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Getting to Know the World's Most Important Book

There was a time when the Bible's influence was widespread, and everyone — even atheists — were better off for it. The Bible changed the world, and we've dedicated this issue of the *Summit Journal* to understanding the importance of God's Word and how to study it.

In his visit to America in the 1830s, French sociologist Alexis De Tocqueville discovered that "America is still the place where the Christian religion has kept the greatest real power over men's souls; and nothing better demonstrates how useful and natural it is to man, since the country where it now has widest sway is both the most enlightened and the freest."¹ If this was so, it was intentional. Here's what some of America's founders said about the Bible and Christianity:

- John Jay called the Bible the "best of books" and told his daughter, "Do not omit reading in it daily; in it you will find the best rules for your conduct in this life and the most elevated hopes for futurity."²

- Samuel Adams: "The Rights of the Colonists as Christians may be best understood by reading and carefully studying the institutes of the great Law Giver and Head of the Christian Church, which are to be found clearly written and promulgated in the New Testament."³

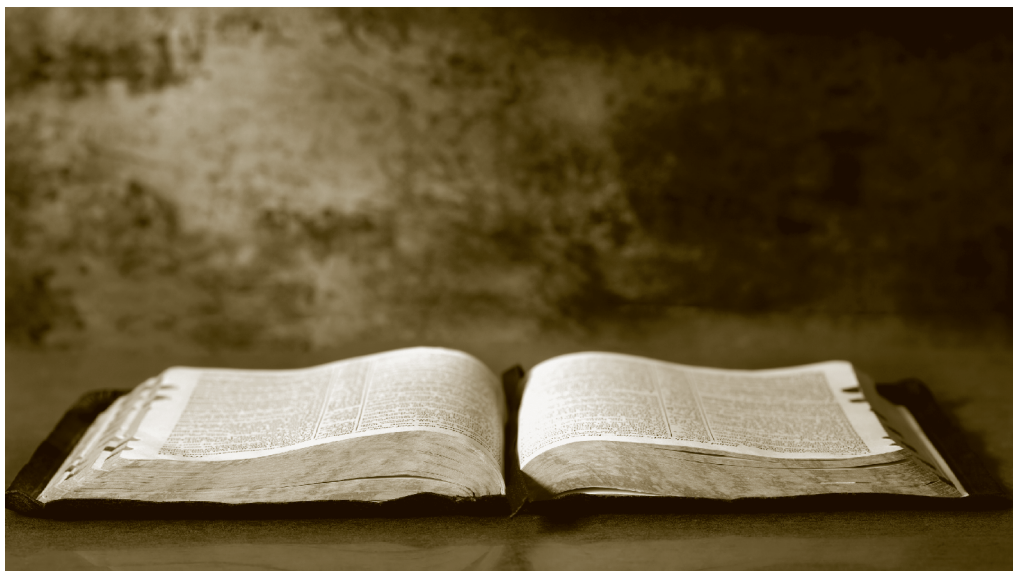
- Noah Webster: "All of the miseries and evils which men suffer from, vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery, and war, proceed from them despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible."⁴

- Benjamin Rush: "The Bible contains more knowledge necessary to man in his present state than any other book in the world."⁵

A remarkable number of U.S. presidents throughout history have concurred:

- John Adams: "The Bible is the best book in the world."⁶

- John Quincy Adams: "No book in the



world deserves to be so unceasingly studied and so profoundly meditated upon as the Bible."⁷

- Abraham Lincoln: "The Bible is the best gift God has given to men. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it, we could not know right from wrong."⁸

- Theodore Roosevelt: "The teachings of the Bible are so interwoven and entwined with our whole civic and social life that it would be literally — I do not mean figuratively, I mean literally — impossible for us to figure to ourselves what that life would be if these teachings were removed."⁹

- Woodrow Wilson: "The Bible is the one supreme source of revelation of the meaning of life, the nature of God, and the spiritual nature and needs of men. It is the only guide of life which really leads the spirit in the way of peace and salvation."¹⁰

- Calvin Coolidge: "The strength of our country is the strength of its religious convictions. The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal

in our country."¹¹

- Franklin Roosevelt: "We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a nation without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic. I suggest a nationwide reading of the Holy Scriptures."¹²

- Harry Truman: "The fundamental basis of this Nation's law was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teachings which we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul. I don't think we emphasize that enough these days."¹³

- Ronald Reagan: "Of the many influences that have shaped the United States of America into a distinctive Nation and people, none may be said to be more fundamental and enduring than the Bible."¹⁴

The significance of the Bible to our leaders' way of thinking was demonstrated by the specific recommendation by the United States Congress that people study America's first English-language Bible: "Resolved that the United States in Congress assembled ... recommend this edi-

from the president's desk

a word from dr. jeff myers



The Bible is the best-selling book in the world. It is printed, in part or in whole, in 2,800 languages worldwide.¹ On average, 85 percent of U.S. households own a Bible; the average number of Bibles per household is 4.3.² Unfortunately, while the Bible is widely owned, it goes largely unstudied:

- Barely one-quarter of adults (27 percent) are confident that Satan exists, even though this is a key teaching of the Bible and something Jesus frequently taught.³

- Sixty percent of Americans can't name five of the Ten Commandments.

- Only 52 percent of young adults knew it was false to say that "Sodom and Gomorrah were married."⁴

- Fifty percent of Americans, including Christians, can't name any of the four Gospels.⁵

If the majority of Christians don't know what the Bible says, we can be sure they also don't realize what the Bible is for. "It's a rule book," some say. "It's a love letter," we've heard, "from God just to us."

However, the Bible doesn't *look* like a rule book, an instruction manual, or a love letter. It looks like something else altogether. Recognizing what the Bible is will affect how we read it and whether or not we understand it. The introduction to *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, a children's book written by author Sally Lloyd-Jones, prosaically sets forth what the Bible is really all about:

God wrote, "I love you" — he wrote it in the sky, and on the earth, and under the sea. He wrote his message everywhere! Because God created everything in his world to reflect him like a mirror — to show us what he is like, to help us know him, to make our hearts sing. ...

And God put it into words, too, and wrote it in a book called "the Bible."

Now, some people think the Bible is a book of rules, telling you what you

should and shouldn't do. The Bible certainly does have some rules in it. They show you how life works best. But the Bible isn't mainly about you and what you should be doing. It's about God and what he has done.

Other people think the Bible is a book of heroes, showing you people you should copy. The Bible does have some heroes in it, but (as you'll soon find out) most of the people in the Bible aren't heroes at all. They make some big mistakes (sometimes on purpose). They get afraid and run away. At times, they are downright mean.

“Recognizing what the Bible is will affect how we read it and whether or not we understand it.”

No, the Bible isn't a book of rules, or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all a Story. It's an adventure story about a young Hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It's a love story about a brave Prince who leaves his palace, his throne — everything — to rescue the one he loves. It's like the most wonderful of fairy tales that has come true in real life!

You see, the best thing about this Story is — it's true.

There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them.

It takes the whole Bible to tell this Story. And at the center of the Story, there is a baby. Every Story in the Bible whispers his name. He is like the missing piece in a puzzle — the piece that makes all the other pieces fit together, and suddenly you can see a beautiful

picture.⁷

If Lloyd-Jones' telling of it is correct, then being ignorant

of or misunderstanding the Bible is to miss the whole point of life itself! Perhaps we should recall the words of Jesus, who said, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

If we want to live out a biblical worldview in the 21st century, we've got to read and understand the Bible. This is a resolution that can change your life — and the world.

Notes

1. For more on Bible translation efforts around the world, see the website for Wycliffe Bible Translators, <http://wycliffe.org.uk/wycliffe/about/vision-whatwedo.html>

2. Lamar Vest, "Does the Bible Still Matter in 2012?" <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/04/29/does-bible-still-matter-in-2012/>

3. "Barna Studies the Research, Offers a Year-in-Review Perspective,"

4. <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/325-barna-studies-the-research-offers-a-year-in-review-perspective#.UnJ3mrvkWL3g>

5. "Americans Get an 'F' in Religion," USA Today, March 14, 2007, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2007-03-07-teaching-religion-cover_n.htm

6. American Bible Society: The State of the Bible, 2013, <http://www.americanbible.org/uploads/content/State%20of%20the%20Bible%20Report%202013.pdf>

7. "Quick, Can You Name a Gospel?" Forbes, April 8, 2009, <http://www.forbes.com/2009/04/08/unlikely-disciple-roose-bible-opinions-contributors-christian-easter.html>

8. Sally Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name* (Grand Rapids, MI: ZonderKids, 2007), pp. 12-17.

most important book

continued from page 1

tion of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States."¹⁵ Clearly, America's founders saw the Bible as essential to the basis of a free society.

The preservation of freedom is only one of many reasons for studying the Bible. In his lecture "Why Should We Study the Bible?" Summit Ministries' founder, David A. Noebel, offers compelling reasons to take the Bible seriously. Here are four of his key points:

1. The Bible is part of world literature. There are more quotations from the Bible than from any other source. Even atheist Richard Dawkins, who abhors the Bible as a source of morality, wrote a startling editorial proclaiming that all children should read the Bible. Dawkins said, "A native speaker of English who has never read a word of the King James Bible is verging on the barbarian."¹⁶

2. The Bible changed Western Civilization. Alvin Schmidt's *How Christianity Changed the World* says the Bible's moral guidance influenced everything, including the abolition of slavery, the banning of child molestation, freedom and dignity for women, the formation of hospitals and schools, the securing of liberty and justice for all, the advancement of science, the development of great art and architecture, and the sanctity of human life.¹⁷

3. Knowledge of the Bible is the mark

“The Bible's moral guidance influenced everything, including the abolition of slavery, the banning of child molestation, freedom and dignity for women, the formation of hospitals and schools, the securing of liberty and justice for all, the advancement of science, the development of great art and architecture, and the sanctity of human life.”

of an educated person. William Lyon Phelps, a Yale professor for 41 years, wrote in *Human Nature in the Bible*, "Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated; and no other learning or culture, no matter how extensive or elegant, can, among Europeans and Americans, form a proper substitute. ... I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college education is more valuable than a college course without the Bible."¹⁸

4. Knowledge of the Bible is the mark of a moral person. To live successfully in this world, a person must be able to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, and choose to do what is right and good. The famous Golden Rule of morality, "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you," comes directly from the Bible (see Matthew 7:12 and also Mark 12:29-31, in which Jesus references the Old Testament passages of Exodus 3:6, Deuteronomy 6:4-5, and Leviticus 19:18). Even famed British atheist Bertrand Russell understood the principle when he said, "What the world needs is Christian love or compassion."¹⁹

The Bible changed the world, and it can do the same today to those who will take time to read it, study it, and apply it.

Notes

1. Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (George Lawrence, Trans., J.P. Mayer, Ed.) (New

York: Harper Perennial, 1969), p. 291.

2. John Jay, "Letter to Maria," October 21, 1794, *Selected Letters of John Jay and Sarah Livingston Jay* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2005), p. 235.

3. See "The Rights of the Colonists," The Report of the Committee of Correspondence to the Boston Town Meeting, November 20, 1772, http://www.constitution.org/bcp/right_col.htm

4. Noah Webster, *History of the United States* (New Haven, CT: Durrie and Peck, 1832), p. 339.

5. Benjamin Rush, "A Defense of the Use of the Bible in Schools," *The American Museum, or, Universal Magazine*, Volume 9, from January to June 1791 (Philadelphia: Carey, Stewart, and Co., 1791), p. 129.

6. John Adams, "Letter to Thomas Jefferson," December 25, 1813, http://www.beliefnet.com/resource/lib/docs/72/Letter_from_John_Adams_to_Thomas_Jefferson_1.html

7. John Quincy Adams, *Letters by John Quincy Adams to His Son on the Bible and Its Teachings* (Auburn, ME: James A. Alden, 1850), p. 119.

8. Abraham Lincoln, "Reply to Loyal Colored People of Baltimore upon Presentation of a Bible," September 7, 1864, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/lincoln/lincoln7/1:1184?rgn=div1;singlegenre=Al;sort=occur;subview=detail;type=simple;view=fulltext;q1=September+7%2C+1864>

9. Theodore Roosevelt, "On Reading the Bible," March 27, 1919, p. 8.

10. James Kearney, *The Political Education of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: The Century Company, 1926), p. 273.

11. Calvin Coolidge, "Religion: Our Nation's Strength," *The Delineator*, July 1922, p. 2.

12. Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1938), p. 420.

13. Harry S. Truman, Harry S. Truman: *Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, 1945-53* (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 157.

14. Ronald Reagan, "Proclamation 5018 of February 3, 1983, 'Year of the Bible,'" *Federal Code of Regulations, 1983 Compilation* (Washington DC: Office of the Federal Register, 1984), p. 9.

15. Here's a photograph of the proclamation: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/vc006473.jpg>

16. Richard Dawkins, "Why I want all our children to read the King James Bible," *The Observer*, May 19, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2012/may/19/richard-dawkins-king-james-bible>

17. See Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004).

18. William Lyon Phelps, *Human Nature in the Bible* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), p. ix.

19. Bertrand Russell, *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* (New York: Mentor, 1962), p. viii. Marijuana Legalization

a look at our world

news and commentary

Editor's Note: Our President Emeritus, Dr. David Noebel, helps us with research by sending 20-30 pages of clippings of each month's news. To see the complete list of Doc's clippings, go to www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/, open the PDF, and scroll to page 9, or call us at 866.786.6483.

International Affairs

The charter of Hamas, the controlling faction in the Gaza Strip, states, "[Peace] initiatives, the so-called peaceful solutions, and the international conferences to resolve the Palestinian problem are all contrary to the beliefs of the Islamic Resistance Movement. For renouncing any part of Palestine means renouncing part of the religion."

Suddenly, the current conflict between Israel and the Hamas faction in the Gaza Strip comes into striking clarity. In evaluating the violence currently going on in Gaza, it is informative to understand not only how both sides operate, but how both sides define themselves and their purposes.

Although Hamas rejects the peace process, its charter, written in 1988, proposes an acceptable alternative solution to the conflict: "There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad. The initiatives, proposals, and International Conferences are but a waste of time, an exercise in futility."

Hamas' enmity toward Israel is not because of Israel's policies or actions. It is because of Israel's identity and existence. The charter continues, "Israel, by virtue of its being Jewish and of having a Jewish population, defies Islam and the Muslims."

The charter is not vague about how it will deal with the Jews or the state of Israel. It further states, "The prophet, prayer and peace be upon him, said: The time will not come until Muslims will

fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! there is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him!"

It adds, "I swear by that who holds in His Hands the Soul of Muhammad! I indeed wish to go to war for the sake of Allah! I will assault and kill, assault and kill, assault and kill (told by Bukhari and Muslim)."

In the recent conflict in Israel and Palestine, Hamas stands as the organization committed to the destruction of its neighboring state. Hamas launched rockets toward Israeli population centers, aiming for civilians rather than military targets. Hamas continued to launch rockets toward Israel during a humanitarian ceasefire, and Hamas rejected the opportunity for a truce.

Only after 10 days of being bombarded by Hamas, and responding through missile defense systems and air strikes, did Israel finally respond with a ground offensive. Yet during this offensive and during the retaliatory air strikes that preceded it, Israel has exercised every power within its ability to show restraint and minimize Palestinian civilian casualties.

As confirmed by the *New York Times*,

"Hamas' enmity toward Israel is not because of Israel's policies or actions. It is because of Israel's identity and existence."

Connor Headrick

Israel has attempted to reduce civilian casualties by dropping leaflets warning citizens to evacuate, by calling phones in target buildings, and even by firing flares or dummy missiles at Palestinian roofs

to ensure the occupants that the military is serious about an imminent strike.

How has Hamas responded? "To all of our people who have evacuated their homes — return to them immediately and do not leave the house," a statement by the Hamas Interior Ministry commands.

In commenting on this issue in the same article, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated, "[O]ne must understand how our enemy operates. Who hides in mosques? Hamas. Who puts arsenals under hospitals? Hamas. Who puts command centers in residences or near kindergartens? Hamas. Hamas is using the residents of Gaza as human shields and it is bringing disaster to the civilians of Gaza. Therefore, for any attack on Gaza civilians, which we regret, Hamas and its partners bear sole responsibility."

As tragic as Palestinian civilian casualties are, there is no question that Israel is doing everything within its power to prevent casualties in its offensive against Hamas, while Hamas is actively endangering its own civilians' lives.

If anyone has the moral high ground in this conflict, it is Israel. Israel is not an oppressive, racist state. Rather, it provides freedoms for citizens of all ethnicities and allows religious freedom for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. In response to the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, Prime Minister Netanyahu stated, "Courageous Arab protesters are now struggling to secure these very same rights for their peoples, for their societies. We're proud in Israel that over 1 million Arab citizens of Israel have been enjoying these rights for decades. Of the 300 million Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa, only Israel's Arab citizens enjoy real democratic rights."

In the same speech, Prime Minis-



a look at our world

continued from page 4

ter Netanyahu stated, "[A]ll six Israeli prime ministers since the signing of the Oslo accords agreed to establish a Palestinian state, myself included. So why has peace not been achieved?"

Because so far the Palestinians have been unwilling to accept a Palestinian state if it means accepting a Jewish state alongside it.

You see, our conflict has never been about the establishment of a Palestinian state. It's always been about the existence of the Jewish state.

A 2012 television ad by Hamas captures this truth with precision. The ad says, "The price will be high, Sons of Zion. Are you willing to pay the price ... ? All of Palestine is ours. There's nothing here for you but death. There's nothing here for you but to be killed and to leave. ... If your arms reach [us], they will be cut off. If your eyes look [at us], they will be gouged out. ... In the land that you came to alive, you will end as body parts. That is Allah's promise."

It would be false to claim that Israel is perfect, or incapable of doing wrong. But the balance of moral authority between Israel and Hamas is clear. Israel is a beacon of democracy and freedom within the turbulent sea of the Middle East. Hamas is a group of terrorists whose stated goal is to destroy the state of Israel.

Israel, on the other hand, is willing to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a two-state solution. In a call to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a member of the Fatah faction rather than Hamas, Prime Minister Netanyahu said, "So I say to President Abbas, 'Tear up your pact with Hamas, sit down and negotiate, make peace with the Jewish state. And if you do, I promise you this: Israel will not be the last country to welcome a Palestinian state as the new member of the United Nations. It will be the first to do so.'"

Let us not make the mistake of put-

ting Israel and Hamas on the same moral ground. Let us no longer condone Hamas by our silence.

Rather, let us speak the truth about Hamas, as contained within their own stated purpose for existence and in their own observed actions, and let us stand firmly beside Israel as it defends its nation from terrorism.

—Connor Headrick
American Thinker
August 3, 2014

Homosexuality

New LGBT initiatives have become routine as major sports leagues jockey for cultural prominence and prepare for the publicity of openly homosexual players. As a "social institution" with "responsibilities," Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig placed his league further in line with the LGBT lobby.

In a press conference before the MLB All-Star Game in Minneapolis, Selig praised the late Glenn Burke and named him the sport's official gay "pioneer." Burke "came out" in 1982, two years after a retirement he blamed on prejudice and his inner conflict. He died of AIDS in 1995 at 42.

Selig then named former player Billy Bean as the league's "Ambassador for Inclusion." An LGBT activist, Bean will refine initiatives begun last year, including "educational training initiatives against sexism, homophobia, and prejudice."

Every major league now has a partnership with an activist group to preach to their players — the MLB chose Athlete Ally. The NFL and NHL often work with You Can Play. Rookie seminars range from encouraging simple trust and respect needed in the vulnerability of a locker room to more subtle messages. A 2012 NBA video for rookies featured GLAAD and Athlete Ally representatives on "the importance of being an ally."

The difference between acceptance and support aren't defined, but activists are in each case helping craft league policies. A person can pledge online with You Can Play to "ensure that athletes are judged solely on talent, heart, desire, and work ethic." But the MLB jumped headlong into the LGBT worldview. In signing Athlete Ally's pledge, Hall of Famers Yogi Berra and Joe Torre endorsed everyone's "perceived or actual sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression."

Major leagues have yet to address overtly biblical views by players, but that time may come soon. The NHL's You Can Play partnership will help govern what officials regard as unacceptable "homophobic remarks," *The New York Times* reports. The NBA's David Stern told the *Times* the league will approach players who express "inappropriate views." On July 18, Minnesota Vikings special teams coach Mike Priefer became the second NFL figure to face "individualized anti-harassment, diversity, and sexual-orientation sensitivity training" because of his words.

—Andrew Branch
World Magazine
August 9, 2014

"Neither the Ebola outbreak nor the ongoing Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria prevented U.S. President Barak Obama and Vice President Joe Biden from raising the issue of homosexuality during last week's U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington. The American leaders, along with other current and former Obama administration officials, capitalized on economic concerns to encourage African leaders to expand legal protections and privileges for homosexuals and call for cultural acceptance of homosexuality."

—Kirsten Andersen
The Jackson (TN) Press
August 19, 2014

How to Study the Bible

The Apostle Paul wrote to his protégé Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Later in the same letter, he affirmed his own careful study with a request: “When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments” (2 Timothy 4:13). Even though Paul was an old man approaching his death, he intended to continue studying Scripture to his dying day.

It is extraordinarily rare for a holy book to call for careful, rational examination of its own teachings to see if they are consistent with revealed truth. Nothing in the Qur’an, for example, says, “Check this out for yourself to see if the Prophet Mohammad was correct.” In fact, Mohammad himself was told to consult the “people of the Book” (Christians and Jews) if he doubted that the message he was receiving from the angel Gabriel was correct.¹ Why? Because Christians and Jews had diligently studied the Bible (though, the Qur’an claims, to little effect).² As for itself, the message of the Qur’an is much like the books of other religious worldviews: “Here it is, take it or leave it.”³

The Bible promises several benefits to those who carefully examine it:

- Insight into how to bear spiritual fruit. See Galatians 5:22-34.
- Freedom from spiritual bondage.

“The Bible calls for careful examination because it is revelation from God.”



See 2 Corinthians 3:17-4:2.

- Direction in life. See Proverbs 3:5-6.
- The ability to grasp truth and defeat error. See 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.

The Bible calls for careful examination because it is revelation from God. “Revelation” means to make known something that was previously unknown. The Hebrew word (*galah*) and the Greek word (*apokalupto*) “express the idea of uncovering what was concealed.”⁴ As Gordon R. Lewis wrote, “Revelation is an activity of the invisible, living God making known to finite and sinful people His creative power, moral standards, and gracious redemptive plan.”⁵

How can we best study and understand God’s revelation in Scripture? Consider these 10 steps:

Step #1: Commit to reading the Bible and studying it. One common mistake people make when learning about the Bible is to assume that what pastors and commentators say about the Bible should be given place over their own personal study of it. Take the

time to really read the Bible. No one is setting a stop watch or an alarm clock. At whatever time, in whatever place is most conducive for you to read — do it. You can’t get in shape by playing around in a gym. Nor can you grasp the Bible just by reading about it. You have to get into the text in a serious way.

Step #2: Read the Bible in context. Never content yourself with reading a single Bible verse. Instead, read it in context and learn how the verse fits into the paragraph, how the paragraph fits into the chapter, how the chapter fits into the book, and how the book fits into the Bible as a whole.⁶ A good foreign language interpreter does not insert his own meaning into what is being said or render only what he thinks should have been said. Instead, he renders his source as faithfully as he can. This is what we must do when understanding Scripture.

Step #3: Choose a translation. It is important to begin your study of God’s Word with a solid translation reflecting the realities of the original ancient texts. Online Bible programs such as

www.biblegateway.com offer several translations at the click of a mouse, and www.bible.cc shows various translations side by side. With these tools, you can compare several versions at once. If you have the opportunity to pick out a Bible, look for one called a “Study Bible,” such as the English Standard Version (ESV) Study Bible published by Crossway Publishers.

Step #4: Understand the genre. Next, to understand a specific Bible passage, identify the genre in which it is written. The primary genres are the Old Testament narratives, the Old Testament law, the prophets, the psalms, the “writings” (wisdom literature), the gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, epistles (“letters”), and apocalyptic literature (Revelation). The genre is important. Graeme Goldsworthy says, “The issue is not that of giving a piece of text a precise name of genre identification, but rather that of understanding the variety of ways that literature can be used to communicate.”⁷

Step #5: Understand the context. By “context” we mean the historical and literary basis for a text. Historical context refers to “the time and culture of the author and his readers, that is the geographical, topographical, and political factors that are relevant to the author’s setting; and the occasion of the book, letter, psalm, prophetic oracle, or other genre.”⁸ Two questions to ask are, “What occasioned the writing?” and “What is the purpose of the writing?”⁹

Step #6: Understand the content. “Content” has to do with the meanings of words, the grammatical relationships in sentences, and the choice of the original text where the manuscripts have variant readings,” say Fee and Stuart. “It also includes a number of the items [such as] the meaning of denarius, or a Sabbath day’s journey,

or ‘high places,’ etc.”¹⁰ One helpful tool in understanding both the context and the content of Scripture is called a commentary. Commentaries are books written by theologians to help people better understand Scripture, passage by passage.

Step #7: Look for relationships. Matthew 4:1-4 (ESV) describes Jesus being led into the wilderness and tempted by the devil. The text says, “And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ But he answered, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’” To understand what Jesus was saying, we need to look at the Old Testament passage Jesus was quoting: Deuteronomy chapter 8, where Moses gave instruction to the children of Israel in the wilderness.

Step #8: Study words. Because the Bible is a unified whole, we might expect words and concepts to be woven throughout in the way individual threads weave throughout a tapestry to create a meaningful picture. To get started with a word study, type the word you’re studying into a Bible program, write down each occurrence, and study them one by one in the context in which they occur.

Step #9: Bring your experience to bear. After we have done the hard work in steps 1 through 8, we are often invited to bring our experiences to bear by the Bible’s use of examples from everyday life. When the Psalmist tells us that he hides in the shadow of God’s wings, people who know something about chickens are invited to picture the way a mother hen shelters her chicks in times of danger.

Step #10: Courageously pursue a

response. We are to be “doers” of the word, not hearers only (James 1:22). To hear God’s Word and do nothing about it is to deceive ourselves into thinking we are free to do nothing. Here are three actions to pursue:

- **Journal.** It’s great to get “off-line” for a bit and actually write things down that we can refer to for the rest of our lives and that might even be of spiritual benefit to those who come after us.

- **Share.** Talk to people. “May I share with you something I learned from scripture today? It would help me if I could talk about it aloud.”

- **Live.** God’s Word is powerful, and often God meets us with specific promptings about how we should live differently. Jesus said in John 13:17 (ESV), “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” To not do them is to not know them.

Notes

1. See the Qur’an, Suras 10:94, 16:43, and 21:7.
2. See, for example, Qur’an, Sura 2:40-44 and 2:121.
3. See the Qur’an, Sura 2, in its entirety for insight into how the Qur’an is to be believed and not questioned.
4. Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), p. 201.
5. The *Apologetics Study Bible*, ed. J.P. Moreland, Paul Copan, and Ted Cabal (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), p. 1823.
6. Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It’s Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), pp. 17-18.
7. Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), p. 51.
8. Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It’s Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), p. 26.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

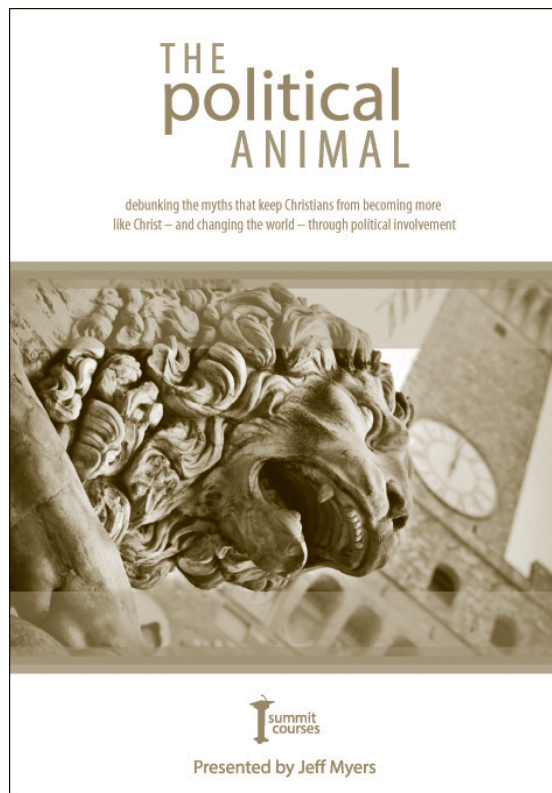


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International Affairs

The charter of Hamas, the controlling faction in the Gaza Strip, states, "[Peace] initiatives, the so-called peaceful solutions, and the international conferences to resolve the Palestinian problem are all contrary to the beliefs of the Islamic Resistance Movement. For renouncing any part of Palestine means renouncing part of the religion."

Suddenly, the current conflict between Israel and the Hamas faction in the Gaza Strip comes into striking clarity. In evaluating the violence currently going on in Gaza, it is informative to understand not only how both sides operate, but how both sides define themselves and their purposes.

Although Hamas rejects the peace process, its charter, written in 1988, proposes an acceptable alternative solution to the conflict: "There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad. The initiatives, proposals, and International Conferences are but a waste of time, an exercise in futility."

Hamas' enmity toward Israel is not because of Israel's policies or actions. It is because of Israel's identity and existence. The charter continues, "Israel, by virtue of its being Jewish and of having a Jewish population, defies Islam and the Muslims."

The charter is not vague about how it will deal with the Jews or the state of Israel. It further states, "The prophet, prayer and peace be upon him, said: The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! there is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him!"

It adds, "I swear by that who holds in His Hands the Soul of Muhammad! I

indeed wish to go to war for the sake of Allah! I will assault and kill, assault and kill, assault and kill (told by Bukhari and Muslim)."

In the recent conflict in Israel and Palestine, Hamas stands as the organization committed to the destruction of its neighboring state. Hamas launched rockets toward Israeli population centers, aiming for civilians rather than military targets. Hamas continued to launch rockets toward Israel during a humanitarian ceasefire, and Hamas rejected the opportunity for a truce.

Only after 10 days of being bombarded by Hamas, and responding through missile defense systems and air strikes, did Israel finally respond with a ground offensive. Yet during this offensive and during the retaliatory air strikes that preceded it, Israel has exercised every power within its ability to show restraint and minimize Palestinian civilian casualties.

As confirmed by the *New York Times*, Israel has attempted to reduce civilian casualties by dropping leaflets warning citizens to evacuate, by calling phones in target buildings, and even by firing flares or dummy missiles at Palestinian roofs to ensure the occupants that the military is serious about an imminent strike.

How has Hamas responded? "To all of our people who have evacuated their homes — return to them immediately and do not leave the house," a statement by the Hamas Interior Ministry commands.

In commenting on this issue in the same article, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated, "[O]ne must understand how our enemy operates. Who hides in mosques? Hamas. Who puts arsenals under hospitals? Hamas. Who puts command centers in resi-

dences or near kindergartens? Hamas. Hamas is using the residents of Gaza as human shields and it is bringing disaster to the civilians of Gaza. Therefore, for any attack on Gaza civilians, which we regret, Hamas and its partners bear sole responsibility."

As tragic as Palestinian civilian casualties are, there is no question that Israel is doing everything within its power to prevent casualties in its offensive against Hamas, while Hamas is actively endangering its own civilians' lives.

If anyone has the moral high ground in this conflict, it is Israel. Israel is not an oppressive, racist state. Rather, it provides freedoms for citizens of all ethnicities and allows religious freedom for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. In response to the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, Prime Minister Netanyahu stated, "Courageous Arab protesters are now struggling to secure these very same rights for their peoples, for their societies. We're proud in Israel that over 1 million Arab citizens of Israel have been enjoying these rights for decades. Of the 300 million Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa, only Israel's Arab citizens enjoy real democratic rights."

In the same speech, Prime Minister Netanyahu stated, "[A]ll six Israeli prime ministers since the signing of the Oslo accords agreed to establish a Palestinian state, myself included. So why has peace not been achieved?

Because so far the Palestinians have been unwilling to accept a Palestinian state if it means accepting a Jewish state alongside it.

You see, our conflict has never been about the establishment of a Palestinian state. It's always been about the existence of the Jewish state.

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A 2012 television ad by Hamas captures this truth with precision. The ad says, “The price will be high, Sons of Zion. Are you willing to pay the price ... ? All of Palestine is ours. There’s nothing here for you but death. There’s nothing here for you but to be killed and to leave. ... If your arms reach [us], they will be cut off. If your eyes look [at us], they will be gouged out. ... In the land that you came to alive, you will end as body parts. That is Allah’s promise.”

It would be false to claim that Israel is perfect, or incapable of doing wrong. But the balance of moral authority between Israel and Hamas is clear. Israel is a beacon of democracy and freedom within the turbulent sea of the Middle East. Hamas is a group of terrorists whose stated goal is to destroy the state of Israel.

Israel, on the other hand, is willing to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a two-state solution. In a call to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a member of the Fatah faction rather than Hamas, Prime Minister Netanyahu said, “So I say to President Abbas, ‘Tear up your pact with Hamas, sit down and negotiate, make peace with the Jewish state. And if you do, I promise you this: Israel will not be the last country to welcome a Palestinian state as the new member of the United Nations. It will be the first to do so.’”

Let us not make the mistake of putting Israel and Hamas on the same moral ground. Let us no longer condone Hamas by our silence.

Rather, let us speak the truth about Hamas, as contained within their own stated purpose for existence and in their own observed actions, and let us stand

firmly beside Israel as it defends its nation from terrorism.

— Connor Headrick
American Thinker
August 3, 2014

OK, so let me get this straight. In the light of so many horrific and barbaric atrocities occurring overseas in the name of Islam recently, including home-grown Australians taking part, our Prime Minister makes a mild plea for all of us to be on the “same team.”

And he calls for changes to laws which will cut off dole payments to terrorists. Also, he says we need to stiffen our anti-terrorism laws to prevent Australians joining in overseas jihad, in part by making it an offense to travel to certain locations overseas.

As a result, there was a huge outpouring of support from the Islamic community, with numerous Muslim leaders publicly applauding the Prime Minister for his measured and sensible efforts to tackle the scourge of terrorism and to make Australia a safer place. Yes, the leaders came out in droves to sing his praises, as did tens of thousands of ordinary Muslims, all thankful for a wise and judicious leader like Mr. Abbott.

Then again, maybe not. My first two paragraphs are 100 percent correct. Regrettably, my third paragraph is 100 percent incorrect. There were no mass shows of support for Abbott. There were no Muslim leaders saying “well done, Tony.” There were no outpourings of gratitude from the Islamic community.

Indeed, we got the very opposite! Yes, you heard me right. We did indeed get large numbers of Islamic leaders coming together to comment on this — but only to condemn it! Yes, the Muslim

community — you know, the supposed majority of moderates out there — raised their voice, but only to condemn the Prime Minister and his very temperate proposals.

They actually made a public declaration of their disgust at Abbott’s efforts at curbing the sickening displays of barbarism we are now seeing on a daily basis from the Islamic State and other Islamic terrorist groups. Even more incredible is the fact that they issued this statement on the very day that IS posted a video showing the beheading of captured American journalist James Foley.

While the whole world is seeing how demonic the Islamic jihadists are, all our Muslim leaders can do here is condemn Abbott, instead of condemning these countless acts of pure evil. That tells us all we need to know, really. Instead of banding together to issue a public statement condemning IS and all other terrorists operating in the name of Islam, they say nothing.

Instead, they come out and make a big stink about sensible measures to curtail terrorism! Go figure. This absolutely speaks volumes about where our Islamic community is at. Complete silence about major, daily acts of Islamic terror and bloodshed, but a very vocal condemnation of efforts to reduce it.

So how many leaders exactly signed this condemnation of Abbott and his sensible reforms? Five? Ten? Maybe 15? Nope. A full 80 names are there. Did you get that? We actually had 80 key Muslim leaders in Australia signing this document.

I would not have thought that we can have many more than 80 key Islamic leaders in this country. If so, then the

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great majority of Australian Islamic leaders and VIPs have all rejected this modest proposal, and have instead decided to push the agenda of Islam, rather than that of Australia.

And consider some of the absolute nonsense contained in the statement. It begins with these words: “We — the undersigned imams, activists, leaders, community organizations and student bodies of the Muslim community — denounce these proposals and the broader ‘war on terror’ regime within which they fit.”

Consider this paragraph: “The primary basis of these laws is a trumped up ‘threat’ from ‘radicalized’ Muslims returning from Iraq or Syria. There is no solid evidence to substantiate this threat. Rather, racist caricatures of Muslims as backwards, prone to violence, and inherently problematic are being exploited. It is instructive that similar issues about Australian troops travelling abroad to fight or Jews travelling to train or fight with the Israeli Defense Force are simply never raised.”

“Trumped up”? “No solid evidence”? Um, I thought you guys were moderates who disapproved of violence and terror. Instead, you are trying to tell us that Islamic terrorism basically does not exist, and is just a beat-up by the kafir?! Denying that Islamic terrorism exists is hardly a reassuring way of showing your moderate credentials.

Let us get back to reality here. Simply consider one damning statistic. Since the September 11, 2001, Islamic terror attacks, we have had various other jihad attacks. So just how many have there been? I am glad you asked. To be precise, we have had 23,671 attacks committed

by Muslims in the name of Islam in the past 13 years.

To break this down a bit, what do we find for the previous week? From August 9–15, there have been 40 jihad attacks and three suicide attacks, resulting in 1,048 deaths and 348 critical injuries. That is one week my, friends. Yet all our Australian Islamic leaders can tell us is that warnings about Islamic violence are “trumped up” and that this is all an exercise in “fear-mongering.”

Well, I certainly am afraid all right. Nearly 24,000 jihadist attacks in 11 years! And did you get the rest of that remarkable claim? Australian troops and Israeli Defense Force troops are in the same camp! Yes, they routinely engage in suicide attacks, assaults on markets and schools, regularly engage in beheadings, and customarily proclaim death to unbelievers.

Yep, got that. So, condemn Abbott, and make excuses for the terrorists. And this from our “mainstream” Muslim community.

Um, so where are all these moderate Muslims? I am still waiting to discover them. Even a handful would do.

— Bill Muehlenberg
billmuehlenberg.com
August 21, 2014

When I attended Stanford in the 1990s, explaining my ethnic background to fellow students was a challenge. I am Chaldean. Or as my more scripted response became: “We are ethnic Assyrians from northern Iraq who belong to the Chaldean Rite of the Catholic Church.”

I would explain how Chaldeans are members of the Eastern Catholic Church, while Assyrians are members

of the Assyrian Church of the East, independent of the Roman Catholic Church. Both, however, share a common ethnic heritage distinct and apart from their Arab neighbors in Iraq. We speak a colloquial form of Aramaic, the same language spoken in the Mideast at the time of Christ.

Having heard of ancient Assyrian civilization at some point, many responded with: “They still exist?” Feeling a bit like a museum artifact, my answer at the time was a simple: “Yeah, we exist.” Today, as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham continues its rampage through northern Syria and Iraq, I would add: “for now.”

Before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, an estimated 1.4 million Chaldeans and Assyrians inhabited Iraq. In the decade that followed, hundreds of thousands of these Iraqi Christians either sought permanent refuge abroad or were internally displaced. During this turmoil, more than 60 churches were bombed, a Chaldean Catholic Archbishop was kidnapped and murdered, and an Iraqi Christian population of 1.4 million dwindled to fewer than 500,000 — a result of the insurgency, subsequent unrest, and radically anti-Christian sentiment that ensued.

By no means are today’s Iraqi Christians novices at living among conflict. For more than 2,000 years, Chaldeans and Assyrians survived countless Persian wars, persecution as early Christian converts, Mongol siege, Arab conquest, Ottoman subjugation, Western colonial rule, postcolonial coups, war with Iran, the Arab-Kurd conflict and chemical-weapon attacks.

Today, targeted by ISIS for their Christian faith, Chaldeans and Assyrians

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ians are the victims of an unabashed ethnic-cleansing campaign. After seizing the northern city of Mosul in June, ISIS spray-painted the symbol for “Nazarene” on the homes of Christians. Families had 24 hours to convert to Islam, leave the city, or face execution. Christians leaving the city had their possessions confiscated at security checkpoints and were forced to leave with nothing.

Most refugees fled to neighboring villages under the protection of Kurdish security forces, the Peshmerga. In response, ISIS shut off water supplies from Mosul to those villages. ISIS then continued its rapid advance into the villages outside of Mosul, displacing hundreds of thousands from their homes, converting churches to mosques, destroying homes and businesses, and leaving nothing to return to. An entire people have been cleansed from the region, guilty of nothing but their faith and ancient ethnicity.

While recent U.S. airstrikes have helped, the Obama administration appears to be pursuing a policy of containment, combined with a naïve hope that the ISIS threat will somehow dissipate. Whether efforts to rally our NATO allies and neighboring Middle East states to help Baghdad and the Kurds defeat ISIS remains to be seen.

What is clear is that the fate of Chaldeans and Assyrians in northern Iraq remains exclusively in the hands of outsiders. Having weathered endless storms of unrest in the region for thousands of years, the biggest threat to their continued existence today is silence and the unwillingness of Western leaders to acknowledge a genocide in the making.

I was the executive director of the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council of

America from 2008-2010 and my primary task was to communicate the plight of Iraqi Christian minorities to the U.S. government. Our council was successful in initiating and passing non-binding Senate Resolution 322 (2010) and House Resolution 944 (2010), each calling on the Obama administration to work toward ending the marginalization and persecution of ethnic minorities within Iraq. But most of our calls for actual assistance fell on deaf ears.

Some officials expressed concern that U.S. support for Iraqi minorities — Christians in particular — could tarnish relations with the Arab world by suggesting favoritism toward Western religion. Other officials insisted that Iraqi minorities use “democratic” channels within Iraq to address their concerns.

Such channels have all but dried up, if they ever existed. It was once thought that the “rising tide” of democracy in Iraq would, over time, alleviate the plight of Iraqi minorities. What ISIS has taught us in recent months is that if there is a rising tide in Iraq, it isn’t democracy. As for the future of Chaldeans and Assyrians, at least I can confirm that we still exist — for now.

— John Paul Kuriakuz
The Wall Street Journal
August 24, 2014

The Discovery Channel just ran another of its wildly popular “Shark Weeks” without mentioning what is probably the shark attack capital of the Western hemisphere — the Florida straits.

“Getting attacked by a shark just might be the scariest event in nature!” gasped a Discovery Channel narrator during Shark Week. “Australia recorded 56 fatal shark attacks between 1956 and 2008!” he gasped

again. “Find out what it’s like from people who’ve lived to tell the tale!”

So the Discovery Channel goes back over half a century and to a distant continent to interview the victims and dramatize the attacks. But why the distant timeline and setting, ask many people in south Florida?

“The Florida Straits probably record 56 fatal shark attacks *every few years*,” says Matt Lawrence, who spent years rescuing desperate Cuban rafters. “Probably every *month* during the early ’90s,” adds Bay of Pigs vet Arturo Cobo who ran the rafter rescue center in Key West and for years heard the sobbing, gut-grIPPING details of these attacks almost daily.

“Something was moving in this raft,” recalls an airborne rescuer.

So I went in lower. The water all around the raft was turning red ... the cloud spreading. Then I saw the shark — about the same length as the raft. The rafter was in fact a Cuban woman in her early 20s. Upon her rescue we found she had two bullet wounds in her legs from Castro’s frontier police. All others in the raft, including two infants had died, as did the shark, from being repeatedly stabbed by the pointed end of a broken oar by Maria. The shark had bitten the oar in half as Maria pounded him. ... I started flying rescue missions full-time after that.

“The boys’ father, delirious from thirst and exposure, finally jumped in the water,” recalls another rescuer.

So the sons threw him a rope tied to the raft and he clutched it. They turned away for a second, slightly relieved — but only to spot a huge shark approaching, then another. Soon an entire school surrounded the raft and they ripped into their father. ... The water turned red as their father was eaten alive. ... I can tell you from decades of heart-breaking work from our center here in Key West that in the Florida

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Straits, every week is shark week.

Were the “root cause” of this drama and horror more politically correct, can you imagine its popularity in movies? Docudramas? Reality TV? But as usual, Castro also escapes censure for this form of torture and mass-murder.

The waters surrounding Cuba are famed for their hordes of sharks. Most people entering them for extended periods (all those showboat swimmers and surfers) insist on a defense against them. Yet a quarter to a half-million Cubans have crossed these waters with little between them and the sharks than thin rubber or canvas — and knowing the odds were close to 50-50 that their craft would overturn or crumble.

Not that (given the media silence) most of you would have any reason to know this, but right off the southern Florida coast an estimated 70,000-80,000 people have perished since 1961 on the high seas, a large but unknown number of these at the hands (jaws, actually) of sharks. To this day, most airborne rescuers report seeing sharks in the vicinity of most Cuban rafters. Many have observed attacks. Most survivors mention sharks and shark attacks often during their terrible voyage.

So here’s one of America’s most populous states and one bounded by beaches crammed with tourists. You’d really think this setting right off the U.S. coast could provide the Discovery Channel with material much more dramatic and relevant (titillating) for its U.S. audience. But where’s the Discovery Channel on this?

Perhaps the Discovery Channel’s budgets remain unscathed by Obama-nomics, and the expense of flying production crews to Australia, South Africa, etc. rather than to Miami seems trivial?

On the other hand, upon viewing a Shark

Week segment set in Florida, some viewers might ask: “But why is it that for over half a century so many thousands of people have risked the ‘scariest event in nature’ in the Florida straits?”

Ah! And there’s the rub.

The Discovery Channel, you see, is a major business partner of the Castro regime. So such a show would probably not sit well with their communist client. When it comes to the U.S. media and U.S. celebrities, after all, this communist client is much more accustomed to seeing such items as Newsweek hailing Cuba as among the “best countries in the world to live,” to hearing Jack Nicholson hail Castro’s Stalinist fiefdom as “a paradise,” and to hear Bonnie Raitt commemorate Cuba in song as a “Happy Little Island!”

Never mind that 10 to 20 times as many people have died attempting to flee Castro’s Cuba as died trying to flee East Germany, who — best we can tell — won no awards from Newsweek for its “quality of life.” What makes these stats even worse is that prior to Castroism, Cuba took in immigrants at a higher rate than did the U.S. And mostly from Europe. Indeed, more Americans lived in Cuba than Cubans in the U.S.

The Discovery Channel’s “Buena Vista Fishing Videos” dramatizes their business partnership with Castro. This show features sport-fishing videos filmed in full partnership with the Stalinist regime’s ministry of tourism. These attract a large number of well-heeled sport fishermen from around the world to Cuba’s “unspoiled” and “fish-filled” coastal waters.

By the simple diktat of banning boat ownership under penalty of torture chamber and/or firing-squad for everyone except top-regime officials, many other nations could boast fishing grounds every bit as “un-

spoiled” as those surrounding the Castro brothers’ fiefdom.

He’d be loath to admit it, being a Che-T-shirt-wearer and all, but Eric Burdon of the Animals wrote a song that resounds with many Cubans: “*We gotta get outta this place — if it’s the last thing we ever do!*”

The last thing, indeed, for an estimated one-in-three of the desperate Cuban escapes during the ’60s, ’70s, and ’80s. This is according to a study by the late Cuban-American scholar Dr. Armando Lago. A consistently hot item on Cuba’s black market is used motor oil: poor man’s shark-repellent, they call it. Perhaps for a few minutes. I suppose we all cling to false hopes when desperate. And people get no more desperate than when striving to flee the handiwork of Newsweek’s “quality-of-life” winner.

— Humberto Fontova
Frontpagemag.com
August 25, 2014

Academia

The New Campus Speech Codes

As September dawns, millions of Americans are flocking to college campuses to start the new academic year. The leaves may be changing all around our beloved republic, but what seems to be unchanging — and, in fact, is becoming tiresomely predictable — is a kind of new intolerance on campuses aimed at the expression of one’s faith and free speech in general.

The ivy so long associated with some of our most beautiful colleges and universities is, increasingly, poisoned with speech zones and political correctness codes targeting men and women of faith. Christians in particular are feeling the serrated edges of this new intoler-

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erance, but the scope of the problem is so wide that its tentacles are putting a squeeze on our most basic and foundational liberties.

This has important ramifications for what it means to be a citizen of unchanging moral convictions in the realms of higher learning.

Uniformity is the New Diversity

At Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania earlier this year, a student expressed opposition to a pending speech by Princeton law professor Robbie George, one of the few well-known and highly regarded Christian conservatives in the Ivy League. The student wrote in *The Daily Swarthmore* in February that “what really bothered me is, the whole idea is that at a liberal arts college, we need to be hearing a diversity of opinion.” Not to be outdone, the campus newspaper *The Harvard Crimson* editorialized that academic freedom, once so highly and categorically guarded as the ideal that protects free-speech rights, should be replaced by something the editorial board called “academic justice” — which to most readers of fair mind is defined as the abolition of other views and opinions. The writer specifically complained about Harvey Mansfield, a longtime professor of government and one of the only conservatives at Harvard. One of Mansfield’s colleagues described the editorial as “the closing of the collegiate mind.”

It is not only elite campuses in the Northeast which are growing increasingly uncomfortable with free-speech rights, but also some in the Midwest. Highly regarded institutions such as Oberlin College in Ohio have seriously considered (and wisely rejected) the use

of something called “trigger warnings” for faculty preparing their students to read great literature.

The trigger warnings would say something like “Be aware of racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism, ableism, and other issues of privilege and oppression” while reading the classics. (For those who have never heard of “cissexism,” it means bias against people who believe they were born in the wrong body and seek to change their gender.

Professorial Arguments

The writer Norman Podhoretz observed in 1989 that college campuses are increasingly becoming “island(s) of repression in a sea of freedom.” His observation is increasingly becoming fact.

In an article published in the Spring 2014 *Claremont Review of Books* titled “Non Campus Mentis,” University of Colorado-Boulder Prof. Steven F. Hayward observes that “even the gender-defining community is having a hard time keeping up ... the standard shorthand is LGBTQ (for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Trans-gendered, and Queer); at Bowdoin College in Maine, it’s LGBTQIA (adding Intersex and Asexual); while down the road at Bates College [also in Maine], it’s LGBTIQQ (the second Q for Questioning).”

Another UC-Boulder professor only deepened this toxic and growing divide over speech, saying Hayward’s observations were “bordering on ... hate speech” and that perhaps censure should follow.

Quite apart from that incident, it is as if men and women of faith are now viewed in much the same way as the notorious racist Bull Connors was during the Civil Rights era for articulating their

most deeply held moral and religious principles — their consciences. Most disturbing is that this is taking place in an atmosphere that is supposed to foster and not hinder dialogue, conversation, and the general exchange of ideas, which might not always conform to the aggressively secular environment that has bedeviled our citadels of higher education.

This culture of intolerance leaves one semi-speechless at how Orwellian it is. Where does it all lead, and where will it all end? In Orwell’s phrase, will we see the emergence of a “Ministry of Truth” to arbitrate what can and cannot be said or thought?

The Courage to Stand Firm

For Christians, it is not an exaggeration to say that, in the history of our beloved country, there has never been an era on campus more oppressive than the current one. The suppression of free speech is increasingly taken as a standard operating procedure.

The writer Herbert London is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and the author of a marvelous book, *The Transformational Decide* (University Press of America, 2012), in which he thinks deeply about free expression in this new century.

In a recent essay, he observed, “This is the time for an awakening that recognizes our strengths, the residual resilience that still exists in some quarters. And it is time to challenge the bold revolution that is now conventional wisdom with a countercultural revolution based on kindness, traditional principles, and a belief in a higher authority. It is asking for a lot, but then where is the present road we are on taking us?”

That last question should be ringing in

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our ears, and it begs an even deeper one: Whither the fate and state of freedom in America?

If this rising generation of young men and women of faith will not contest the new intolerance that is being foisted upon them, and thereby take their place as a new counterculture rooted in the hope and confidence of all that God teaches us about the common good and a healthy society, then what really is next for our country, culture, and civilization?

Can we remain a land of liberty if our God-given religious freedoms and speech rights are so categorically and routinely usurped and denied?

The good news is that hope is real, and that in the fullness of time, Providence provides a way forward for those seeking civilizational renewal and revival. The largest historical question is whether we will have the moral courage to stand against the civilizational slide we are currently experiencing

The time to enlighten young hearts and minds is now upon us.

— Timothy S. Goeglein
Citizen

September 2014, p. 26, 27

Education

A family from Alabama is inspiring the nation with its amazing home-school success story. In fact, Kip and Mona Lisa Harding, from Montgomery, have been so successful in educating their 10 children at home that seven have gone on to college — by the age of 12!

It all began when the Hardings’ oldest child, Hannah, was in third grade, enrolled in public school. A friend suggested that the couple try homeschool-

ing their daughter, something they conceded wasn’t even on their radar. But they ended up giving it a try and soon decided that they could do a better job educating their children than the local school district could. Recalling Hannah’s early public-school experience, Kip noted that “there was a lot of homework in the evenings, and we just decided to pull her out. It was a scary time at first, but we started and it was working out great and we just never looked back.”

Mona Lisa Harding told NBC’s Today show that at first she and Kip didn’t have a firm plan. “It just kind of happened. We started homeschooling, and it was very efficient. Kids have to be educated, and as they accelerated, we had to find another option because they outdid me very young.”

Out of the gate, Mona Lisa had ordered a slew of workbooks by subject and grade level, “but that got a little tedious and a little boring,” she told KSL.com. “We started to get away from boxed curriculum and went into just reading for pleasure and reading what the kids wanted to read.”

Before long the Hardings found their children blossoming under the less regimented environment, accelerating in reading, writing, math, and science in a way they never could have in a government school structure. Mona Lisa explained that she and Kip would discover subjects in which each child excelled and concentrate more time in those areas, allowing their children to hone their skills and knowledge.

“Hannah was whizzing through the math and saying, ‘Mom, do I really have to do the rest of this chapter? It’s

so repetitive,’” Mona Lisa recalled to KSL.com. “And I’d say, ‘No, just do the odd [problems] or the even ones or just skip the rest of that chapter. ... And next thing you know, she’s ready for some advanced math.”

By the time Hannah was 12 years old, the Hardings were searching for more challenging options for her education, and ended up enrolling her in a local junior college. She began with just one class, but three semesters in Hannah was carrying a full load right along with students who were up to 10 years older than she was. At 26, Hannah is now an engineer with a master’s degree, and is working toward her doctorate.

The other Harding children have had similar success. Twenty-four-year-old Rosannah earned a bachelor’s degree in architecture before she turned 18, and has helped to put her husband through college.

Twenty-three-year-old Serannah graduated from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in Georgia and is now a U.S. Navy physician completing her residency at Maryland’s Walter Reed Hospital Army Medical Center. She is the one of the youngest doctors in U.S. history.

Eighteen-year-old Heath earned a bachelor’s degree in English at age 15 and a master’s in computer science at 17. He calls himself the family “slacker” because he took some time off between degrees.

Keith Harding, 15, recently graduated from Alabama’s Faulkner University with a degree in music, and is planning to become a composer.

Seth Harding, 13, is now a sophomore at Alabama’s Huntingdon Col-

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lege studying history. He would like to become an archaeologist.

Eleven-year-old Katrinnah is a freshman at Faulkner University, majoring in legal studies and minoring in theater. She wants to be an attorney.

Additionally, the Hardings have three more children, “all of whom are homeschooled but too young for college, even by the family’s standards,” reported BusinessInsider.com. “Mariannah (8) and Lorennah (6) both say they want to be pediatricians, while Thunder (4) already has his sights set on lifeguarding.”

The Hardings point out that, like most other kids, their children aren’t geniuses. They simply found a method of teaching them that brought out the best and encouraged learning. Kip told KSL.com that their homeschool philosophy is simple: “One [public school] teacher has 30 students on average. We can do better than that. Kids get left behind in a classroom. ... This is where homeschooling really takes off because these kids are getting extra attention.”

While the Hardings insist that they are not trying to denigrate public schools, they point out that there are some fundamental problems with the government model. “Teaching is a hard job and teachers still have a place,” Kip said. “But government money comes with strings attached. ... We’re just relying on God and He keeps coming through and it’s working out well. Truly, we’re just average.”

Encouraging parents who are considering educating their children at home, Kip emphasized that successful homeschooling goes beyond merely creating a positive learning atmosphere. “Love

those kids,” he encouraged parents. “Be around them as much as you can. Be that influence for your kids. ... People just really need to take charge of their kids and love them to death.”

—Dave Bohon
The New American
June 16, 2014

Homosexuality

New LGBT initiatives have become routine as major sports leagues jockey for cultural prominence and prepare for the publicity of openly homosexual players. As a “social institution” with “responsibilities,” Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig placed his league further in line with the LGBT lobby.

In a press conference before the MLB All-Star Game in Minneapolis, Selig praised the late Glenn Burke and named him the sport’s official gay “pioneer.” Burke “came out” in 1982, two years after a retirement he blamed on prejudice and his inner conflict. He died of AIDS in 1995 at 42.

Selig then named former player Billy Bean as the league’s “Ambassador for Inclusion.” An LGBT activist, Bean will refine initiatives begun last year, including “educational training initiatives against sexism, homophobia, and prejudice.”

Every major league now has a partnership with an activist group to preach to their players — the MLB chose Athlete Ally. The NFL and NHL often work with You Can Play. Rookie seminars range from encouraging simple trust and respect needed in the vulnerability of a locker room to more subtle messages. A 2012 NBA video for rookies featured GLAAD and Athlete Ally representatives on “the importance of being an ally.”

The difference between acceptance and support aren’t defined, but activists are in each case helping craft league poli-

cies. A person can pledge online with You Can Play to “ensure that athletes are judged solely on talent, heart, desire, and work ethic.” But the MLB jumped headlong into the LGBT worldview. In signing Athlete Ally’s pledge, Hall of Famers Yogi Berra and Joe Torre endorsed everyone’s “perceived or actual sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.”

Major leagues have yet to address overtly biblical views by players, but that time may come soon. The NHL’s You Can Play partnership will help govern what officials regard as unacceptable “homophobic remarks,” *The New York Times* reports. The NBA’s David Stern told the *Times* the league will approach players who express “inappropriate views.” On July 18, Minnesota Vikings special teams coach Mike Priefer became the second NFL figure to face “individualized anti-harassment, diversity, and sexual-orientation sensitivity training” because of his words.

—Andrew Branch
World Magazine
August 9, 2014

“Where are the men that came in to thee in the night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them ... and Lot said, I pray you, my brethren, do not so wickedly.”

—Genesis 19:5, 7

“There shall be no prostitute of the daughters of Israel; neither shall there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel.”

—Deuteronomy 23:17

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire.”

—Jude verse 7

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“Except Jehovah of hosts had left unto us [Judah] a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom; we should have been like unto Gomorrah.”

—Isaiah 1:9

“According to the Obama Administration at the recent [August 4-6] U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit held in the nation’s capital, support of the homosexual agenda is the key to successful economic development for African nations — and the ticket for receiving billions of dollars in foreign aid.”

—Michael F. Haverluck,
OneNewsNow.com,
August 18, 2014

“Threats by Western nations to terminate humanitarian aid to countries refusing to endorse and protect homosexuality continue to grow.”

—Ibid

“The ultimatums given by the president and vice president for African nations to fully support pro-homosexual policies or surrender aid are not new.”

—Ibid

“Also attending the African Leaders Summit was former President George W. Bush, who launched a \$15 billion HIV/AIDS initiative during his administration.”

—Ibid

Editor’s Note: Sodomy practiced by homosexuals is the primary cause of AIDS in Africa.

“Neither the Ebola outbreak nor the ongoing Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria prevented U.S. President Barak Obama and Vice President Joe Biden from raising the issue of homosexuality during last week’s U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington. The American leaders, along with other current and former

Obama administration officials, capitalized on economic concerns to encourage African leaders to expand legal protections and privileges for homosexuals and call for cultural acceptance of homosexuality.”

—Kirsten Andersen,
The Jackson (TN) Press,
August 19, 2014

“If we are promoting homosexual ‘rights’ within our military and government, what about promoting them overseas? If sodomy and same-sex marriage are constitutional rights, what is their relationship to U.S. foreign policy? Despite the tremendous controversy regarding these issues within the United States, the Obama administration has gone ahead and placed them at the center of U.S. diplomacy.”

—Robert R. Reilly,
Making Gay Okay (2014),
p. 195

“The Obama administration has undertaken the task of universalizing the rationalization for sodomitical behavior and is doing so with high moral rhetoric — as usual, by appropriating the language of human rights.”

—Ibid

“Mr. Obama said that ‘the struggle to end discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons is a global challenge, and one that is central to the United States’ commitment to promoting human rights.’”

—Ibid

“In her speech [to the African Summit], Mrs. Hillary Clinton echoed this response and set this test: We need to ask ourselves, ‘How would it feel if it were a crime to love the person I love.’ Well, that depends. What if the person

one loves is already married? What if the person one loves is a sibling? How about a teacher in love with a student? Or a pastor in love with a choirboy? Or an uncle in love with his niece? Acting upon any of these loves in a sexual relationship is, in most places, a crime.”

—Ibid., p. 200, 201

“All Islamic groups in Pakistan condemned the ‘pride’ event as a form of ‘cultural terrorism’ against democratic Pakistan. Students protested against what they called ‘the attempts of the United States to promote vulgarity in Islamic societies under the pretext of human rights. One speaker at a demonstration said, ‘Now the United States wants to project and promote objectionable, unnatural, abnormal behaviors under the pretext of equality and human rights, which is not at all acceptable. ... If you destroy the morality of the society, you have destroyed it completely.’”

—Ibid, 201

“If this is democracy, we don’t want it, thank you; we would rather keep our faith and morals.”

—Ibid, p. 205

“But, of course, democracy is not the goal; the goal is the universalization of the rationalization for sodomy. This is now one of the depraved purposes of U.S. foreign policy.”

—Ibid, p. 205

“Homosexuality is one of America’s most successful cultural exports.”

Ibid, p. 205

“The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides the following statistics on its AIDS.gov website: In 2009, white MSM [men having sex with men] accounted for the larg-

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est number of annual new HIV infections of any group in the United States (11,400), followed closely by black MSM (10,800)."

Ibid, p. 127

"In the United States, MSM who die of AIDS had estimated life expectancies at least 30 years less than either official U.S. figure for males-in-general or estimates from Washington Post obituaries for all males or ever-married males."

Ibid, p. 219

Neither the Ebola outbreak nor the ongoing Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria prevented U.S. President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden from raising the issue of homosexuality during last week's U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington. The American leaders, along with other current and former Obama administration officials, capitalized on economic concerns to encourage African leaders to expand legal protections and privileges for homosexuals and call for cultural acceptance of homosexuality.

Asked repeatedly by African leaders what the continent's largely war-torn, impoverished nations can do to promote economic growth and development, Obama and Biden both said African countries need to make themselves more gay-friendly if they want to attract more aid, talent, and investment from Western nations.

"There are certain common ingredients to success in the 21st century that have become self-evident," Vice President Biden said in a speech August 5. "The need for economic integration; a court system that adjudicates disputes fairly. A commitment to invest in all

of a society's people and respect their rights, because countries that respect citizens' equal rights no matter what their gender or religion, no matter who they love, tend to be the ... most attractive to attracting international talent and international investment."

During a Q&A session, President Obama recommended that government leaders and business leaders alike model themselves on the open-mindedness of the West when it comes to homosexuality.

"Some of the incredible cultures of some of our U.S. businesses that do a really good job promoting people and maintaining a meritocracy, and treating women equally, and treating people of different races and faiths and sexual orientations fairly and equally, and making sure that there are typical norms of how you deal with people in contracts and respect legal constraints — all those things I think can then take root in a country like Zimbabwe or any other country," Obama said.

"Hopefully, governments are encouraging that, not inhibiting that," he continued. "They recognize that that's how the world as a whole is increasingly moving in that direction. And over time, you will see an Africa that is driven by individual entrepreneurs and private organizations, and governments will be responsive to their demands."

Homosexual activist groups have complained that the administration didn't go far enough, calling the summit a "missed opportunity."

Shawn Gaylord, of the Human Rights First homosexual activist group, praised the summit's organizers for hosting "robust side events" focused on

homosexual issues, but expressed disappointment that "these events were not widely attended by the leaders who most need to hear these messages." Instead, he said, homosexual activists should have been specifically invited to participate in presidential-level discussions with world leaders and top business investors.

"The Obama Administration has unequivocally demonstrated global leadership on the human rights of LGBT people, and the president will leave a legacy for his engagement with international civil society," Gaylord said in a statement. "That is why it is most disappointing that the White House chose to keep these issues literally on the margins in side events, and exclude civil society and human rights defenders from the same White House meetings corporate CEOs and investors were invited to."

But Ned Price, a spokesperson for the National Security Council, insists that the Obama administration is as committed as ever to promoting gay rights overseas.

"The Obama Administration has long spoken out — including with our African partners — in support of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals," Price said in a statement. "The Summit has provided an opportunity to continue these conversations."

Given the cold reception Africans have given Obama's overtures so far, it seems unlikely the continent will rush to follow his lead when it comes to bringing homosexuality into the mainstream. Still, some observers are wor-

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ried that as the economic costs of resistance mount, governments will weaken under the strain.

"I do think that, unfortunately, there's been an obsession by some within the administration — and that goes for the president himself — to promote the abortion agenda and the LGBT agenda in our foreign policy," said Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) on Family Research Council president Tony Perkins' Washington Watch radio program last week.

"These issues are what drives this administration in much of our foreign policy in Africa," Smith continued. "Many of these countries deeply resent it because they are profoundly pro-marriage and profoundly pro-life. But when your foreign aid is being limited or conditioned on those two issues, there are some, but thankfully not many, in these governments who begin to weaken."

Both Obama's and Biden's comments echoed previous ultimatums issued by the U.S. and other Western governments concerning African nations' approach to homosexuality. Homosexual activity is illegal in the majority of African nations, and such bans enjoy overwhelming support from the people, who tend to be devout followers of either Christianity or Islam — both of which forbid homosexual behavior.

In recent years, Western nations have increasingly threatened to withdraw humanitarian aid from countries that fail to accept homosexuality as a valid, legally protected lifestyle, but African leaders have not taken kindly to their efforts.

During President Obama's \$100 million tour of the AIDS-ravaged continent last year, the president offended several

heads of state by publicly denouncing their nations' laws against homosexual behavior. And in April, the African, Pacific, and Caribbean Group of States (ACP) released a strongly worded resolution condemning wealthy Western nations for their repeated attempts to blackmail African nations into legalizing homosexual behavior by threatening to withhold charitable aid.

When United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron threatened to cut off aid to African countries that criminalize sodomy and other homosexual behavior, Ghanaian President John Evans Atta Mills said his nation would rather go it alone than accept aid dependent upon the acceptance of behavior they know to be immoral and damaging.

"While we acknowledge all the financial assistance and all the aid which has been given to us by our development partners, we will not accept any aid with 'strings attached' if that aid will not inure to our interests, or [if] the implementation — or the utilization — of that aid-with-strings-attached would rather worsen our plight as a nation, or destroy the very society that we want to use the money to improve," Mills said.

Likewise, Ugandan presidential adviser John Nagenda told the BBC that Ugandans were "tired of these lectures" and should not be treated "like children," adding that Cameron's "bullying mentality" was "very wrong."

"Uganda is, if you remember, a sovereign state and we are tired of being given these lectures by people," Nagenda told the BBC. "If they must take their money, so be it."

Following President Obama's disas-

trous tour of Africa last year, Obianuju Ekeocha, the Nigerian founder of Culture of Life Africa, wrote an open letter to the president that seemed to sum up the way many African leaders feel about his attempts to "lead" the continent toward acceptance of homosexuality.

"In some parts of Africa, we are still trying to out-law odious practices like female genital mutilation, so please don't try to persuade us to introduce yet another type of mutilation into our society," Ekeocha wrote.

"In many parts of Africa, we are still trying to recover from the deep wounds inflicted by the aberration of marriage which is polygamous marriage, please don't tell us to take on yet another aberration of marriage which is same-sex marriage," she continued. "In some other parts of Africa, we are still mourning and counting the graves of young people lost to AIDS — a deadly disease rooted in wide-spread sexual perversion and depravity, so please do not encourage our leaders to enact laws that will raise altars to even more sexual depravity."

"Africa wants to walk the path of authentic growth, development, and stability. And this path is not paved in morally objectionable sexual 'rights,' but rather in authentic rights that promote human flourishing and common good," she added.

President Obama has made advocacy for homosexual acceptance a central part of his foreign policy since at least 2011, when he asked U.S. embassies worldwide "to strengthen existing efforts to effectively combat the criminalization by foreign governments of LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and

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transgender] status or conduct” and to expand efforts to combat “discrimination, homophobia, and intolerance on the basis of LGBT status or conduct.”

Obama’s secretaries of state, John Kerry and Hillary Clinton, both repeatedly said that promoting the homosexual agenda overseas was a “top priority” for U.S. foreign policymakers.

— Kirsten Andersen
The Jackson Press
August 13, 2014

Culture

The headline made me laugh. “Morning Joe Thinks Kim Kardashian’s New Selfie Book Is a Sign of the Apocalypse.” Yet Ms. Kardashian’s “Selfish” — a collection of pictures she took of herself — is no joke. Some enterprising publisher is betting “readers” will pay \$20 per to flip through 352 pages of bad lighting and self-absorption.

And if it does sell well, maybe the end really is near.

Another selfie made the news this week for a tragic reason. On the coast of Portugal, a Polish couple climbed over the guardrails to snap themselves with the sea as backdrop. While their two young children watched, mom and dad backed off the cliff and fell hundreds of feet to their death.

What’s with this culture of all-me-all-the-time? More important, what’s the alternative, and does anyone have a picture of that?

A Facebook FB +0.36 percent timeline goes back to 2007. The timeline for my father, James Dobson, goes back four generations to his great-grandfather. My great-great-grandfather was on his way to kill a man when he was diverted to a tent revival in a small Texas town. Instead of taking a life that night, M.V. Billingham gave his life to God.

He left his gun on the altar.

M.V. was unarmed, but after that he habitually deployed a secret weapon. For most of his adult life, he routinely prayed for his son, for his son’s children, and for their children to the fourth generation ... all the way to my dad. Whatever a “selfie” says about a person, this man was the opposite. With a strong sense of “more than me, more than now,” more than a century ago, he prayed for people he’d never meet.

Did it make a difference? My family says yes. Among other things, my dad grew up aware of his place in a bigger story. He knew the next leg of the race was his to run; the baton was his to hand off.

Who’s going to drop out of a relay like that? Not me. Once I grew up — I mean, once I matured enough to be humbled by his unselfishness — I committed to the intergenerational prayers, too.

I won’t say every Millennial is stranded in adolescence, glued to screens, thumb-calloused from texting or unable to think past the end of Grand Theft Auto. But we’re losing the habit of thinking past ourselves. As we do, we lose our best selves and our best chances to help shape what comes next. We drop the baton.

While I was dating, before I met my wife, dad would ask me about the women I was seeing. I’d say this woman made me feel good, so-and-so seemed to support me, that sort of thing. My reasons for dating, he told me, seemed selfish. He said, “Do you make each other better people?” Of course, now I see how right he was. Marriage isn’t about me; it’s about us. And very soon it’s us with children.

So page after glossy page of Kim Kardashian in her mirror may ring up dol-

lars for a woman who hardly needs the change, but what’s the point of 15 minutes at the epicenter of attention?

As the great writer Peter Drucker said to social entrepreneur Bob Buford: “The fruit of your work grows on other people’s trees.” When a couple takes the hard road to stay together, when parents can manage a strong-willed child without breaking her spirit, when adults feel the pain in a child’s outrage and not a reflex to punish, when families live for more than themselves, when unwanted babies get to the parents who want them, the baton is passed, and the lesson is learned: A great life is less like a selfie, more an album of group photos.

— Ryan Dobson
Wall Street Journal
August 20, 2014

Climate Change

You won’t see headlines on this elsewhere, but we’re well into the first year of the 19th “Little Ice Age” in the past 7,500 years. Brrrr ...

One of the first groups of people this year to notice this phenomenon? Pro baseball players.

The season kicked off in April, yet the Boys of Summer were playing in winter-like conditions. Try catching a fastball (or hitting one) in 37 degree weather, as the Baltimore Orioles and the Red Sox did in Boston during the middle part of the month. On April 29 at Fenway, ESPN noted that the temperature at game time was 22 degrees colder than on the same day in 2013!

Dr. Habibullo Abdussamatov, head of space research at the Russian Academy of Science’s Pulkovo Observatory, is no expert, but he can explain much of what happened over the first 30 games of the season. Allow me to explain ...

Al Gore’s online bully boys have been

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largely successful in a concerted effort to shout down and demonize Dr. Abdussamatov, as well as anyone who dares report his view that solar physics — not human activity — is the informing source of climate variability on earth.

Dr. Abdussamatov projects that the thermal inertia of the oceans, which accounts for a relatively slow release of stored heat energy, will run out of stored heat in the near future. He’s predicted that “from approximately 2014, we can expect the start of the next bicentennial cycle of deep cooling with a little ice age of 2055, plus or minus 11 years.”

Dr. Abdussamatov’s work earned him official distinction in a 2008 U.S. Senate Minority Report, issued by the chamber’s Environment and Public Works Committee. The report notes the work of Abdussamatov and more than 600 other international researchers whose work debunks much of the so-called “consensus” about global warming in the scientific community.

Real Climate Science Targeted by ‘Thought Police’

Abdussamatov’s work also earned him an honored spot as a climate denier, a distinction meant to deny him research funding and keep the press from accurately covering his view that falling temperatures “will have very serious consequences and it is necessary to begin preparations now, since there is practically no time in reserve. The global temperature of the earth has begun its decrease without limitations on the volume of greenhouse gas emissions by industrially developed countries.”

In a 2009 research paper, Abdussamatov wrote that the Earth, “after receiving and storing over the 20th century an anomalously large amount of heat energy, from the 1990s began to return it gradually. The upper layers of the world ocean, completely unexpectedly to cli-

matologists, began to cool in 2013.”

“The heat accumulated by them unfortunately now is running out,” said Dr. Abdussamatov, who noted that “over the past decade, global temperature on the Earth has not increased; global warming has ceased, and already there are signs of the future deep temperature drop. Meantime, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere over these years has grown by more than 4 percent, and in 2006 many meteorologists predicted that 2007 would be the hottest of the last decade. This did not occur, although the global temperature of the Earth would have increased at least 0.1 degree if it depended on the concentration of carbon dioxide.”

Abdussamatov concluded by noting that global warming “had a natural origin, the contribution of CO2 to it was insignificant, anthropogenic increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide does not serve in the explanation for it, and in the foreseeable future CO2 will not be able to cause catastrophic warming. The so-called greenhouse effect will not avert the onset of the next deep temperature drop, after the 19th in the last 7,500 years, which without fail follows after natural warming.

An Inside Look at the Real Climate Deniers

Back on March 11, 2000, *New York Times* environmental writer William K. Stevens expressed the global warming theory in one concise paragraph: “Computer models predict that the temperature rise will continue at that accelerated pace if emissions of heat-trapping gases are not reduced, and also predict that warming will be especially pronounced in the wintertime.”

Since then, we’ve heard similar versions of this theory, that global warming computer models called for much warmer winters and even the disappear-

ance of snow.

But Dr. Abdussamatov cautioned that this was all a misunderstanding. The real source of climate variability is a bi-centennial cycle of total solar irradiance (TSI), caused by “changes in the radius of the Sun.” According to Abdussamatov, during the deepest solar minima, TSI declines to a degree sufficient to explain a much colder climate: “Annually, the shortage is 6 x 10 to the 6th power joules/M2, while over an entire cycle, the hemisphere of the Earth turned to the Sun — an area of 127.5x10 to the 6 km2 — will receive 24,000,000 MJ less energy than before. Our planet experiences a shortage of energy comparable with the summer power of 21 million nuclear power plants.”

What *The New York Times*, the Environmental Defense Fund, and others were forecasting at the turn of the century has not happened. Quite the contrary. But you wouldn’t know that from the real climate deniers, who continue to stick to the global warming fallacy.

Talk about denial. You couldn’t make this stuff up.

Not since “The Emperor’s New Clothes” has so much political dignity been exposed in such a transparently false promotion. As Charles Moore in the *London Telegraph* explains in his aptly named piece “The Game Is Up for Climate Change Believers”: “The international war against carbon totters on, because Western governments see their green policies, like zombie banks, as too big to fail. The EU, including Britain, continues to inflict expensive pain upon itself.”

Moore went on to note that there was a growing sense among global warming advocates that “the answer to the problems of climate change lay in adaptation, not in mitigation.”

In other words, “global warming” is

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another big lie from which groups like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change can't afford to back away. Likewise, the Obama administration is too deeply in thrall to the politically correct global warming hoax to explicitly deny it.

Yet they can't deny that so far 2014 has been one of the coldest years in memory. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said the December 2013 through February 2014 period was the 34th coldest period for the lower 48 states since it began keeping records in 1895.

Meanwhile, the Little Ice Age is playing havoc with American life in more serious ways than just making it uncomfortable for ballplayers.

For instance, *The Financial Times* reported on the real-world consequences of all this, including that it occasioned a stall in U.S. economic growth — reported at 0.1%.

In reality, as John Williams points out in *Shadow Government Statistics*, this means that GDP actually contracted in Q1. The not-annualized first-quarter GDP gain of a miniscule 0.03 percent was only achieved by what was estimated to be a gigantic surge in healthcare costs and much higher spending for home heating. Net of questionable healthcare spending mandated by The Affordable Care Act, the annualized GDP change was — 1 percent.

— James Dale Davidson
Financial Intelligence Report
June 2014

Science

A team of attorneys is jumping to the defense of a scientist who was fired after making the stunning discovery of soft tissue attached to a triceratops skeleton, undermining the belief that dinosaurs

roamed earth no less than 60 million years ago.

The Pacific Justice Institute said its case on behalf of Mark Armitage alleges a university official where Mark Armitage worked shouted at him, "We are not going to tolerate your religion in this department!"

The suit against California State University Northridge, filed recently in Los Angeles County Superior Court against the board of trustees, alleges discrimination.

"Terminating an employee because of their religious views is completely inappropriate and illegal," said Brad Dacus, PJI president.

"But doing so in an attempt to silence scientific speech at a public university is even more alarming. This should be a wakeup call and warning to the entire world of academia," he said.

Armitage's lawyers said he was at a dig in the Hell Creek formation in Montana in 2012 when he came up with "the largest triceratops horn ever unearthed at the site."

Later, while examining the specimen under a high-powered microscope at CSUN, he discovered the soft tissue.

"The discovery stunned members of the scientific community because it indicates that dinosaurs roamed the earth only thousands of years in the past rather than going extinct 60 million years ago," the legal team explained.

Armitage, a published scientist of over 30 years, then was dismissed when CSUN abruptly claimed his appointment at the university of 38 months had been temporary and there was no funding for his position.

The lawyers said the claim contradicted prior statements and documents from the university.

According to Armitage's biography, he had been serving as the manager for

the Electron and Confocal Microscopy Suite in the school's biology department.

That's where he was working when his discovery of the soft tissue was published in *Acta Histochemica*.

He previously found two new species of trematodes and reported the discovery of new hosts for several trematodes. He also discovered short half-life radiohalos in clear diamonds.

He is a lifetime member of the Creation Research Society, where he has served on the board of directors since 2006. He's also in the Microscopy Society of America, the Southern California Academy of Sciences, and the American Society of Parasitologists.

His graduate degrees are from Liberty University. His articles have been published in *American Laboratory*, *Southern California Academy of Sciences Bulletin*, *Parasitology Research*, *Microscopy and Microanalysis*, and *Microscopy Today*.

Michael Pepper, staff attorney with PJI's Southern California office, said: "It has become apparent that 'diversity' and 'intellectual curiosity,' so often touted as hallmarks of a university education, do not apply to those with a religious point of view. This suit was filed, in part, to vindicate those ideals."

According to a report by CBSLA.com, CSUN spokeswoman Carmen Ramos Chandler said Armitage was a temporary hire between 2010-2013.

The complaint said Armitage told university officials when he applied for the "permanent, part-time" position that he had published work regarding creationism, but he got the job anyway.

School officials previously had described him as "tops."

"He has patience, great expertise, and practices great care."

His work gradually took on more and more responsibility and was expanded

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beyond his half-time original schedule, the complaint explains.

But his discovery of the soft tissue, which according to most scientific perspectives should have completely decayed millions of years ago, sent a shock wave through the department where he worked.

While Armitage was told it wasn't an issue, only a few months later a "secret" meeting was held by faculty members in which they allegedly decided to get rid of him, the complaint states.

The action alleges discrimination based on religion, wrongful termination, retaliation, violations of academic freedom and free speech, and he subsequently was granted a "right to sue" from the Department of Fair Employment and Housing.

CBS reported that later, other researchers noted that soft tissue also was found on the bones of a *Tyrannosaurus rex*, but they explained that by saying iron in the dinosaur's body preserved the tissue.

— Bob Unruh
WorldNet Daily
August 1, 2014

Marijuana Legalization

The great irony, or misfortune, of the national debate over marijuana is that while almost all the science and research is going in one direction — pointing out the dangers of marijuana use — public opinion seems to be going in favor of broad legalization.

For example, last week a new study in the journal *Current Addiction Reports* found that regular pot use (defined as once a week) among teenagers and young adults led to cognitive decline, poor attention and memory, and decreased IQ. On Aug. 9, the American Psychological Association reported

that at its annual convention the ramifications of marijuana legalization was much discussed, with Krista Lisdahl, director of the imaging and neuropsychology lab at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, saying: "It needs to be emphasized that regular cannabis use, which we consider once a week, is not safe and may result in addiction and neurocognitive damage, especially in youth."

Since few marijuana users limit themselves to use once a week, the actual harm is much worse for developing brains. The APA noted that young people who become addicted to marijuana lose an average of six IQ points by adulthood. A long line of studies have found similar results — in 2012, a decades-long study of more than 1,000 New Zealanders who frequently smoked pot in adolescence pegged the IQ loss at eight points.

Yet in recent weeks and months, much media coverage of the marijuana issue has either tacitly or explicitly supported legalization. A CBN/ORC International survey in January found that a record 55 percent of Americans support marijuana legalization.

The disconnect between science and public opinion is so great that in a March WSJ/NBC News poll, Americans ranked sugar as more harmful than marijuana. The misinformation campaign appears to be succeeding. Here's the truth. The marijuana of today is simply not the same drug it was in the 1960s, '70s, or '80s, much less the 1930s. It is often at least five times stronger, with the levels of the psychoactive ingredient tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, averaging about 15 percent in the marijuana at dispensaries found in the states that have legalized pot for "medicinal" or, in the case of Colorado, recreational use. Often the

THC level is 20 percent or higher. With increased THC levels come increased health risks. Since Colorado legalized recreational use earlier this year, two deaths in the state have already been linked to marijuana. In both cases, it was consumed in edible form, which can result in the user taking in even more THC than when smoking pot. "One man jumped to his death after consuming a large amount of marijuana contained in a cookie," the Associated Press reported in April, "and in the other case, a man allegedly shot and killed his wife after eating marijuana candy." Reports are coming out of Colorado in what amounts to a parade of horrors from more intoxicated driving to more emergency hospital admissions due to marijuana exposure and overdose.

Over the past 10 years, study after study has shown the damaging effect of marijuana on the teenage brain. Northwestern School of Medicine researchers reported in the *Schizophrenia Bulletin* in December that teens who smoked marijuana daily for about three years showed abnormal brain-structure changes. Marijuana use has clearly been linked to teen psychosis as well as decreases in IQ and permanent brain damage.

The response of those who support legalization: Teenagers can be kept away from marijuana. Yet given the dismal record regarding age-restricted use of tobacco and alcohol, success with barring teens from using legalized marijuana would be a first.

The reason such a large number of teens use alcohol and tobacco is precisely because those are legal products. The reason more are now using marijuana is because of its changing legal status — from something that was dangerous and forbidden to a product that

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is now considered “medicinal,” and in the states of Colorado and Washington recreational. Until recently, the illegality of marijuana, and the stigma of law-breaking, had kept its use below that of tobacco and alcohol.

Legality is the mother of availability, and availability, as former Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Joseph A. Califano Jr. put it in his 2008 book on substance abuse, “High Society” is the mother of use. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, currently 2.7 million Americans age 12 and older meet the clinical criteria for marijuana dependence, or addiction.

Mark A.R. Kleiman, a professor of public policy at the University of California, Los Angeles, has estimated that legalization can be expected to increase marijuana consumption by four to six times. Today’s 2.7 million marijuana dependents (addicts) would thus expand to as many as 16.2 million with nationwide legalization. That should alarm any parent, teacher, or policy maker.

There are two conversations about marijuana taking place in this country: One, we fear, is based on an obsolete perception of marijuana as a relatively harmless, low-THC product. The other takes seriously the science of the new marijuana and its effect on teens, whose adulthood will be marred by the irreversible damage to their brains when young.

Supporters of marijuana legalization insist that times are changing and policy should too. But they are the ones stuck in the past — and charting a dangerous future for too many Americans.

— William J. Bennett, Robert A.

White
The Wall Street Journal
August 13, 2014

“A Letter to Heaven”

[Marc Alan Lee was the first Navy Seal to be killed in Iraq (August 2, 2006). He was also a Summit graduate attending twice the previous years. For his role in Iraq, he was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart for his heroic actions on the 2nd of August. In fact, Marc and his teammates from ST-3 are now the most highly decorated special ops unit since Viet Nam.]

To Honor his death, Marc’s mother (Debbie Lee) has written the following letter addressed to ... Marc Alan Lee ...]

My dear Marc, my Mighty Warrior, my Hero ...

I love and miss you so very much. It’s been eight years since you were redeployed to Heaven, and I know that you are in the best hands that could ever hold you! I was blessed that God trusted me to be able to hold and love you for 28 years.

I have so many fond memories of you:

Carrying you in my womb, you grew quickly and moved like crazy, causing the Dr’s to think they heard two heartbeats and declare you were twins!

The first time they placed you in my arms at the hospital and I held and nursed you, it brought such peace and contentment, even though your father and I had gone through a divorce during the pregnancy and I had no idea how I was going to raise you and your siblings who were 2 and 3.

The animated and crazy sounds you made as a toddler ... Disney didn’t need a sound crew, they just needed you

Your knock-knock jokes you would make up that were so stupid but you would crack yourself up laughing, and everyone else couldn’t help but laugh with you.

You loved to have me give you a back

rub/tickle thing I do and you would say, “Hey Mom give me tingles.” FYI, you shouldn’t say to your girlfriend that they don’t do it like Mom!

You winning class clown two years in a row and questioning you about how that would get you a scholarship.

The day you came home as a freshman and declared, “I’m going to be a professional soccer player,” with the only problem being you had never played soccer a day in your life. Yet, you did see that dream come true and were trying out for a professional team in Colorado when you blew out your knee the night before try-outs.

The day you came home and announced you had joined the Navy and had a contract to go to BUDs to become a Navy SEAL. You had so much determination and perseverance.

The many times we would wrestle and slap fight. I remember taunting you and telling you I could whoop your tushy. As you grew in stature and strength, under my breath I would say, “Or at least let me think I can.”

The last hug I ever received from you when you left my house before you deployed. Even as a teenager, when I would drop you off at the bus before a soccer game, you had no problem giving me a kiss and a hug. I miss your kisses, hugs, and hearing, “I love you Mom!”

It’s hard to believe it has been eight years since you left this earth. What you did that day — purposely standing in the direct line of fire three different times to save your teammates — was so selfless, noble, honorable, and heroic. Oh, by the way, I did make it to Iraq and got to see where you spent your last days. They named your base in Ramadi after you: “Camp Marc Lee.”

They also named the new TRADET building in Coronado after you, the Marc A Lee Training Center. That’s per-

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fect because you did rock it when it came to physical training! I am soooooo very proud of you!!! You sacrificed everything; you gave up all of your tomorrows, your future, so they could live today.

I catch myself wondering, what if you were still here? Would there be four or five little Marcs running around? Would you have gotten out of the SEALs and become a successful businessman? Oh wait, you were a West Coast SEAL and they would tease you and call you “pretty boy.” So I guess you would be making movies in Hollywood ... hee hee. ... Hey, I always teased you before, so I would be lax to stop now? ;o) Would you be living in the same town with your brother and I and all of the cousins hanging out in Grandma’s pool. I know you would have been there to care for me when I got old ... wiping my drool and changing my diapers. Hey, I changed plenty of yours!!!

Then I come back to reality. But son, just in case you can’t see down here, let me tell you how God has used that letter you wrote just weeks before you were killed and your heroic story to change lives around the world. I’m not exaggerating when I tell you that your life has changed millions and millions of lives around the world. You may not physically be here, but you are still impacting this world in a major way.

I know you just intended that letter to go to a few friends and family. But hey, I’m your Mom, and if I can’t sing your praises, something’s wrong. So I’ve sent it to a few people, who sent it to a few people, who sent it to a few people. (The Internet is a great thing!) Do you guys have that up there? Jon Voight even carries it in his wallet. I started a foundation and named it America’s Mighty Warriors. You remember all those talks we had about your name and the meaning of it ... Marc ... mighty warrior. And me

telling you that if you kept your eyes on God, He had something big He wanted to do through you. Well He did! This sure wasn’t what I had in mind, but I shouldn’t be surprised, as God tells us His ways are not our ways!

You believed, and are in glory — no pain, no sorrow, no sickness for you. I find such comfort knowing I will see you again! God has given me amazing strength and comfort! Remember when I used to do the Kindergarten graduation and Christmas programs for the school and I would freak out to speak in front of 200 people? I would hold the microphone with both hands trying to make it stop shaking?? I know it sounds crazy, but I speak and tell people your heroic story, and God has taken my fear away and put me in amazing places. I know you’re there with Him every day, and this all makes sense to you. But we live by faith down here. People tell me all the time what a strong woman I am, but I have to correct them and say, “Oh no, it’s not me. What you see is God’s strength.” I do long for the day He calls me home and I get to communicate in person with you and give you a big hug.

Oh by the way, I did accept your challenge in that last letter to “pass on the kindness the love, the precious gift of human life.” You were wise beyond your years. It is so cool to do those random acts of kindness you mentioned and then hand people your letter or hero card. Yes, I did make hero cards that I pass out. ... I know you didn’t seek the glory and wouldn’t want that, but hey, you’re not here to stop me.

I must tell you it is so strange to see your name on a granite wall, in a book, or on a movie. But when we have heroes like you who selflessly sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy every day, you deserve it Marc, your story needs to be told and is being told.

Oh, and your final gift to me — your teammates — has been such a blessing!! You always did spend so much time finding just that perfect gift, and you rocked on that one buddy. They call me Momma Lee, and I finally get what you were trying to tell me about the “brotherhood” thing. They were as close to you as your brother, and they are my “adopted or inherited” sons. You could never be replaced, but there are lots of brothers all over trying to fill your shoes. Of course, Chris has probably filled you in on many of the details since he got to Heaven. Tell him I miss him tons, and give him a big hug for me. I’m so proud of him too! Tell him I am watching out over the Kyle family just like he watched out over me for you.

In your memory, I put your boots on and pick up your weapon to stay in the fight daily for our troops and the families of the fallen. Thank you, Marc; your final actions, you never quit, you ran into the line of fire and gave your final breath; no one took that from you. We had a tough life growing up and perseverance was something we lived. But doggone it, now when I want to quit and just live the easy life, I think of you and the sacrifice you made and it pushes me forward. ;o)

I love and miss you deeply, but will carry on until God calls me home! Tell the rest of the guys Momma Lee sends love and hugs!

A very special letter someone wrote ;o) had this ending and I think it’s only appropriate to send it back to you. Half way through the deployment, can’t wait to see your smiling face.

I love you,
Mom
Debbie Lee