflict have severely undermined crop production and rural livelihoods. The upsurge in violence since July 2016 has further devastated food production, including in previously stable areas. Soaring inflation—up to 800 percent year-on-year—and market failure have also hit areas that traditionally rely on markets to meet food needs. Urban populations are also struggling to cope with massive price rises on basic food items."

Meanwhile, "Violence in Yemen, according to the U.N., has left 18 million people—nearly two-thirds of the country—in need of humanitarian aid," *National Public Radio* reported. "Drought combined with chaos and extremist militants in Somalia are leaving millions hungry there. And in West Africa, Boko Haram fighters have terrorized people across large swaths of Northern Nigeria, driven farmers from

The State of Food Insecurity in the World

This graph represents the percent of the population in each country that is undernourished as of 2015. Undernourishment means that a person is not able to acquire enough food to meet the daily minimum dietary energy requirements, over a period of one year. FAO defines hunger as being synonymous with chronic undernourishment.



Source: FAO
Graphic: Staff, Tribune News Service

■ **FOOD INSECURITY:** Top, a displaced Yemeni man carries a sack of food supplies in the outskirts of Sanaa, Yemen (March 16, 2017). Center, a woman opens her empty fridge at her house in Petare, Venezuela (Feb. 22, 2017). Bottom, a 5-year-old child cries next to his mother and brother as a nurse struggles to find a vein for an injection at a government-run health clinic in Shada, Somalia (Feb. 25, 2017).
PHOTOS: MOHAMMED HUWAIS/AFP/ (TOP); FEDERICO PARRA/AFP/ (CENTER); ANDREW RENNEISEN/ (BOTTOM); GETTY IMAGES

their land and left a massive food shortage in their wake."

The concept of famine being a result of conflict is not new. Stephen Devereux, editor of *The New Famines: Why Famines Persist in an Era of Globalization*, wrote in his book that the worst famines throughout history were a result of political decisions.

In an interview with *The Economist*, "Mr Devereux [reckoned] that in 35 big famines since 1900, more than 70m people have died from famine or famine-related causes. Of these, almost half perished in one terrible event: China's Great Leap Forward of 1958-62, which caused famine deaths of over 30m… Another quarter died during Stalin's forced collectivisation of the Soviet Union in the late 1920s and early 1930s (especially in Ukraine and Kazakhstan). The other huge famine was that in Bengal in 1943. Since these countries have transformed their food security, famine mortality has declined over the past century and shifted from Asia to, almost exclusively, Africa. Political crises have triggered famines in sub-Saharan Africa since the 1960s, including those in Ethiopia in 1983-85 and Sudan in 1998. The rains failed throughout the

Horn of Africa in 2010-12, but famine deaths were concentrated in Somalia, where the government was weakest."

Many times, suffering countries turn to neighboring countries for assistance, which in and of themselves are unable to help, as in the case of Somalia and the bordering nation of Kenya.

"Kenya itself is also suffering from the effects of the regional drought: rates of acute malnutrition higher than 30 percent have been reported in three northern counties; 100,000 children under five are estimated to be severely malnourished; and up to three million people face a food security crisis and require assistance," *IRIN News* reported.

Global Snapshot

More than 50 countries have levels of hunger considered "serious" or "alarming," according to the International Food Policy Research Institute's "2016 Global Hunger Index: Getting to Zero Hunger," with women making up 60 percent of the world's hungry.

In addition, think tank Oxfam Canada reported that "65 percent of the world's hungry live in only seven developing countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia."

In Asia alone, two out of three people suffer from food insecurity: "Hunger continues to take its largest toll in terms of the number of people impacted in Southern Asia, which includes the countries of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh," the World Hunger Education Service reported.

Asia is often not even mentioned in terms of its food insecurity on the world stage, but according to *CNN* more than 490 million people there routinely go hungry.

"The Asia-Pacific region is home to more than half a billion (62 percent) of the world's undernourished people and over 100 million stunted children, resulting in the suffering of millions and, all too often, premature death," the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reported.

"This is unacceptable in a region which has been showing strong economic growth in recent decades. It is also home to a vast majority of the world's smallholder farmers who presently produce enough food for all."

And while countries in Central and South America have been largely successful in decreasing malnutrition, Venezuela recently declared a food emergency, with almost nine out of 10 civilians lacking access to food due to political conflicts and economic decline.

"A staggering 87 percent of Venezuelans say they do not have money to buy enough food, the most recent assessment of living standards by Simon Bolivar University found," *The New York Times* reported.

The outlet highlighted the growing violence at empty supermarkets, crop warehouses, and in the middle of highways, where civilians have begun halting and looting trucks transporting the limited food supplies left in the nation.

"Venezuelans have been suffering food and medicine shortages for months, leading many to skip meals or go without crucial treatment," *Channel News Asia* reported. "Lines of hundreds form in front of supermarkets as people jostle for hours under the hot sun hoping price-controlled rice or flour will be delivered."

Different Problem

While famines due to weather patterns and political conflicts have always been a problem, unlike any other time in history, there *is* enough food available to feed everyone across the globe. But lack of resources and access prevent it from being distributed.

"The world produces 17% more food per person today than 30 years ago," Oxfam Canada stated on its website. "But close to a billion people go to sleep hungry every night.

"The problem is that many people in the world don't have sufficient land to grow, or income to purchase, enough food."

Think tank Food First echoed this sentiment.

"Even though the global population more than doubled between 1961 and 2013, the world produces around 50 percent more food for each of us today—of which we now waste about a third. Even after diverting roughly half of the world's grain and most soy protein to animal feed and non-food uses, the world still produces enough to provide every human being with nearly 2,900 calories a day. Clearly, our global calorie supply is ample.

"Increasingly, however, calories and nutrition are diverging as the quality of food in most parts of the world is degrading. Using a calorie-deficiency standard, the UN estimates that today roughly one in nine people is hungry—about 800 million; but adding measures of nutrient deficiencies as well, we estimate that a quarter of the world's people suffer from nutritional deprivation.

"Food scarcity is not the problem, but the scarcity of real democracy protecting people's access to nutritious food is a huge problem. So, fighting hunger means tackling concentrated political and economic power in order to create new equitable rules. Otherwise hunger will continue no matter how much food we grow."

After visiting Kenya, Yemen, South Sudan, and Somalia, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien told reporters at a press conference the problem is greater than just ensuring people have sustenance.

"'I continue to reiterate the same message to all: only a political solution will ultimately end human suffering and bring stability to the region,' he said, noting that with access and funding, humanitarians will do more, but cautioned that relief-workers were 'not the long-term solution to the growing crisis.'"

As stated time and time again in *The Real Truth* magazine, only a government free from the hands of corrupt minds, amoral political leaders, and inept civil servants can bring about real and lasting solutions to humanity's ever-growing problems—including famine. Thankfully, a world SUPERGOVERNMENT led by tried and proven leaders is just on the horizon, as announced almost 2,000 years ago (Mark 1:14-15).

That government of divine, incorruptible, character-driven leaders will soon be here! □

"Please Pray for Me"

Should You Ask the Public for Prayers?

ANOTHER TYPICAL day: You wake up, log on to your computer or tablet, or check your smartphone. After opening Facebook, or a similar social media service, you read the latest items posted to your newsfeed.

Glancing through, you see that a childhood friend discovered she has been diagnosed with a life-threatening disease. This is terrible news. Unless a miracle occurs, she says, she will most likely die in a matter of weeks.

As you scroll farther down, you learn that a family member continues to battle six months without work—with children to feed and a looming home foreclosure. Again, more terrible news.

Your morning update is rounded out by news of a bloody car accident that occurred overnight not far from your home.

The Bible sums up how we should deal with such day-to-day realities: "In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God has also set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him" (Ecc. 7:14).

Life happens. Sometimes we experience pleasant surprises. Other times, we feel like we are trapped between a proverbial rock and hard place—with no room to wiggle free or even breathe. This is the nature of our mortal lives.

No wonder surmounting pressure and unrelenting anguish can move some of us to the point of desperation. We want RELIEF! We want to ease our pain. Therefore, we look for ways to end the misery. And often, we turn to religion to give us comfort.

In this age of social media and text messaging, people sometimes rush to explain their problems to any who will listen. They type or sometimes even cry out, "Pray for me!"

Public requests for prayers in the wake of tragic circumstances happen often. They are no doubt sincere and heartfelt.

Yet is this the right way to receive intervention from God?

Biblical Backing?

Turning to God in hard times is understandable. Perhaps some Bible verses come to mind.

Jesus stated, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7). Also, I Peter 5:7 states: "Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares about you" (*Revised Standard Version*).

Beyond individual supplications to God, the New Testament is filled with requests for prayers.

- I Thessalonians 5:25: "Brethren, pray for us."
- II Thessalonians 3:1: "Finally, brethren, pray for us…"
- Hebrews 13:18: "Pray for us…"

There is more. James 5:16 tells Church members to "pray one for another" and Colossians 4:3 tells brethren to continue "praying also for us."

In addition, the "Lord's Prayer" is all plural, making it a command that we should pray for others: "*Our* Father," "Give *us* this day *our* daily bread," "forgive *us our* debts," "lead *us* not into temptation," and so on.

Clearly, the Bible condones requesting prayers from others. The next question then becomes: Is this all there is to having prayers answered?

Reasoning Together

The Bible states, "Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD" (Isa. 1:18). Scripture reveals a God who is more than reasonable, and whose will or purpose in this matter can be understood if we simply practice a most vital step in Bible study: *Let the Bible interpret itself*.

Examining common religious teachings, however, reveals that few are willing to do this.

For example, when the Bible quotes Jesus Christ saying, "And no man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13), we need to ask, "Why do most ministers teach that people go to heaven when they die?" To twist this verse into saying something it does not is disingenuous.

The same principle applies to prayer.

In Matthew 6, Christ lays the groundwork for how people should pray. He states: "And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly" (vs. 5-6).

Christ said that when prayer occurs, it should be in a private place. Personal prayers should not be done in public for all to hear or proclaimed in the "corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men."

Continuing in verses 7-9, He states: "But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not you therefore like unto them: for your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask Him."

The beginning of what is called the "Lord's Prayer" then starts, "After this manner therefore pray you…"

When we allow Scripture to interpret itself, we see that "after this manner" in the original Greek text in which the verse was written means "thus, in this way." Christ intended verses 9 through 15 of Matthew 6 to be applied as a *general outline*—a means to expand and personalize our day-to-day prayerful conversations with God.

Despite this clear statement, why do millions—even billions—assume that Christ meant our prayers should recite word-for-word the now famous "Lord's Prayer"?

Praying is simply a way to initiate a personal, intimate, one-on-one verbal communication between you and God. (Similarly, studying the Bible is, in effect, allowing God to "converse" with us.) It should be done in private, on your knees, and should follow a certain pattern.

So how does this apply to praying for others?

More Than a Wish List

Following this outline is just the first step to having your prayers answered. It also requires action—both on your part and those for whom you are praying.

In Matthew 6:33, Christ made a promise: "But seek you first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; *and all these things shall be added unto you.*" This ironclad promise is an important key to having our prayers answered and our needs met.

Jesus Christ acknowledged we have daily needs, yet He tells us, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, [How] shall we be clothed?" (vs. 31).

Within this verse, however, He also made a bold statement: prayer is conditional.

Unemployment—losing one's home—failing health—whatever the problem, we can claim God's promise that He will deal with our problems IF we put His Kingdom (the gospel—Mark 1:15) and His righteousness (living His Law—Psa. 119:172) *first* and foremost in our daily lives. This requires obeying the laws He has set in place.

This is what most miss. To have prayers answered, a person requesting prayers, though sincere, must be seeking to live God's Way. It is that simple.

Yet praying for others *is* something that Christ does want us to do—in the proper context.

Recall James 5:16 in which the author tells Church members to "pray one for another." In Thessalonians, Paul calls those he asks for prayers "brethren." This means that those asking for prayers were Church members who were all striving to live God's Way and obey His commandments. Those requesting prayers knew this and followed this principle. This is why they prayed for one another.

Nonetheless, God does not want us to merely relay a wish list of "gimmes." He wants us to first spend time honoring Him and then make requests for ourselves or others. Otherwise, we treat the Creator of the universe like a genie in a magic bottle who grants wishes to any who ask—and this trivializes prayer.

This naturally begs the question: "If we do our part, how do we *know* God will keep His promise?"

First, it is *impossible* for God to lie (Titus 1:2), even once.

Next, we can turn to the Bible definition of faith, as described in Hebrews 11: "Now faith is the substance [confidence, guarantee] of things hoped for, the evidence [proof, conviction] of things not seen" (vs. 1).

Contrary to popular thinking, faith is not an empty, well-meaning word that goes nowhere. It is a vital trait that God looks for in His people. Notice verse 6: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that [1] He is, and [2] that He is a rewarder of them that *diligently seek* Him."

Faith requires action.

Be Sure Your Prayers Are Heard

We must be very careful not to trivialize prayer. Recognize that Christ—God Himself—not only instructed us on how to pray but also Himself prayed on a regular basis. He took the time to talk to His Father and seek His will.

There is a God on the other side who listens when we pray. He has the power and ability to act. But it is up to *us* to help determine whether He will.

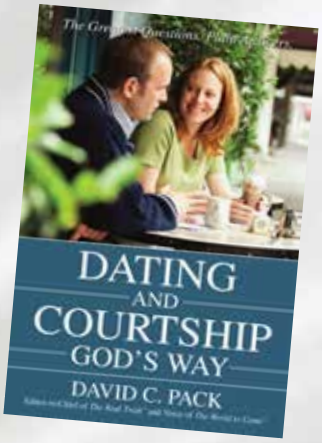
God inspired the apostle James to record: "Confess your faults one to another, and *pray one for another*, that you may be healed. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much*" (Jms. 5:16). It is this kind of prayer—one that is genuine, heartfelt and given by a person actively seeking to live God's way of life—that gets His undivided attention and stirs Him to action.

If you would like to learn more about how to expand your prayers and communication with God, read our free article "The Keys to Dynamic Prayer" at *rcg.org*. Or view *The World to Come* broadcast "Dynamic Prayer—Bible Teaching Made Plain!" posted at *worldtocome.org* and *youtube.com/RestoredCOG*. □

How do I get to "I do"?

The path to getting married can be complicated. On average, a person will experience four disastrous dates, be in eight relationships, will have "fallen in love" twice, and will be heartbroken two times before settling down.

But this is not what God intended! Order your free copy of *Dating and Courtship – God's Way* to learn straight from the Bible how to practice successful dating—free from heartbreak—and to prepare for a successful marriage.



rcg.org

Getting Better Sleep

IMAGINE RESOLVING to change your daily habits with the goal of achieving optimal health. You might propose exercising three to four times per week, buying more organic foods—those absent of pesticides and chemical fertilizers—and eating lean meats, whole grains, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Perhaps you would decide to drink more water and cut back on soda or sweet tea.

But what if you had made these changes yet, over the course of a month, slept only four to five hours per night? Undoubtedly, you would feel WORSE—not better—despite picking up healthier habits in all other areas of your life.

This points to a simple truth: getting sufficient sleep is vital to your overall health.

Consider the following from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "Sleep is increasingly recognized as important to public health, with sleep insufficiency linked to motor vehicle crashes, industrial disasters, and medical and other occupational errors. Unintentionally falling asleep, nodding off while driving, and having difficulty performing daily tasks because of sleepiness all may contribute to these hazardous outcomes. Persons experiencing sleep insufficiency are also more likely to suffer from chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, depression, and obesity, as well as from cancer, increased mortality, and reduced quality of life and productivity."

Getting adequate sleep is clearly important for maintaining good health and lowering your risk of chronic disease. It is also a key to experiencing a high quality of life.

How can you ensure you get a good night's rest?

Sleepy State

Most in the United States lack sufficient sleep. Only about 1 in 3 U.S. adults get at least seven hours—the minimum recommended by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)—according to a 2016 study by the CDC.

For teenagers, it is worse. The NIH found that less than 10 percent of American teens get at least the recommended nine hours.

Even many Americans who do receive a sufficient quantity of sleep report feeling sleep deprived. According to a 2014 report by The National Sleep Foundation, "Despite sleeping within the recommended number of hours a night, 35 percent of Americans report their sleep quality as 'poor' or 'only fair.' Twenty percent of Americans reported that they did not wake up feeling refreshed on any of the past seven days."

Using data from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the same report concluded that "driving drowsy" is comparable to driving drunk, and is "responsible for 1,550 fatalities and 40,000 nonfatal injuries annually in the United States…"

Widespread sleep deprivation has also been connected to poor academic performance, learning and memory problems, poor physical health, and mental health conditions.

How did it get to this point?

Overstimulation

In generations before the Industrial Revolution, daily schedules were more based on the sun rather than a clock. Most rose with the sun to begin the work day, and at sunset, relaxed and retired to the relative dimness of their homes. Shortly thereafter, they went to sleep.

Today, our eyes are bombarded by artificial light, usually many hours after the sun has set.

"…we may be paying a price for basking in all that light," *Harvard Health Letter* stated. "At night, light throws the body's biological clock—the circadian rhythm—out of whack. Sleep suffers."

When our eyes are exposed to light after the sun sets, our brains do not produce as much melatonin, the hormone responsible for drowsiness and falling asleep.

The biggest culprit is light emitted from digital screens such as smartphones, tablets, televisions and computers. These emit a type of blue light that more closely mimics the light of the sun. *Harvard Health Letter* stated that this light seems "to be the most disruptive at night," signaling to our brain that it is 12 o'clock noon instead of 12 o'clock midnight. "And the proliferation of electronics with screens, as well as energy-efficient lighting, is increasing our exposure to blue wavelengths, especially after sundown."

This affects adults as well as teenagers. Stanford School of Medicine reported: "Some 92 percent of U.S. teens have smartphones, and 24 percent report being online 'constantly,' according to a 2015 report by the Pew Research Center. Teens have access to multiple electronic devices they use simultaneously, often at night. Some 72 percent bring cellphones into their bedrooms and use them when they are trying to go to sleep, and 28 percent leave their phones on while sleeping, only to be awakened at night by texts, calls or emails, according to a 2011 National Sleep Foundation poll on electronic use."

Avoiding Pitfalls

If you experience sleep inadequacy, how do you fix the problem?

There are a myriad of different physical, environmental and emotional factors that can negatively impact the quality and quantity of one's sleep. These range from work stress, to ill-fitting beds, to sleeping conditions that are too hot or cold.

But there are simple changes you can make to positively impact the quantity and quality of your sleep.

First, related to light overstimulation, consider instituting a "digital sunset" one hour before your intended bedtime. This practice involves turning off all electronics—including televisions, tablets, smartphones and computers—long enough in advance so that your brain has time to produce enough melatonin.

If you cannot avoid using electronics at night, consider getting an application on your device that reduces the level of blue in the light. This will ensure the device does not emit the type of light that is similar to sunlight. Yet keep in mind that device usage can still prevent sustained sleep and adequate rest.

An additional point includes limiting your consumption of caffeine. Generally, 400 milligrams is considered a safe daily limit. That is roughly the amount in four cups (8 oz. cups—not giant mugs!) of brewed coffee.

Also, be cautious of the time of day you consume caffeine. On average, 75 percent of the caffeine you consume daily will be filtered out of your system within 10 hours. This means that if you consume two cups of coffee at noon, 25 percent of it—approximately 50 milligrams—will still be in your system by 10:00 p.m. (This is assuming, however, that you did not consume other caffeinated drinks—such as energy drinks or soda. Avoid these as much as possible if your goal is better sleep.)

Finally, limit alcohol consumption before bed. This may seem counterintuitive because alcohol does help a person to fall asleep. Yet "overall it is more disruptive to sleep, particularly in the second half of the night," Irshaad Ebrahim, medical director at The London Sleep Centre in the United Kingdom, told *WebMD*.

He further stated, "Alcohol also suppresses breathing and can precipitate sleep apnea," or pauses in breathing that happen throughout the night.

Remember, sleep is as important as all the other health habits you have. Follow these simple suggestions and get better sleep—tonight! □

Continued from page 15

merit in that. There is a need to pay attention to the plight of the poor and the oppressed.

The other side of the coin is—and it's demonstrably true—some elements of the terroristic mindset are embedded in such groups. So, the media has to find a way to err on the side of the "oppressed" without condemning the government. This is a very difficult balancing act and I don't pretend to have the answer to that.

Overall, the media is failing—but so is every other manmade institution. I do understand that terrorism is one of the most pervasive, most complicated, most impossible matters for mankind to solve.

EW: In your writings, you also commented on the role of government with this issue. You say "the government cannot always—if ever—tell you the truth" when it comes to informing the public about terrorism.

You add that a more positive way to state this is that "the government has to err on the side of good public relations." Tell us more about the responsibility of the government to keep its citizens informed—particularly as it relates to communicating threats.

JP: I made those comments using the Shah of Iran as an example. His days were numbered during the Iran hostage crisis. The public relations element was that the Shah was a U.S. ally and we didn't want to "throw him under the bus" by saying he could not maintain his position. If not careful, this could have become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

At the same time, it did not take an expert to see that obvious events were so far against the Shah that he could not continue. Despite this, the U.S. government refused to admit it for months and months, until, if my memory serves, he was literally taken out of office. Then the government finally admitted openly that he had to go.

A general concern for the government in communicating terrorist threats is that they don't want to unduly scare the public. There is a very delicate balance between protecting citizens and keeping things that they don't need to hear away from their ears, if you will.

Government cannot tell you *all* the threats that exist because one of two things will happen. You will either—if I could use the term—"freak people out" because they cannot handle being told that there's an imminent threat, *or* the opposite. If repeatedly told, "The threat is real, the threat is real," and nothing happens, it becomes the "boy who cried wolf." There is a very delicate psychological balance.

The government is constantly "proving the negative," which is attempting to prove an attack with little to no evidence it will occur. Even if you know an attack is percolating, you probably don't know enough about the "whens" and "wheres" to be able to sufficiently announce to the public that a threat is out there. So most announcements of public safety threats are more generalized, which makes you say, "Why give it?"

If threat announcements are too generalized, it is more easily construed to where it becomes, "Oh, just another threat, so why do I care?"

Recall the use of color codes to communicate threat levels. Critics pointed to the fact that a constantly heightened threat level undermined the credibility of the system and led to complacency in the minds of the public. Well, that system was the government's effort to manage this dynamic.

And it's tough. If the government doesn't warn and it is later learned people died at least partially because of the failure to communicate the threat, the government will be blamed. If they communicate the threat and unduly alarm the public, the government is still blamed. It cuts both ways.

EW: Earlier you mentioned "war on terror." I remember when that phrase was a really big deal. President George W. Bush generated controversy when he first used it in the wake of 9/11. Opponents thought the "war" metaphor was inaccurate and opened the door for ongoing, expensive military campaigns.

President Barack Obama later eschewed the term, opting instead for a "targeted" approach to fighting terrorism as opposed to what he called "a boundless, global war on terror." Help us understand the significance of each approach.

JP: I did a breakdown about this some years ago on the *Chicago Tonight* television program. I was on a panel talking about the prison at Guantanamo Bay (Gitmo). Let me just say that where you land on this issue follows closely along political lines.

The question the panel faced was whether the Obama administration was going to close the prison facility and I laid out the Democrats' thought process and the Republicans' thought process. Here is how I would describe it.

If you see terrorism as purely a criminal act, which most Democrats or shall I say liberals or progressives see it, then you defend against and prosecute terrorist actions through the criminal justice system. Underlying this approach is the emphasis that terrorists are criminals who ought to be or have to be afforded their criminal rights.

On the other side of that coin, if you see terrorism as war, as most conservatives do, then you are much more inclined to see perpetrators as an "enemy" who has declared war on your country. You therefore don't care as much about the "rights" of those individuals as you do the security of your homeland or the security of your citizens.

If you see terrorism as war, then Gitmo is essentially a "prisoner of war" camp. Prisoners of war don't get trials. You don't care as much about their rights. They are just housed until the war is over.

Now if you see Gitmo as a traditional prison, then you are against its operation because what you see are individuals being improperly detained in violation of their constitutional, legal or human rights. You would instead

want the prisoners to stand trial or eventually be released because of the notion of *habeas corpus*—which means you must have a legal basis to prosecute a detainee, not just hold them.

It was widely characterized, by progressives, based on this crime/war distinction, that Gitmo "caused" terrorism. They felt that many of the terrorist attacks we see are somehow in retaliation for prisoners being held there indefinitely. I find this connection dubious.

EW: It sounds like you believe "war" is the more realistic way to deal with terrorism?

JP: Yes, I do see it as war. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey recently said there is a "holy war coming to Europe." Now, is he right? I don't know. But he did describe what was coming as war. But there is a larger point.

Driving my thinking is the question of whether you want to deal with fighting terrorism in your own land or fighting it in someone else's land. Either way, you *will* deal with it. The reality and impact of 9/11 caused many Americans to realize, "We can't deal with terrorism in our own land. Therefore, we have to go get them in their land."

There are a whole host of downsides to that, of course. You "blow up the world" at some level by taking a more proactive approach by going, for instance, into the Middle East and overturning or creating upheaval in an area that's historically been a cauldron of terrorism.

But just from a narrow, "How am I going to live a calm and peaceful life?" standpoint, the easy answer for some is to "go get them before they come get me." Obviously, the impact of that is a whole series of negative foreign relations implications. But, this is the core of the war approach.

Taking it back to the criminal approach, the prevailing view is to see attacks such as Fort Hood, San Bernardino, Boston and to a lesser degree Orlando as tragic events, but not existential threats to the country. The Obama administration said this numerous times, and it was probably right. Those individual events, in and of themselves, are not going to take down the country, but how much carnage must ensue while you deal with the threat?

Frankly, I think it *could* literally be a fatal threat to a country if its strategy allows terroristic activities to continue. At the very least, it does balkanize and impact our society in very, very dramatic ways.

So, though you may be able to arrest and prosecute the offenders in the aftermath of an attack—if they even survive—or you might be able to take out a terrorist cell or two—by focusing on terrorism as a criminal act versus an act of war, you inevitably, in my view, allow a certain amount of carnage into your own country.

EW: This is a little surprising coming from an attorney. Doesn't the rule of law have to prevail? In a nation built on certain unalienable rights I would think we would have to be very careful with this approach.

JP: Well, the law is important. Terrorism *is* a criminal act and if criminal activity occurs on American soil, it must be prosecuted by American laws and investigated by American law enforcement—you can't escape this. But to manage the threat, you must consider going beyond our shores and seeking to put down what is a worldwide movement. If not, and that worldwide movement appears on your shores, the question becomes, is it already too late?

EW: Your explanation sounds like some of the reasoning behind President Donald Trump's approach to immigration. His recent moratorium on immigrants from select nations appears to be an effort to keep out what could be deemed a threat.

JP: That is correct. Whether you agree or disagree, the logic behind President Trump's decision is, "Keep them over there, don't let them come here."

This war is not always what strategists term a "hot war," or a conflict with active military combat. There are different ways to fight, including the use of "soft" and "hard" power tactics. This immigration policy, which admittedly relates to crime and war, is an acknowledgment that there is a war going on.

One way to wage the war in this case, besides attacking the other side, is to manipulate your immigration policy. The goal is to prevent, at least theoretically, some percentage of potential extremists who may land on your shores.

For example, during World War II, the Japanese were not allowed to immigrate to the United States. In fact, Japanese Americans at the time were notoriously segregated into internment camps. Was this decision a terrible deprivation of constitutional rights or a means to enhance public safety during a war?

Putting aside the controversy related to the camps for the moment, if you asked almost anyone back then whether the U.S. should have allowed immigration from Japan in the midst of a war, they would have almost certainly said, "Obviously not."

But ironically, this is the hot issue in contemporary America. Five of the six countries named in the travel ban are essentially failed states. The sixth is Iran, which has been called the biggest sponsor of terrorism since the Iran hostage crisis. It is also where public demonstrations denouncing the "Great Satan" along with chants of "Death to America" are regularly heard. So, it leaves one to wonder why a travel ban or similar restrictions would be controversial.

Because many see terrorism as crime, not as war!

Part 2 of this conversation, to appear in an upcoming issue, will delve into the mindset of a terrorist, discuss the rise of the Islamic State group, explain how terrorism has become much more effective and deadly in the years since 9/11, and reveal further why law enforcement is struggling to keep up. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

not reveal His plans to those who do not obey Him!

Psalm 111:10 states, "A good understanding have all they that *DO His commandments*." God only gives understanding to those who *do* what He says!

Revelation Means a Revealing

After recording the prophecy, Daniel asked God to explain what it meant. While used to record the book, even Daniel did not understand it. Notice: "I heard, but I understood not" (Dan. 12:8). God told him, "Go your way… the words are *CLOSED UP* and *SEALED* till the time of the END" (vs. 9). Moffatt's translation renders "till the time of the end" as "till the crisis at the close."

While Daniel could not understand, those who live in the time of the end *can*! And the wise DO!

Let's now begin understanding Revelation. This awesome picture of future events was sealed with seven separate seals. It is crucial to understand another KEY point: *The seven seals in God's hand essentially span all but the last two chapters of the book!* They are opened one by one, in sequence. Each reveals events before they happen. Only Christ is described as qualified to remove the seals and *open* the book to understanding.

The Greek word *apocalypse* is translated "revelation." This English word actually means to *reveal*—not *conceal, hide, veil or close up*. The dictionary definition is: "The act of revealing or disclosing; something revealed, especially a dramatic disclosure of something not previously known or realized."

In the book's very first verse, the apostle John recorded Christ's words, "The Revelation *of Jesus Christ…to show* unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." Near the book's end it adds, *"Seal NOT* the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the *time is at hand*" (22:10)—the time to understand Revelation is NOW!

God reveals a basic *framework* for understanding future events. This framework is primarily laid out in Daniel and Revelation. Daniel—recorded 600 years earlier—sets the stage for the larger and more detailed book of Revelation, which describes many events nowhere else in the Bible.

Also, by naming the book "Revelation," God makes clear it is not a *review* or a *reiteration*. It is *not* merely *retelling* what can be learned in the Old Testament, or elsewhere in the New Testament. The book contains elements of God's Plan that were revealed decades *after* the rest of the Bible was recorded. All the apostles but John knew *nothing* about it because they died decades before John received it.

Its 22 chapters stand on their own. Treating Revelation exactly as God intended—as a book that contains *dif-*

Chapter outline of the book of Revelation

Chapter	Story flow	
1	Introduction	
2-3	Message to the Seven Church Eras	
4-5	Prelude—Setting	
6	First Six Seals	
7	The Two Companies	
8-10	The Trumpets	Inset chapters
11	The Two Witnesses	
12	The True Church	
13	The Two Beasts	
14	The Three Messages	
15-16	The Seven Last Plagues	
17-18	The Great False Church	
19	The Return of Jesus Christ	
20	The Millennium	
21-22	New Heaven and New Earth	

ferent, *additional* prophecies, largely separate from those previously recorded in His Word—is the first great KEY to unlocking the book!

Revelation outlines a long series of events that relate to one another in a continuous flow—comprising an entire story. These occur in order of time sequence. (Two graphics included in this Personal—an *outline* and a *story flow*—bring the big picture.) Also realize Christ periodically insets certain events into the course of Revelation. This is the second key to unlocking the book!

Now a third all-important key! Revelation explains many things that happen deeper into God's Plan that would be lost to the understanding of billions if we did not have this book. Endless speculation would arise over what God was going to do in His Plan's next phases. He would have to reveal these things.

Story flow of the book of Revelation

THE SEVEN SEALS	PROPHETIC EVENTS	
FIRST	False prophets	
SECOND	War	
THIRD	Famine	
FOURTH	Pestilence	
FIFTH	Tribulation	
SIXTH	Heavenly signs	
SEVENTH	Seven Trumpets	
	1st	Trees injured
	2nd	Sea injured
	3rd	Rivers injured
	4th	Heavenly catastrophes
	5th	First Woe
	6th	Second Woe
	7th	Third Woe (or The Seven Last Plagues)
		The Father Also Comes to Earth

Signs of Christ's Coming Parallels Seven Seals

One of the basic rules of Bible study is to always let the Bible interpret itself. This is probably never truer than in Revelation. Since John sees many symbols, we need to be able to understand the *actual events* they represent. Otherwise, we will not know what is being described. How do we do this?

Mark 4:10-12 and Matthew 13:10-15 hold a fourth key to understanding *how* Jesus teaches. In both places, Jesus explained that He spoke in parables so His servants *would* understand Him—*but others would not!* Carefully read these verses: "When He was alone [with only the disciples], they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parable. And He said unto them [not to others, or to the world as a whole], Unto YOU it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and *not perceive*; and hearing they may hear, and *not understand*" (Mark 4:10-12). Note exactly what Jesus said! *Only* true Christians can see His real meaning. Others might *think* they do—but they cannot!

Christ never leaves His servants in the dark about matters they need to know. But He does record them in ways that keep them hidden from the view of all others. This is why so *few* understand a book read by so *many*.

We have already touched upon the principle that the unrighteous do not understand events lying just ahead. But those who have God's Spirit *will* understand. (Read Acts 5:32 and John 16:13.) Only through God's Spirit *leading* those who are *obeying* Him can they understand the truth. If you remember nothing else, remember this. Recognizing and accepting these two verses is vital to every reader of Revelation. All who do not seek to obey God, even if they sincerely seek to understand the many truths of prophecy, are wasting their time.

Jesus explained—in *plain*, *clear language*—the key events of the last

days preceding and leading to the time of His second coming to Jerusalem. Jesus' disciples asked Him privately, "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" (Matt. 24:3; Luke 21:7).

First, recognize God often employs the principle of *duality*. Early events can be types or forerunners of latter fulfillments. As previously noted, Christ returns and establishes His Kingdom *well ahead of* the events of Revelation. But there are parallels between His next coming, just ahead, and the run-up to His later, 1,000-year reign. Keeping this principle of duality in mind, note the unmistakable similarities between what is described in the gospels—which speak of our time—and the much later time of Revelation.

We must briefly examine the critical Matthew 24 chapter for vital CLUES, which explain the symbols found in Revelation. Jesus gave a list of six events to occur before His return to Jerusalem. They largely *parallel* the seals—including the four horsemen—of Revelation 6. God so often does important things in prophecy twice!

First, deceivers arise among God's people (Matt. 24:5). Second comes wars (vs. 6) throughout the age, culminating in the end time with world war (vs. 7). Third are famines and fourth pestilences (both also vs. 7).

It is at this point that Jesus inserted a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, in AD 70, because this was a forerunner, or type, of the yet future siege of Jerusalem. Therefore, Matthew 24:9-28 (and also Luke 21:12-24) applies to the period of AD 70—*but only as a forerunning type of the final time of the end* to which His warning refers LITERALLY!

Fifth, in Matthew 24:21-22, Christ explains that the Great Tribulation occurs. Sixth are heavenly signs (vs. 29)—when the stars fall and the sun and moon are darkened. The *sign* of Christ's coming (vs. 30) occurs at this same time. His actual coming to Jerusalem is right on the heels of it.

The colossal seventh seal—which is the seven trumpet plagues—is conspicuously absent in the gospels. The events of Matthew are for *our time* and merely *parallel* the much later time of Revelation when the whole world receives the kinds of things found in Matthew 24. Studying this early type provides insight about the later time.

> "Many scholars claim that 'the Lord's Day' is, in fact, a reference to THE DAY OF THE LORD of the Old Testament. But it is not! Almost no one understands this. Without this central point correct in one's thinking, the entire book will make no sense. Reading Revelation becomes a fruitless exercise."

Christ the Revelator

Understanding who is the actual *author* of Revelation—and understanding the critically important *theme*, the centerpiece of the book—is vital. Without these keys, many have bogged down into either arguments about whether "the Lord's Day" (1:10) is referring to Sunday—or whether John, instead of Christ, authored the book.

Almost everyone refers to this book as "The Revelation of Saint John the Divine." Why? Nowhere does it describe John as either divine or the revelator. So the primary purpose of chapter 1 is to establish Jesus Christ as the book's Author. Notice: "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, which GOD GAVE unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: *who bare record* of the word of God, and *of the testimony of Jesus Christ*, and of all things that he saw" (vs. 1-2).

Did you notice that the book of Revelation contains *Jesus Christ's* words, as the Revelator, not John's? John was merely a scribe—a kind of secretary taking dictation.

Anyone who carefully examines this verse will plainly see that Revelation originated with God (the Father), who gave it to Christ. Christ sent and signified it by His angel, who then gave it to John, "who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw" (vs. 2). John merely *recorded* these events, preserving them for Christ's servants—His end-time Church. So it came from the Father to Christ to an angel to John, and finally to Jesus' servants—and no one else. These are not my words, but the Bible's.

Some background: As soon as the book was copied and canonized (about AD 100), the founders of the developing universal church at Rome denied its origin. The highly authoritative and famous 11th edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states: "Instead of this [Rev. 1:1] the Church substituted the name of the disciple through whom the message was delivered for that of his Master, and designated our Apocalypse 'The Apocalypse of John.' This title was familiar before the end of the 2nd century."

A towering question arises. If the world's best minds cannot even discern the book's correct *title*—and *Author*—how could they discern its *message*?

Jesus used John to "bare record of"—write down—what He was revealing. In short, John wrote three

things: (1) The word of God, (2) the direct testimony (the words) of Christ, and (3) what he saw in vision.

You now understand the introduction to the book.

The Theme

Many scholars claim that "the Lord's day" is, in fact, a reference to THE DAY OF THE LORD of the Old Testament. But it is not! Almost no one understands this. Without this central point correct in one's thinking, the entire book will make no sense. Reading Revelation becomes a fruitless exercise.

Revelation 1:7 describes the nations "wailing" at Christ's return to Jerusalem. Mere basic comparison to Matthew 24:30 where they "mourn"—the same word translated "wailing" in Revelation 1:7—proves this is the same day Christ descends into Jerusalem.

Now notice verse 10. It actually reveals the central focus or theme of the whole book. Understand that John lived over 1,900 years ago—long before the events of this book were to be fulfilled. He recorded, "I was in the Spirit on the *Lord's day*, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."

Centuries of controversy have sprung from this reference because people argue about which day of the week John is referring to. The presumption is that he is talking about Sunday. But this verse has nothing to do with Sunday—it does not reference *any* day of the week! The day of the week John received this prophecy is IRRELEVANT.

The Lord's Day is here speaking of Christ's return to Jerusalem. This is very different from the term "Day of the Lord" found throughout the Old Testament. What happens on *that* day—which comes somewhat later—is also horrific.

The prophet Joel speaks of this day. Here is a small portion of what the book says: "Blow you the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the DAY OF THE LORD comes, for it is near at hand; a DAY of darkness and of gloominess, a DAY of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains…" (2:1-2).

This is the day that lies in the near future. And it has nothing to do with the events of Revelation, which so many think will come next.

The prophet Zephaniah is even more graphic than Joel: "Hold your peace at the presence of the LORD God: for the DAY OF THE LORD is at hand: for the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, He has bid His guests. And it shall come to pass *in the day of the LORD's sacrifice*, that I will punish the princes and the kings' children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel. In *the same day* also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit. And it shall come to pass *in that day*…" (1:7-10).

A few verses later, Zephaniah gives more insight into just how terrible this time will be. Consider this sobering picture: "The *great day of the LORD* is near, it is near, and hastes greatly, even the voice of the *day of the LORD*: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm…And I will bring distress among men, that they shall walk like blind men, BECAUSE THEY HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung" (vs. 14-17).

This presents a truly horrible picture. Verse 18 refers to this time as "the day of the LORD'S WRATH." Verse 17 identifies the *cause* of God's wrath: "because they [all mankind] have sinned against the LORD."

Events depicted here—God's time of punishment—are almost more awful and terrifying than words can describe. This day literally belongs to God. Man's conduct has made God angry. And He will soon intervene in the affairs of this world.

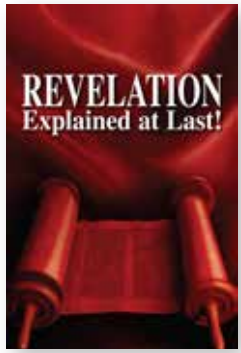
These prophecies precede and *type* the truly terrible time of God's punishments, plagues and judgments when Revelation is fulfilled at the end of the Kingdom of God. Jesus, through John, is revealing *to His servants* what occurs AFTER the Kingdom! It is a graphic description of world punishment on peoples who did not appreciate God's Kingdom after it had been present for many centuries.

Ezekiel 8:3 gives some insight into how John could be transported 1,900 years into the future. Notice: "The spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me *in the visions of God* to Jerusalem." Like Ezekiel, John was *in vision*—"in the spirit"—from the Isle of Patmos where he recorded Revelation. In the past, God has projected His servants through visions into crucial future events so they could record them.

We are in the time of the end, when God wants His people to understand the last events preceding the return of Christ. The book of Revelation speaks neither to unknown events in the distant past or things just ahead. It warns of colossal events that will affect the masses of humanity long into the future after the Kingdom.

This is but an introduction to the book of Revelation. You will want to read our eye-opening booklet *Revelation Explained at Last!* at *rcg.org/real*. It includes much more to help you grasp the big picture within Revelation.

Do not get lost in the cacophony of ideas and endless speculation surrounding this "mysterious" book. It *has* been revealed and you CAN understand it! □



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HEALTH ISSUES

HPV: Nearly One in Two U.S. Adults Infected

A report published by the National Center for Health Statistics found that over 42 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 59 have human papillomavirus (HPV).

The sexually transmitted disease consists of more than 150 related viruses, which may cause a range of symptoms from genital warts to cervical cancer in women and other HPV-related cancers in both men and women. However, most cases of the virus do not cause symptoms.

Cancer-causing strains of HPV, which account for 31,000 cases of cancer each year, currently affect 25 percent of men and 20 percent of women in the U.S., according to the report.

■ **VACCINATION:** A pediatrician gives an HPV vaccination to a 13-year-old girl in her office (Sept. 11, 2011).

PHOTO: JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

The STD has become widespread because many people do not know they have it. A fact sheet by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated: "Since HPV causes no symptoms, most men and women can get HPV—and pass it on—without realizing it. People can have HPV even if years have passed since they had sex."

Adults are not routinely screened for HPV infections. Dr. Geraldine McQuillan, lead author of the report from the National Center for Health Statistics, stated to *The New York Times*, "One of the most striking things that we really want people to know is that high-risk HPV is common—common in the general population." □

SOCIETY & LIFESTYLES

Breakups of Unmarried Parents Surpasses Divorce

For the first time, there have been more instances of unmarried couples with children breaking up in the United Kingdom than married couples with children, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The statistics show that, despite unmarried couples with children making up only 1 in 5 of all parents in the UK, they accounted for more than 50 percent of parents breaking up during 2016.

This represents a shift from 10 years ago when cohabiting parents made up 45 percent of all splits involving children.

Harry Benson, a member of the UK's Marriage Foundation, attributed the shift to an increase in the number of couples cohabiting instead of getting married. In 2006, there were 954,000 cohabiting couples. That increased to 1.26 million in 2016.

A statistic published by the Marriage Foundation revealed: "If current trends remain as they are, any child born today in the UK has only a 50/50 chance of being with both their birth parents by the age of 15."

Mr. Benson said this amounts to a "public health issue," *The Telegraph* reported, "because children in cohabiting relationships were more likely to have problems with health and education." □

Key Moments of North Korean International Provocation

■ **MILITARY DRILL:** Four ballistic missiles are launched by the Korean People's Army during a military drill in North Korea (Oct. 11, 2016).
PHOTO: STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A series of missile launches by North Korea has renewed concerns among its Asian neighbors and United States officials that it could begin to use nuclear weapons.

United States Secretary of State Rex Tillerson declared the Oval Office's foreign policy stance toward North Korea: "Let me be very clear: the policy of strategic patience has ended. We are exploring a new range of security and diplomatic measures. All options are on the table."

In response, North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Han Song Ryol told an *ABC News* reporter: "The possibility of a preemptive strike against [North Korea's] nuclear program is strong."

He also said, "If you bring out a knife to attack us, we will take out a sword."

The latest events follow a long pattern of provocations from North Korea. The following timeline shows key moments since the 1990s.

■ **1993:** North Korea threatens to quit the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty when the International Atomic Energy Agency accuses it of violating the terms of the treaty and demands inspectors be given access to nuclear waste storage sites.

■ **1998:** North Korea fires a long-range rocket that flies over neighboring Japan and lands in the Pacific Ocean—surpassing North Korea's known military capability.

■ **2002:** Pyongyang declares it is reactivating nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and expels United Nations inspectors.

■ **2003:** North Korea withdraws from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This prompts a series of talks between North Korea, South Korea, China, the United States, Japan and Russia to resolve the threat of North Korea developing nuclear weapons.

■ **2006:** Pyongyang test fires seven missiles. Among them is a long-range missile that crashes shortly after take-off, despite claims that it has the capability to strike the U.S.

■ **2009:** Pyongyang launches a long-range rocket it claims is used for carrying a communications satellite; neighboring countries accuse North Korea of testing long-range missile technology. The UN Security Council condemns it, prompting North Korea to walk away from talks and restart its nuclear facilities.

■ **2010:** North Korea sinks a South Korean warship near the North Korea-South Korea border.

■ **February 2013:** The UN approves sanctions after North Korea stages its third nuclear test.

■ **July 2013:** Panama impounds a North Korean ship carrying two MiG-21 jet fighters hidden under bags of sugar.

■ **September 2013:** China, North Korea's only ally, bans exports to North Korea of items that could be used to make missiles or nuclear weapons.

■ **August 2016:** A North Korean submarine fires a ballistic missile off its east coast, which travels 300 miles before falling into the Sea of Japan.

■ **September 2016:** Pyongyang carries out its fifth and reportedly biggest nuclear test, claiming it has mastered the ability to mount a warhead on a ballistic missile.

■ **January 2017:** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un announces that his nation is in the final stage of developing long-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. China expands its ban on goods to North Korea.

■ **February 2017:** Pyongyang fires a ballistic missile into the Sea of Japan; widespread international condemnation ensues. China suspends all coal imports from North Korea.

■ **March 2017:** Pyongyang fires four ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan. □

Where Is God's Church Today?

Jesus Christ declared, "I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). If He promised His Church would never be destroyed, where is it today? Jesus gave identifying signs in the Bible to locate it. He said His Church would:

- Be a little flock
- Teach the truth
- Be separate from the world
- Be set apart by its beliefs
- Be identified by its biblical name
- Not mingle truth with error
- Be structured
- Not be divided

Locate the Church Jesus Built!

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