Saitoti Petro, a Masai warrior, poses for a portrait near the village of Na raka wu, Tanzania. (A P Photo)
A GIRL WITH A DEADLY LUNG DISEASE...

A BOY WITH A TRAGIC PAST...

A BARGAIN THAT BRINGS LIFE, BUT MAY COST MORE THAN ANYONE CAN IMAGINE...

“A COMPELLING FANTASY WORLD WITH HUMOR AND HEART.”
-GENE LUEN YANG
Creator of American Born Chinese and Boxers & Saints

“RECOGNIZING AND RESISTING OPPRESSION IS A THEME THAT THE BOOK POWERFULLY ADVANCES. AN ABUNDANCE OF WIT AND ACTION JAZZ UP THE ROBUST MESSAGE.”
-BOOKLIST

“WITH THE RICH CHARACTERIZATION OF JOHN GREEN AND THE MAGICAL ESCAPISM OF NARNIA, THIS BOOK IS A MUST-READ!”
-LORIE LANGDON
Author of Olivia Twist and the Doon Series

“THE ISSUES THIS STORY BRINGS UP ARE RELEVANT TO CURRENT DISCUSSIONS ABOUT POVERTY AND CULTURAL EXTINCTION. . . . FOR NARNIA FANS WHO ENJOY HEAVY SNARK, THIS IS A MUST-READ.”
-KIRKUS

SNEAK PEEK AVAILABLE AT
THESUNLITLANDS.COM

MATT MIKALATOS

COMING IN SUMMER 2019

Wander and the Wander logo are trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
Whenever Mohammed al-Shenbari sees a new object, he quickly tries to find its “balancing point.” When he does, he makes it stand in a way that appears to defy the law of gravity. The 24-year-old Palestinian taught himself the skills that make the young fitness coach also a popular entertainer in Gaza. The key, he says, is deep focus and concentration combined with finding the object’s center of gravity. Al-Shenbari began practicing just a year ago after viewing a video by Korean balance artist, Nam Seok Byun. He hopes one day to balance much larger objects, such as household appliances—even a refrigerator! (AP Photo/Hatem Moussa)
Texas: Largest Milk Company in Bankruptcy

Dean Foods, America’s biggest milk processor, filed for bankruptcy last fall. The decision came after years of declining milk consumption. Since 1975, the amount of milk consumed per person in America has tumbled more than 40%. There are many reasons why Americans are foregoing milk mustaches and finding Oreo-dunking alternatives. But the dairy industry blames the variety of other drink choices marketed as “healthy.” Those include juices, teas, and dairy alternatives such as almond and soy milk. Another blow to Dean Foods was large-scale competition. Walmart opened its own milk processing plant in Indiana in 2018. The change in trends hit dairy farms and milk sellers hard. Some family farmers had already quit the business. Dallas-based Dean Foods says it may sell itself to the marketing cooperative, Dairy Farmers of America. The company said it will continue operating normally while it organizes its finances under the bankruptcy filing.

Cuba: 500th Havanaversary

As Havana, Cuba, enters its 500th year, the metropolis faces tough challenges. Sapped of resources by its own communist government, plagued with weather damage, pinched under U.S. sanctions, and depleted by “brain drain” as skilled professionals seek better lives elsewhere—Havana still celebrated with a week of festivities. Tourists came to experience the events. Construction stagnated in Cuba after the 1960s socialist revolution. So a diverse—though crumbling—architectural history survives. Colonial-era Spanish plazas stand almost alongside Neo-Baroque apartments, Art Deco theaters, and M décory M dém homes. Tourist appreciation for the eclectic charm as Havana residents pride—en they have little else. Maria de las Ángeles Matamoros lives in a 19th-century townhouse that’s been carved up into 20 small apartments. She shares a bathroom with neighbors and hauls water in buckets to her unit. “I wouldn’t live anywhere else,” she says. “It’s a profound love. Old Havana, where I live, it’s part of me.”
EU: Import Tariffs Affect U.S. Customers

In a strange tangle of “cause and effect,” your family may have paid more for certain foods and gift items this holiday season, and it’s all because of airplane manufacturing. In October, the World Trade Organization ruled that the European Union had illegally subsidized (given money to support) Airbus, a French airplane maker. Those subsidies unfairly harmed U.S. manufacturer Boeing, the verdict said. The award: $7.5 billion. But the EU doesn’t just pay the United States directly. Instead, the U.S. imposed tariffs (or surcharges) on some European imports: cheese, tools, pajamas, olives, and wine, for example. To get to that big number, the U.S. added 10% to EU’s aircraft imports and a whopping 25% to agricultural products—for up to a year. When the tariffs hit, the cost to U.S. buyers went up to match. And that’s how aeronautics changed the cost of your cheese and crackers.

Dubai, UAE: Here Comes Expo 2020

It’s already home to the world’s tallest building and busiest international airport. It boasts an indoor ski slope, a created archipelago in the Persian Gulf, and other modern marvels. Next year, Dubai, the wealthy city-state in the United Arab Emirates, will host World Expo 2020. The future-focused city hopes to draw 25 million visitors—a and their money—to the man-made desert oasis. Expo is a recurring world’s fair. The Expo 2020 website calls the gathering “a world event for connecting people, promoting business, sharing innovations.” London hosted the first such fair in 1851. Many inventions that are now commonly known debuted at past world fairs: ice cream, the color television, the Ferris wheel, X-ray and touchscreen technology—even the Eiffel Tower! Dubai is dangling plans to reveal its largest solar project yet at Expo 2020. What else might be in store?

Israel: Google Helps Digitize Books

The National Library of Israel is working with Google to digitize 120,000 books. Its extensive collection of Jewish texts will be uploaded to the internet for public use. The National Library began by transporting 50,000 books to Google’s digitization center in Germany using climate-controlled shipping containers. Another 20,000 will be scanned in-house due to their rare or fragile nature. The collection includes children’s books and classics, maps and manuscripts, articles and historical accounts. They are written in Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino, Latin, English, German, French, Arabic, Russian, and more languages. The huge undertaking will last around two years. After that, all out-of-copyright Hebrew books in the library will be available online and free to the public. The original books will return to their home at the library in Jerusalem.
“Forget I said that.” Ever wish you could erase what comes out of your mouth? Amazon’s Alexa virtual assistant not only hears but also records every word . . . and saves it too. Amazon has settings to let Alexa owners erase voice recordings automatically. But the company warns that deletions hamper Alexa’s service. That forces users to choose between privacy and quality.

The idea that someone (or something!) might be listening to everything we say seems alarming. It has many folks either worried or creeped out. Christians know that God is omnipotent. He sees and hears all—without high-tech help. But unlike people and businesses, He has intentions for us that are always for good. The Alexa debate is a reminder to “let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths.” (Ephesians 4:29)

Alexa is one of several smart services that responds to user questions and commands. When Alexa (or Siri or Google . . .) hears a “wake word,” it knows a request is coming: “Alexa, will it rain today?” “Hey Siri, play ‘The World and Everything in It’ podcast.” Virtual assistants (VAs) can make to-do lists, give news and weather updates, play music, set alarms, and much more. The services can also control smart devices like lights and thermostats.

VAs “learn” about their owners from requests. To improve service (and, ahem, marketing), the companies behind the VAs save voice recordings—sometimes indefinitely.

That practice raises eyebrows with privacy experts. Companies often employ human reviewers to sort through requests. This human involvement causes concern. Unscrupulous employees could leak private details embedded in the voice commands or conversations that the VA “overhears.”

Previously, most who relied on VAs had to delete recordings manually. Now Alexa users can change settings to have Amazon automatically delete recordings either immediately or after a certain length of time. But automatic erasure triggers a warning about degrading Alexa’s ability to respond or understand.

Apple, Microsoft, Google, and Amazon all claim they strip personal info from recordings before reviewers see them. They also say that a real person reviews less than one percent of conversations with VAs. But while offering assurances that the listening is no big deal, VA makers are either increasing their warnings about the recordings or putting other safeguards—including strict hiring policies—in place.

Today’s tech users are starting to realize what makes smart devices so smart: They’re always listening—and often watching too. VA owners need to decide whether they’re okay with devices constantly eavesdropping on their lives.
Food trucks. Wi-Fi. Hot showers. Upgrades could be headed to a national park near you. The goal, according to the U.S. government, is boosting income and encouraging overnight stays. But do God-created natural wonders like the Grand Canyon and the Everglades need improvement?

At most of the country’s 61 national parks, spotty reception and baths à la wet wipe are part of the camping experience. However, a recent study by the Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee (ORAC) reveals that not everyone is satisfied with these primitive “perks.” The report says the park system “fails to meet expectations of the contemporary camping market.” But the Park Service says it can’t fund modern updates.

ORAC says that private businesses could help make camping wishes come true…and lower park maintenance bills too. It’s hoping that lodging, electricity, running water, internet, and other extras will attract customers. There’s even talk of adding food trucks. So when your hot dog falls in the fire, you won’t need to go to bed hungry.

The committee also suggests raising prices for campsites and introducing blackout periods for senior citizens during peak season. That’s because those visitors get discounted rates for admission and stays.

Derrick Crandall is ORAC’s vice chairman. He sees the cost hikes as unavoidable. But, he asks, “Are we talking about pricing people out of national parks through this? Not at all."

Bringing outsiders into national parks isn’t a new concept. Gift shops, white-water rafting, mule rides, and bike rentals are already run by private businesses at more than 100 parks. And visitors to Yosemite’s historic lodge can grab a Starbucks latte without leaving the park.

Crandall says allowing non-government businesses into the parks could free up staff for actual park work—like giving tours, meeting safety needs, and other visitor services. According to the Park Service, more than 9.2 million people stayed at its campgrounds last year. Most of them view national parks as American treasures—so turning park campgrounds into moneymakers may seem disrespectful. Plus, some complain that upgrades will cause the cost of enjoying the great outdoors to skyrocket.

Several park campgrounds could begin pilot programs next year.

Clay Cutler lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He says he doesn’t need much when he goes camping—just a flat piece of ground for a tent, a fire ring, and good company.

“I’m not going and looking for Wi-Fi,” says Cutler. “That’s 99 percent of the reason I go camping: to get away from that and enjoy nature.”
A federal lawsuit claims that South Carolina violates the rights of poor people with unpaid traffic tickets. The lawsuit is backed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Southern Poverty Law Center. It is part of a broader campaign by civil rights groups to dismantle practices that they say penalize, and sometimes criminalize, poverty. But is that what’s really happening?

Janice Carter is a 42-year-old Air Force service veteran. She is listed as a plaintiff in the case. She says that after she accrued several tickets for traffic violations, the Department of Motor Vehicles suspended her license. To get it reinstated, Carter says she must come up with $1,100 to cover the fines plus another $500 in fees. Her only alternative, she says, is to request a hearing to explain why she can’t pay. But that hearing isn’t free. It would cost $800. Carter says neither option is affordable.

The lawyers representing Carter say the scenario makes for a “wealth-based” system of law enforcement that deprives people of their driving privileges (sometimes preventing them from getting to work) only because they are poor.

“I’m not contesting [the fines],” says Carter. She admits that she violated the law.

Nusrat Choudhury of the ACLU’s racial justice program says others in the case admit the same. “None of the plaintiffs here are contesting the fact that they owe for traffic tickets,” Choudhury says.

But Carter believes she should not lose her right to drive, even if she breaks the law and can’t pay the penalty.

According to Choudhury, the plaintiffs want the state to allow them an exception because of their low income. They want a cost-free means of negotiating their penalties.

But does that, in turn, create favoritism for the poor over the more affluent? Should a wealthy person be required to pay fees for the same access that a poor one gets for free?

God is clear that He disapproves unfair treatment of the poor. But He also says favoring the poor over the wealthy is likewise injustice. Leviticus 19:15 says, “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.”

The solution to avoiding costly fees that may interfere with one’s ability to drive and work is simple and equitable for everyone, regardless of financial status: Obey the traffic laws that exist for the common good. (See also Romans 13:1-6.)
Equal Rights Push in Egypt

In Egypt, women cannot inherit property equally with men. Muslim law forbids it. But one woman challenged the law, citing religion as the basis for her appeal.

In 2018, Huda Nasrallah’s father died. He left behind an apartment building in Cairo and a bank deposit. Nasrallah and her two brothers filed an inheritance request at a local court. She asked for an equal share of the property.

Egypt is a mainly Muslim country. Islamic laws favor male heirs. But Nasrallah is not Muslim. She is one of Egypt’s estimated 10 million Coptic Christians. Living in a mainly Muslim society, Coptic Christians are considered heretics. (The term “Christian” here can be confusing. Because of its Catholic roots, Coptic Christianity emphasizes obedience and ritual instead of salvation by God’s unearned grace in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. But Coptics consider the Bible to be God’s holy word.)

Egypt’s legal system grants the Coptic church full authority over many personal matters, like marriage. But that authority does not apply to inheritance. Nasrallah, a lawyer, believes this is a double standard.

Nasrallah’s brothers told the court that they would like the inheritance divided fairly among the three siblings. This is unusual. Many Coptic men enjoy benefiting from the Islamic laws, Nasrallah says. Those men use the excuse that the law is “out of their hands.”

Egyptian judges twice ignored the brothers’ testimony. Nasrallah cannot inherit, they said.

“It is not really about inheritance,” says Nasrallah. “My father did not leave us millions.” But she believes she has “the right to ask to be treated equally.”

Last year, the Tunisian government proposed a bill for equal inheritance rights. After that, many Arab countries began calling for those same rights.

There’s been backlash among Muslims. Most see the bill as violating Islamic law—and weakening Muslim societies.

Nasrallah appealed to a higher Egyptian court, citing a Coptic ruling that calls for equal male-female inheritance. She prepared her case around the biblical teaching that all heirs should receive equal shares—no matter their genders. (Numbers 27)

Girgis Bebawy, a Coptic lawyer, has represented dozens of Copts in similar cases. Prior to Nasrallah’s case, he had yet to win one.

In late November, the Egyptian court returned a landmark decision. Nasrallah will inherit equally with her brothers. She hopes her case sets a precedent for others, saying, “If I didn’t take it to court, who would?”
U.S. companies are putting the brakes on hiring, according to the government. A modest 136,000 jobs were added in September 2019. But these jobs helped set the unemployment rate at a 50-year record low of 3.5%. Imagine 100 adults sitting in your church or watching your soccer game. Only three or four of them are looking for a job. That sounds great, doesn’t it?

Times are good for businesses, so most people who want a job now have one. A very low unemployment rate is a blessing. It has calmed concerns about the economy creeping toward a recession.

But slower hiring is challenging the economy too. Low unemployment can make it hard to find qualified candidates. Many with skills and experience are already happily employed elsewhere. Lower-paying positions as well as seasonal openings also suffer when unemployment is very low. People are quick to leave those positions for greener pastures.

When it is clear sailing, people give thanks. But what else do they do? They start to scan the horizon. Are those storm clouds headed in our direction? Businesses have been reducing their investment spending. Uh-oh. Global growth is stable, but not rapid. Uh-oh. Right now, manufacturing (making new goods) is the weakest sector of the U.S. economy. Spending is down. Layoffs are up. Overseas demand for U.S. exports has fallen sharply. Worries over trade wars are ever present. Factory activity is at its lowest level in over 10 years. Retail is in a similar predicament.

On the sunny side, two sectors still had big job gains, however. Healthcare added 41,000 jobs—likely due to a population that is living further into old age. Professional and business services added 34,000 jobs—a solid number.

Why do we care about the number of people working? Americans worry about financial security. But as long as people have jobs, they will keep spending. That spending in turn keeps the economy moving forward.

Try that again. Why do we care about people working? Because labor has dignity. God created people to work—to participate in His creation. It is good for people to share their skills, services, and creations in the marketplace. Commerce is good for those close to us—our families, neighbors, and churches. But work is also good for people far away. Every job has its small part to play in a global economy of business and trade.
Not long ago, people clamored to work at U.S. ski slopes. Many a young person ran lifts or operated snowmaking machines just to score free ski passes. This season, resorts scrambled to fill jobs before the flakes started flying.

Unlike the ski bums of yesteryear, today’s snow workers aren’t just looking for any excuse to schuss down the slopes. They’re getting choosy—requiring better housing, higher pay, and good benefits.

“It’s an enormous challenge for us,” Dave Byrd of the National Ski Areas Association says of the labor issue. Housing is one of the biggest snow-job obstacles. In ski areas, lodging can be scarce, expensive, or both. Luxury resorts and online vacation rental services like Airbnb have snagged much of the available property near skiing hot spots. So, working all day, skiing all night, and then flopping anywhere for a few hours’ sleep isn’t really possible anymore in most places. “The ski bum in the 1980s and 1990s, those are hard to find,” Byrd says. “Housing is so enormously challenging.”

Another problem for employers is the country’s low unemployment rates. (See “Numbers To Notice” at left.) Historically low numbers of people are looking for jobs at present. Most workers can find steady, full-time jobs with benefits. There’s no need to freeze outside for a few months to get by.

“Home Depot and Target are paying $13 an hour, and the ski area 20 minutes out of town—[employers have] to match that,” Byrd says. “They’ve got to compete for that labor pool.”

According to Byrd, the ski industry depends on hiring about 100,000 seasonal workers each year. But ski resorts are naturally located in mountainous areas, placing them far from cities with big workforces.

“We don’t have a lot of ski areas [close] to major metropolitan areas. And even when we do, . . . they’re still struggling to find people,” Byrd says.

That means looking beyond the usual labor pool for workers.

Today, foreign workers make up about 5% to 10% of the ski resort labor. Many have special government-issued work visas. In all, the ski industry hires about 8,000 foreign workers on this type of visa. This year, Vermont’s Sugarbush Resort is hiring more than 100 foreign college students because of the difficulty in filling jobs. Byrd calls such foreign workers critical to the ski industry.

It’s not that ski resorts aren’t trying. Resorts from New Hampshire to Utah attempt to lure workers with bonuses, pay increases, housing, and free transportation. Still, it seems the days of ultra-cheap snow labor have mostly melted away.
Check your shirt’s tag. Where was it made? Do you ever think about who works to provide your clothes, electronics, sports gear, etc.? Most developed countries have laws about work conditions. Those laws protect workers and guarantee a minimum level of pay. But some other countries have different policies. Those differences can cause ethical issues for consumers when employee treatment violates basic human rights.

For that reason, the Trump Administration blocked shipments of baby pajamas from a Chinese company. The pajamas sell at Costco warehouses in packs of two for about $15. That’s a bargain for U.S. shoppers. But research into production practices suggested that the Chinese manufacturer uses forced labor.

Hetian Taida Apparel is accused of forcing ethnic minorities to sew clothes. The laborers are in an internment camp in China’s far western Xinjiang region. Most are Muslims. Their religious views threaten the Chinese government’s communist ideals. Government officials try to force the imprisoned minority groups to give up their language and their religion. They also make them work in state-subsidized factories that profit the government.

God gives people creativity and skills to provide goods and services that others need or want. Commerce, industry, and honorable labor is good, and scripture has much to say about working diligently and treating employees well. (See 1 Timothy 5:18, Ephesians 4:28, and Colossians 4:1, just for starters.)

Conversely, God is not pleased with unjust treatment of workers. He saw His people enslaved in Egypt, as Deuteronomy 26:6 says, “The Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor.” Malachi 3:5 promises that God will act against those who “oppress the hired worker in his wages.”

As Christian consumers (product or service buyers), awareness of unjust work conditions should prick our consciences. Is it righteous to benefit from someone else’s suffering? Or is it righteous to go without—or pay more for an alternative made under fair trade practices?

On October 1, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency (CBP) stopped some cargo containers at port. The goods inside were not allowed to be distributed to U.S. retailers. The CBP says the contents might have originated from factories that mistreat workers and use child labor. Costco is one of the businesses scheduled to receive products from those containers.

Costco continued to sell the Hetian Taida sleepers it had in stock. A company representative stated, “We believe (the pajamas) were made in a factory other than the one that was the subject of the CBP detention order.”

Human rights experts say as many as 25 million people globally are victims of forced labor. Under the law, U.S. importers have 90 days to prove their products were made without forced labor. If they can’t, the goods ship to another country, or Customs keeps and often destroys them.
Lost Painting Found... in the Kitchen

“Oh, that old thing...!” Year in, year out, an elderly French woman walked past a 10-inch board hanging in her open kitchen-dining room. She knew little about the decorative piece of religious art. But this fall, the painting made her a multimillionaire.

**Christ Mocked** depicts Jesus surrounded by men. Arms are outstretched, swords drawn. In the center, Jesus appears griefed. The painting is by 13th-century Italian artist Cimabue, or Cenni di Pepo.

Cimabue was a pioneer in art history. He broke from the popular style of the Middle Ages by including movement and angles in his work. His style led the way for later artists to develop a sense of perspective in painting. Those elements eventually became common in Western European painting.

The woman thought the gold-leafed image was unimportant. She couldn’t remember where she’d gotten the high-priced treasure—or how it had come to be hanging over a hot plate.

Those who know Jesus possess treasure too. The treasure in their souls is “the knowledge of the glory of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:6-7) That is a treasure that neither moth, rust, nor time can corrupt.

Auctioneer Philomène Wolf spotted the 10-by-8-inch painting this summer. She’d been inspecting the contents of the woman’s house in northern France. Wolf told a French newspaper that any items not selected for sale were headed to the town dump.

Wolf realized the painting was something of value. She suggested having it appraised. “You rarely see something of such quality,” Wolf says. “But I didn’t imagine it was a Cimabue.”

Dominique Le Coent of Acteon Auction House sold the painting to an anonymous buyer. Art watchers expected a sale from $4.4 million to $6.6 million. Instead, the image sold for $26.6 million! Le Coent says that was a “world record for a... pre-1500 work.”

“There’s never been a Cimabue painting on sale,” Le Coent explains. “So there was no reference previously on how much it could make.”

Art experts say the painting is part of a multi-paneled altarpiece that Cimabue painted around 1280. Two other Cimabue panels are in the Frick Collection in New York and the National Gallery in London. Experts compared the colors, sizes, styles—even the wormholes in the wood panels. Paris art expert Stephane Pinta also compared likenesses in facial expressions and buildings—as well as techniques for showing light and distance. Everything fit: This painting was Cimabue’s.

Art consultant Alexis Ashot calls the discovery of this masterpiece *ground-breaking* for the art world. “It’s wonderful to be reminded that there are paintings of such major importance that are still out there... to be discovered,” he says.
Can people and predators share Africa’s savannah in peace?

For many years, peoples of the African savannah chased big game. Hunters sometimes killed to show bravery. Often, they killed to avenge the slaughter of a prized animal. Today, a new generation has a new attitude: living together.

Saitoti Petro scans a dirt road in northern Tanzania. The tall, slender 29-year-old is marching with four other young men. They all belong to a pastoralist people group called the Maasai. (Pastoralists raise grazing animals, such as sheep or cattle.) They’re searching for signs of the continent’s top predator: the lion.

Petro points to a fresh track about as long as a ballpoint pen. Smudges in the dust tell him a large male lion passed there within the last two hours.

Africa’s elephants, cheetahs, rhinos, and lions are “vulnerable” to extinction according to scientists. Conservationists say that if things don’t change, these grand beasts will keep disappearing.

Losing habitat is the top risk to wildlife globally. Across Africa, lions have left 94% of the lands they once roamed. Grasslands are quickly becoming cropland or cities. And in places where lions still live, poaching and revenge killings are the next biggest threats.

Ultimately, God is in control of every living (and non-living!) thing. But from Earth’s beginning, He gave humans dominion over animals. (Genesis 1:28) That gives humans the responsibility to take care of God’s creation in a way that glorifies God and reflects His qualities. What a shame if humans eliminate a species—either through neglect or cruelty!
For centuries, Maasai peoples in Kenya and Tanzania have taught their children about the King of Beasts: “If you see a lion, stop and look it straight in the eyes—you must never run,” Petro says. His advice is sound. Lions prefer to chase their prey.

The Maasai consider these brave animals worthy adversaries. Petro Lengima Lorkuta, Saitoti Petro’s father, killed his first lion when he was 25. He hurled a spear at it after the cat attacked his largest bull. He says that in those days, “If you killed a lion, it showed that you were a strong warrior.”

Inhabitants of the savannah still hunt lions—often to avenge cattle that the big cats have eaten. Ancient peoples built natural fences to protect their animals at night. Many Maasai still do. But the tangled thorn bushes are no match for a hungry predator.

In recent years, revenge animal killings have become deadlier. Many herdsmen have switched from spearing individual lions to putting out poisoned carcasses: Whoever eats, dies. Such a method can slaughter a whole pride, or group, of lions—and any other animals that feed on the tainted meat.

Such possible mass slayings concern scientists and savannah residents. After all, a healthy lion population helps control diseases, parasites, and other animal populations on the savannah.

Today, Petro thinks there are too few lions, not too many. “It will be shameful if we kill them all,” he says. “It will be a big loss if our future children never see lions.”

The survival of lions—and many other threatened savannah species from cheetahs to elephants—probably depends on finding a way for people, livestock, and wild beasts to use these lands together.

A nonprofit called African People & Wildlife offers support and training to help predators and people coexist. Petro is one of more than 50 lion monitors on the Maasai Steppe, a grassland strewn with trees and water sources.

The monitors walk daily patrol routes. They teach shepherds how to protect their cattle and live more peaceably alongside large predators. Over the past decade, this group has helped more than a thousand households build secure modern corrals made of living acacia trees and chain-link fence. The devices protect livestock at night when predators attack.

On the morning Petro finds the fresh tracks, his team hears cowbells jingling. Petro heads toward them and finds two young shepherds sitting under a tree. Their two dozen cattle are meandering toward the ravine.

Petro tells the shepherd boys about the lion nearby. He and his team help the boys turn their herd around, sending them in a safer direction.

There’s some evidence that the lion monitors’ methods to ease human-lion conflict are working. In 2005, the tiny village of Loibor Siret saw about three predator attacks on livestock each month. In 2017, they happened only about once per month. The biggest change in those 12
years? About 90 village households built reinforced corrals, which are much more effective than the older thorn barriers at keeping predators from livestock.

Protecting animals out on the steppe is a trickier challenge. But monitors helped resolve at least 14 problems in 2017 that might have led to all-out lion hunts.

While the number of lion hunts in the region is dropping, they still sometimes happen. And the local lion population is beginning to bounce back. “Once you make lions safe, their numbers can recover quickly,” says Laly Lichtenfeld, co-founder of African People & Wildlife.

More and more, scientists are also realizing they must consider the lands and people outside park areas as they plan for protection and conservation. Large migratory animals range widely: They follow the rains and the animals they prey upon—inside or outside the parks. Sometimes, people living near parks distrust
Petro's patrol efforts to protect the lions.

“We don’t want to hear lions roar at night,” says Neema Loshiro. The village woman sells handmade jewelry on the street of Loibor Siret. The only wildlife she wants nearby are giraffes and impalas. “They’re pretty and don’t attack people or eat crops,” she says.

Petro’s family erected a reinforced corral four years ago. They have not lost any livestock to predators since. “The modern fence is very helpful,” Petro’s father says. He supports his son’s efforts to educate their neighbors about avoiding predator conflicts. “Now I love to see lions,” he says—just not too near his home.

**Going Forward**

Many things stay the same on the Maasai Steppe. Petro rises each day at dawn to take the cattle to pasture, as his ancestors have done for generations. He scrubs his teeth with a twig from *Salvador persica*, the “toothbrush tree.” He wears a long, colorful robe and carries a sharpened machete blade.

Yet attitudes are changing. Lions are only doing what comes instinctively to them. They are, by God’s design, predators. People—like the Maasai—can choose how they respond to animal behavior. It may be wise to destroy a vicious beast that has become a man-eater. But humans who show restraint do well to creatively manage the lion population—rather than kill out of sinful anger, pride, or vengeance. God can change human hearts. He can transform a desire for revenge into a desire to protect. And we can be thankful whenever we see Him working that way—even in those who are not believers.

“We expect the growing generation to get more education than us,” Petro says, “and therefore to know the importance of wild animals.” He knows the lions and other animals of his land are vital to a whole way of life—his way of life.

“Our elders killed and almost finished off the lions,” Petro says. “Unless we have new education, they will be extinct.”
Duluwat Island was once home to the Wiyot people. Just after California’s famed Gold Rush, a horrific massacre took place there. The surviving Wiyot left. Today, tribal members have reclaimed much of the area—and gained a community along with it.

Duluwat, also known as Indian Island, sits off the coast of Northern California. The closest city is Eureka, named in tribute to its mining history. (Eureka means, “I have found it!”) The Wiyot people used Duluwat for fishing and for a yearly dance ceremony. Today, Duluwat is mostly marshland and shell-based mounds. The Wiyot piled up shell fragments collected from the ocean. Over thousands of years, the shell mounds transformed Duluwat’s landscape—adding acreage to the island.

In 1860, European-American immigrants nearly wiped out the Wiyot. Elders, women, and children died during a raid while the tribe’s men were away gathering supplies. Reports at the time said that the killings were revenge for Wiyot cattle-stealing.

After the massacre, the island became a shipyard. It functioned that way from 1870 through the 1980s. Some Wiyot tribe members said they weren’t allowed to return to the island.

American Indian tribes lost millions of acres of land. Military force and treaties broken by the U.S. government account for much of that loss. But tribes also exchanged land for federal services such as health care and education. According to Cris Stainbrook, president of the Indian Land Tenure Foundation, Native Americans rarely get their land back. Most tribes must buy land as it comes up for sale.

The Wiyot Tribe wanted to regain Duluwat. Members began fundraising in 1998. They sold art and fry bread and accepted donations. In 2000, the tribe bought one and a half acres of the island. Batteries, lead paint, chemicals, and scrap metal littered the site—contamination left from the former shipyard.

It’s human sin nature to want to hurt those who hurt us. But Jesus shows His followers a better way: loving one’s neighbor. (Matthew 22:39)

Together, the tribe and Eureka community members removed debris and tainted soil. Officials deemed the land safe in 2014. The Wiyot began occupying parts of the island.

This fall, Eureka city officials gave more than 200 acres—including acreage on Duluwat Island—back to their Wiyot neighbors. “It’s the right thing to do,” says Councilwoman Kim Bergel. “It’s been far too long.” Now the Wiyot own almost the whole island and some surrounding land. The tribe imagines Duluwat as a place where the whole community can gather. “It was never . . . us versus them,” says tribal administrator Michelle Vassel. “We all live in this community together.”
Today’s journalists face modern challenges. Online media platforms are surging. But the lowly newspaper—and its reporters—are fighting money, tech, and distrust issues. Journalism students and teachers must emphasize new skills to keep their profession alive.

A trustworthy press helps inform people and monitors all levels of government. That is essential to a free nation. We call all the collected means by which journalists and broadcasters bring the news to people—newspapers, magazines, TV, podcasts, websites, radio—the media. Yet this useful establishment is growing increasingly unpopular. A report from the Knight Foundation says that 43% of Americans say the media does a poor job of supporting democracy. Many people blame a biased and corrupt press. Of course, the problem isn’t the method of news delivery. It’s human nature.

According to the University of North Carolina, newsroom jobs across the country are fewer than half what they were 10 years ago. And on many college campuses, the news about the news is bleak too.

Take the Syracuse, New York, student-run Daily Orange: It isn’t daily anymore. The paper prints just three times each week. Next year, the University of Maryland Diamond will be online only. Half the newspapers that still exist on paper say they don’t print as many copies. And UNC’s Daily Tar Heel has cut staff pay and rented cheaper offices to make its budget.

Considering the problems in journalism, it’s surprising that enrollment in college journalism programs is up. Daily Orange managing editor Catherine Leffert calls the layoffs and cutbacks “disheartening… But what keeps me wanting to be a journalist… is seeing the effect that the D.O. has.”

Another boost to budding journalists is coming from an unusual source. University of Maryland journalism dean Lucy Dalglish says President Donald Trump’s disdain for the media has made more students interested in becoming reporters. But journalism educators wonder, “Are we preparing young people for a dying industry?”

Years ago, journalism graduates took low-level reporter jobs at newspapers or television stations. That still happens. But today’s jobs more often involve digital editing, social media production, and video streaming.

Some universities are focusing on specialized programs. The University of Florida offers a sports media program. Several schools highlight statistics-driven data journalism. The news isn’t all bad. Journalism professor Kathleen Culver says, “When I look at 18- and 20-year-olds [in journalism] and see what they want to do, I’m optimistic.”

Maddy Arrowood is the student editor of the Daily Tar Heel. She says her experience makes her more interested in a journalism career, not less. Her optimism “comes from knowing that people still need news. They still need information.”
Along the Burnt Mesa Trail in New Mexico, a crew outfitted with spurs, ropes, and hard hats scrambles to collect pine cones. Team members are well equipped to scale hefty tree trunks. They use long clippers to snip branches loaded with prickly ponderosa pine cones. The seeds inside each cone will be cleaned and sorted, and then saved or grown into seedlings. In either case, the seeds will help bring new life to fire-scarred hillsides. Project participants hope to collect one million seeds.

Pines produced a bumper crop of cones this year. The bounty is evidence of God’s design working to guarantee future propagation, or new growth. Every decade or so, trees produce extra seeds. The excess is a welcome gift to other species—including people! The extra seeds are vital to new plant growth—especially in forests ravaged by hungry predators and natural disasters such as fire.

Sarah Hurteau works with The Nature Conservancy in New Mexico. She knows how important seed collection is for reforestation. Hurteau says, “We’ve had so many large, high-severity fires in the state, and without our intervention there is a possibility that some of those areas will never be forests again.”

Some trees depend on forest fires for growth. God uses something that seems harmful to a forest for its own good. For example, Jack pine trees have thick, hard cones covered in dense resin. The resin seals the cone’s seeds inside. When fire consumes the cone, the intense heat breaks the resin seal, releasing the seeds. Sequoia trees also benefit from this fire-stimulated seed release. But many other trees and their seeds are devastated by flames. That’s why so many forests struggle to recover from fire damage.

For years, people have helped manage forests by collecting, saving, and propagating seeds. In New Mexico, the Santa Clara Pueblo community has gathered seeds from about 2.5 million trees! The group maintains a seed bank of ponderosa, Douglas fir, spruce, and other conifer variations. South Dakota, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah maintain similar seed banks.

Of course, there’s a science to cone picking. Pine cone collectors look for perfect samples. They don’t collect cones that are bent, curvy, broken, sappy, or full of holes. Trees loaded with cones can take significant time to harvest. But that’s OK. It’s what’s inside that matters. Precious seeds are worth the investment.
Europe’s Last Untamed River

Europe’s last wild river is endangered. The threat comes not from pollution or drought. Instead, the menace is a world hydropower boom—and the dams needed to maintain it.

Rivers are a crucial part of the God-created water cycle. They carry energy and nutrients and furnish drinking water, transportation, and recreation. Rivers host a variety of fish and provide food for birds, animals, and people.

So it is with Albania’s Vjosa River. The Vjosa (pronounced v-JAH-suh) runs more than 170 miles through the heart of one of Europe’s poorest countries.

Now the Albanian government plans to dam the Vjosa and its tributaries. Officials want to generate electricity using the flowing water. The process produces hydropower (also called hydropower). To do this, they want to build eight dams along the river—plus another 30 on the river’s various offshoots.

Some experts say hydropower is reliable, cheap, and renewable. After all, rivers keep running, right? But critics say the benefits of hydropower are overstated—and outweighed by the harm dams can do.

Dams interrupt the flow of rivers and harm the wildlife in and around them. They impede the natural movement of water and sediment (mud or sand on the river bottom). This can cause temperature swings, change the water chemistry, or trigger toxic algae growth.

Dams can also completely unravel food chains. Low water levels reduce area in which insects can lay eggs. Fewer insects feed fewer fish, which leaves less prey for fish-eating birds and mammals.

But the most well-known issue is that dams block the paths of fish trying to swim upstream to spawn. Some who live along the riverbank or rely on the waterway for their livings are worried. They fear dams could kill the Vjosa.

We humans can get ahead of ourselves. We might invent a way around a problem without considering what—or who—could suffer as a result. We often fret over future events without knowing all the facts. God knows all. His word teaches that prudence (discretion and restraint before action) is wise. He also tells Christians how to resist sorrow and turmoil: “Hope in God.” (Psalm 42:5)

Jonus Jonuzi grew up along the river. He raised his children there. Now he watches his grandchildren play in its waters.

Before dawn, Jonuzi crosses a bridge over a narrow gorge to tend to his goats. Later, his son drives the animals to drink from a nearby spring. The water emerges cold and clear.

“Everything I have, I have because of the river,” he says. “Albania needs electrical energy. But not by creating one thing and destroying another.”
Philmont Scout Ranch is a vast and spectacular piece of property in New Mexico. It is owned by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). But the financially strapped organization took out a large mortgage on the property last fall.

The BSA says it has no plans to sell the property. The land is offered as collateral in the big loan. Collateral is the term used for something of value in a financial lending situation. The BSA needs to borrow some money. It owns property that has great value. So the BSA says to a bank or other lender, “Please loan us money. We will pay you back. But if we don’t, this property will become yours in exchange.” The land backs up the promise of repayment. A loan issued with collateral backing it up is called a mortgage.

Officials with the Boy Scouts believe this to be a wise way to help the organization through what it hopes will be a temporary rough spot. But the decision dismayed a member of Philmont’s oversight committee. He says it violates the agreement made when the land was donated to the Scouts in 1938.

Mark Stinnett is a lawyer. He’s also the member of the committee that objected to the mortgage deal. “The first point of the Scout Law is ‘A Scout is trustworthy,’” Stinnett wrote in his complaint. “I am distressed beyond words at learning that our leaders apparently have not been.”

He says the $446 million in debt the Scouts received from the agreement with J.P. Morgan Chase puts the property at risk of loss. When it was originally given by wealthy oilman Waite Phillips, it was transferred as a “restricted asset,” Stinnett claims. That means that BSA is not free to transfer it to anyone else.

The BSA says operations at Philmont “continue uninterrupted, and we are committed to ensuring that the property will continue to serve and benefit the Scouting community for years to come.” But a spokesperson defended the mortgage as the means to meet that commitment: “In the face of rising insurance costs, it was necessary for the BSA to . . . address our current financial situation. This included identifying certain properties, including Philmont Scout Ranch, that could be used as collateral.”

The BSA says it’s exploring “all available options,” including passing costs on to members. The annual membership fee for its 2.2 million youth members will rise from $33 to $60 next year. Many members are not happy about that either.

Managing money, property, and people’s best interests takes real wisdom, and sometimes it’s not possible to please everyone involved.
“Give me that old time religion”? For a growing number of Americans, not so much. New information from the Pew Research Center reveals a spike in Americans claiming no religious connection. Meanwhile, it reports a steep decline among those who claim the name of Christ.

Phone surveys in 2018 and 2019 found that 65% of American adults describe themselves as Christians. That’s a plunge from 77% in 2009. For those who call themselves atheists, agnostics, or “nothing in particular,” it’s a different story. The portion of these so-called “nones” has risen from 17% in 2009 to 26% today.

The Pew report has more troubling news. Church attendance is on the decline. The portion of those who attend religious services regularly—at least once or twice per month—has dropped 7% over the past 10 years. The percentage of those who rarely or never attend services has increased by the same amount. In 2009, regular attenders outnumbered those who rarely attend church 52% to 47%. Now those folks who make regular church attendance their priority are in the minority. Only 45% of Americans claim to attend church more than once a month.

Generational differences may partly explain the change in America’s religious landscape. The report says three quarters of U.S. baby boomers (people born between 1946 and 1964) call themselves Christians. Among the younger millennial generation, however, only 49% label themselves Christian.

On the surface, these stats might seem like only bad news. But numbers don’t always tell the whole story. For much of the history of the United States, many people have shared a common Judeo-Christian heritage if not an actual, life-saving faith. Christianity and church attendance were largely accepted as cultural norms. The Pew study suggests that norms have shifted. Maybe Americans today are more honest about their religious beliefs. In the past, churches may have been full because Christianity was popular, not because everyone in the seats really believed the gospel.

It is important to remember too that Jesus’ church (the whole body of believers) is not confined to any one part of the globe. While Christianity becomes less popular in one country, it may explode in others (for example: Iran, Afghanistan, and Gambia). Christians take comfort in knowing that God protects His people throughout the world. God is with the true church everywhere, whether there are many or few, in peace and in persecution. Christians pray for their communities and nations to be awakened to the gospel. And they rest secure, knowing that God is in control.
Faster, better . . . cooler? Athletes at this year’s world championships showed big gains. And not just on the clock. About 200 competitors took part in a research project on how their bodies work under pressure. These world-class athletes carried high-tech transmitters—in their guts.

An International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) project is studying the effects of heat and temperature deep inside athletes’ bodies—the part known as the “body core.” Exercise heats up the body and induces sweat for cooling. The heart and circulatory system often struggle to keep up. Trainers know that keeping an athlete’s core temp steady can affect performance.

Paolo Emilio Adami is the health and science department medical manager for the track federation. He says, “Our body is the most perfect machine that exists.” Adami is right. God created the human body to function with amazing precision and complexity. God also made the whole universe (Psalm 8:3)—and that’s a pretty amazing “machine” too!

For the IAAF study, most volunteers come from endurance events such as race walks, the 10,000 meters, and the marathon. Researchers couldn’t have picked a better time or place for their real-life heat research. Temperatures in Doha, Qatar, location of the 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships, reach a sweltering 100 degrees every day.

About two hours before the start, runners each swallow a red-and-white capsule. The “pills” contain transmitters and batteries. The capsules work their way into runners’ intestines by race time. During the races, the capsules record body-core temps.

Thermal cameras along the course also measure heat emission from passing runners. Athletes weigh in before and after the race to help gauge hydration levels.

American marathoner Roberta Groner took part in the project. After the women’s marathon, medical staff hung a receiver around her neck to download data.

Groner was eager to see the study results after her sixth-place finish. They could offer her useful training tips. After all, the Tokyo 2020 Olympics are on the horizon. Conditions there could be every bit as stifling as Doha.

“We’re learning a lot from these elite athletes,” says Adami. He stresses that the data doesn’t affect an athlete during the competition—since it’s all gathered post-race.

“Based on this data, ideally, [trainers] should be able to tailor the needs to each athlete,” Adami says. As for how the device leaves the body—well, ahem, nature simply runs its course.

American Christian Taylor competes in the men’s triple jump final.
Giichi Matsumura disappeared from a World War II internment camp in California. In a remarkable turn of events, his body was found. Twice. It was located first in 1945, weeks after his initial disappearance, and then again 74 years later.

During World War II, the United States was at war with Japan. Internment camps housed more than 110,000 Japanese-American detainees. These American citizens had not committed crimes. But officials feared their possible ties back to Japan. They deemed them security risks. Manzanar, 185 miles north of Los Angeles, California, was one of the camps.

The war ended in 1945. But more than half the detainees refused to leave the prison camps. Many had lost their homes. They feared racism and violence, and they lacked hope.

Matsumura was a 46-year-old gardener. He lived with his family behind barbed wire in Manzanar. On July 29, 1945, Matsumura trekked with several other men up to a chain of mountain lakes. At some point, Matsumura wandered off to paint a watercolor picture. A freak summer snowstorm blew in. The others took shelter in a cave. When the weather cleared, they couldn’t find Matsumura. Search parties spent days looking for him, but all they found was his sweater.

A month later, a hiker spotted Matsumura’s remains. With no means to bring him home, authorities buried the body where the hiker found him. They marked the site with stones and a blanket, and then the location was forgotten—for decades. People tried and failed to find the gravesite. Matsumura was lost again.

In October, another hiker who had ventured off the trail found a skeleton lying in what appeared to be a burial pose. The location of the bones is consistent with Matsumura’s resting place. Authorities are conducting DNA tests on the bones. If confirmed that they are Matsumura, he will finally be buried next to his wife Ito. She died in 2005 at the age of 102. Her grave is marked with a granite headstone bearing her name and that of her long-lost husband.

Matsumura was lost, found, lost again, and now perhaps found once more. Yet never once was he out of God’s sight. Sadly, Matsumura was treated as a stranger in his homeland. He lived in exile. Like Matsumura, Christians too are strangers in this land. But we have hope. This Earth as it is today is not our forever home. Thanks be to God! “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” (Ephesians 2:19)
Stranger than *Star Trek*, wilder than *Ender's Game*. An orbiting “space hotel” could soon have travelers spinning through the cosmos. The vision for a doughnut-shaped space station housing galaxy-flitting scientists and tourists isn’t new. But the rotating reality could be here sooner than you think.

Gateway Foundation is a leader in space construction. According to its website, founder John Blincow and others share a goal: “colonizing space and other worlds.” Their first step is a sci-fi-looking spaceport: the Von Braun Space Station. The station would function as both hotel for tourists and a stop-off on the way to other planets.

Gateway’s station is named for Wernher von Braun (1912-1977). Von Braun was an aerospace engineer and designer of livable outer space environments. As a young German scientist, he worked on developing rockets. Nazi Germany sought to force him to use his research for making weapons.

For a time, he was imprisoned for resisting.

In 1945, as World War II ended, von Braun surrendered willingly to U.S. troops. He joined other German experts working for the United States, hoping America would use his technology for space exploration—not weapons development. He became NASA’s chief architect for the Apollo moon-landing spacecraft.

Von Braun drew from the writings of earlier scientists. In 1952, he first published his idea for a rotating, wheel-shaped space station.

Timothy Alatorre is Gateway’s lead architect. He is designing both the spaceport and its interior.

His plan includes restaurants, hotel-like rooms, a gymnasium, and more. For passengers wanting the weightless experience, Alatorre adds several no-gravity spaces onboard. The ring-shaped Von Braun Station is intended to orbit Earth multiple times each day, rotating the whole time. This spinning would use speed and God-created centrifugal force to create artificial gravity. (See Colossians 1:17.)

Alatorre admits taking inspiration from sci-fi classics. “I think it started really with *Star Trek* and then *Star Wars*, this concept of large groups of people living in space and having their own commerce, their own industry, and their own culture,” he says.

In the coming years, the station will face many obstacles. Some of those include extreme heat, extreme cold, high costs—and finding employees willing to basically become astronauts!

Plans call for the station to be finished by 2025—or thereabouts. Gateway officials hope the Von Braun Station will lodge about 450 people.

The website invites aboard anyone who wants “to experience life on a large space station with the comfort of low gravity and the feel of a nice hotel.”

“Our objective is to have the station available for the average person,” Alatorre says. “It would be something that would be within reach.”

Von Braun would probably approve. He believed space undeniably revealed the holy Creator. He said, “Manned space flight is an amazing achievement, but it has opened for mankind thus far only a tiny door for viewing the awesome reaches of space. An outlook through this peep-hole at the vast mysteries of the universe should only confirm our belief in the certainty of its Creator.”
Alatorre adds several no-gravity spaces onboard. The ring-shaped Von Braun Station is intended to orbit Earth multiple times each day, rotating the whole time. This spinning would use speed and God-created centrifugal force to create artificial gravity. (See Colossians 1:17.) Alatorre admits taking inspiration from sci-fi classics. “I think it started really with Star Trek and then Star Wars, this concept of large groups of people living in space and having their own commerce, their own industry, and their own culture,” he says.

In the coming years, the station will face many obstacles. Some of those include extreme heat, extreme cold, high costs—and finding employees willing to basically become astronauts! Plans call for the station to be finished by 2025—or thereabouts. Gateway officials hope the Von Braun Station will lodge about 450 people. The website invites aboard anyone who wants “to experience life on a large space station with the comfort of low gravity and the feel of a nice hotel.”

“Our objective is to have the station available for the average person,” Alatorre says. “It would be something that would be within reach.” Von Braun would probably approve. He believed space undeniably revealed the holy Creator. He said, “Manned space flight is an amazing achievement, but it has opened for mankind thus far only a tiny door for viewing the awesome reaches of space. An outlook through this peep-hole at the vast mysteries of the universe should only confirm our belief in the certainty of its Creator.”

SpaceX defied the old adage “The sky’s the limit” yet again. The company launched another 60 Starlink satellites into space with the assistance of the Falcon rocket, a reusable booster. The launch marked the unprecedented fourth flight of a booster for SpaceX. The cargo comprised compact, 575-pound, flat-panel devices that took their places in orbit. They join 60 satellites deployed in May 2019. (See “SpaceX Launches 60 Satellites” at teen.wng.org.) The satellites make up an orbiting network designed to provide truly global internet coverage.

SpaceX founder Elon Musk plans to put thousands of Starlink satellites in orbit. With this second launch, he is another step closer to his goal of providing cable-free internet coverage to every populated area on Earth.

So far, so good—sort of. SpaceX is keeping an eye on one satellite that has a potential problem. If it cannot make it past the initial 174 mile-high orbit distance, SpaceX will command the faulty Starlink component to drop from the sky. It will burn up harmlessly in the atmosphere.

Only a few short years ago, internet service in most of the world was spotty, clunky, and rare. Cables and wires brought the cyber network directly into office buildings. But few homes were connected.

Demand for web access was great, though. The introduction of faster connection speeds and wireless internet were game changers. Public spaces like hotels, doctor’s offices, and coffee shops offered free Wi-Fi. Today, most homes in developed countries easily connect to internet services. But lesser developed countries don’t. It’s still too difficult and costly to run internet cables into poor and remote areas.

Can stretching the internet through space solve the accessibility problem? SpaceX thinks so. But it isn’t the only company in the game. OneWeb and Jeff Bezos’ Amazon are also competing for sky space.

For Musk, internet satellites are a means to an end. He hopes Starlink revenue will fund spacecraft development. His eyes are set on Mars.

Change can mean saying goodbye to what we’re used to. Will the old internet infrastructure of cables become obsolete, like wired telephones and dial-up modems? Probably. But change also makes things better. Ultimately, God uses change to advance His kingdom. He promises that all nations will know Him, and He uses people—their work, their communications—to share knowledge of Him.

How might global internet help achieve the promise of Psalm 22:27: “All the ends of the Earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you”?
Online Voting on the Horizon

Blockchain is a new cybersecurity technology. It is getting the attention of people who want to protect their personal information online. Blockchain moves verified data securely through transactions one “block” at a time. It opens a series of virtual doorways and closes each completely before that personal information goes on to the next place in the chain. Now some elections officials think blockchain could make online voting possible. Online elections may help the sick or elderly vote from home. Overseas military personnel could vote online instantly—instead of mailing ballots. But tech experts say, “Not so fast!” They agree that blockchain-based voting could boost voter turnout by making it more convenient. But there are weaknesses too. The biggest concern is verifying that the voter really is authorized to cast that vote. There’s still work to do before blockchain can reliably prevent or detect election fraud. But those who watch internet trends say it’s coming soon!

Goodbye, Stethoscope?

Can you imagine a doctor or nurse without the trusted tool, the stethoscope? The medical profession’s long-standing symbol is facing an uncertain prognosis. For 200 years, a pair of tubes that connected a patient to a doctor evaluated heart, lung, and digestive health. But maybe not for much longer. Compact, high-tech devices threaten the stethoscope’s future. These new tools rely on ultrasound, artificial intelligence, and smartphones instead of a medical professional’s well-trained ears. Medical school graduates traditionally receive white coats and stethoscopes to launch their careers. Proficient use of the centuries-old device is required for licensing. But world-renowned cardiologist Dr. Eric Topol calls the stethoscope obsolete. In today’s technological age, he says, “We can do better.” New handheld devices can do all that a stethoscope does—plus provide internal images and data summaries. Those kinds of options get some doctors’ hearts pumping.

New York City Gets Slimed

Slime, the bedazzled, stretchy sensation with fans of all ages, is taking up residence in New York City. An entire 8,000-square-foot museum has been dedicated to the goo for six months. The pop-up museum known as Sloomoo Institute is the brainchild of Karen Robinovitz, Sara Schiller, and Toni Ko. According to the trio, the exhibit’s purpose is to spread slime’s powers of rejuvenation and relaxation. Skeptical about that? (So are all the moms who have cleaned up slime residue.) The museum hosts a nook with an EEG machine. Visitors can plug in, grab a sticky fistful, and see their brains on slime. There’s also a glow-in-the-dark cove and plenty of hands-on, sensory exploration with many varieties. You can even mix your own at the DIY bar. After Sloomoo’s term in the Big Apple is over, it will slide on over to a new locale—maybe even one near you.
Boyan Slat’s Cleanup Takes on Rivers

Dutch inventor Boyan Slat is passionate about cleaning up plastic pollution in the Pacific Ocean. So he’s going to the source: rivers. Slat developed a new floating device to catch garbage before it reaches the seas. The 25-year-old founded The Ocean Cleanup system, which is intended to round up plastic waste in the ocean. The project has had challenges and setbacks, but Slat isn’t giving up. “We need to close the tap,” he says. Slat’s critics agree. They’ve long said solving Earth’s plastic problem will take a combination of efforts. And so, the solar-powered, river-sweeping Interceptor was born. Slat has deployed Interceptors to rivers in Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic. He says 1,000 rivers are responsible for about 80% of plastic pouring into the oceans. He wants to tackle them all in the next five years.

Primate “Person” Moves to Florida

Sandra was born in Germany. The now 33-year-old orangutan lived 25 years at the Buenos Aires Zoo. In 2015, Sandra was granted “personhood” in Argentina. Judge Elena Liberatori ruled that Sandra is not legally an animal but a “non-human person,” thus entitled to some legal rights enjoyed by people. “I wanted to tell society something new,” said Judge Liberatori. “Animals are sentient beings . . . the first right they have is our obligation to respect them.” Sandra had no other primate companions at the Argentinian zoo. Conditions there didn’t meet the judge’s standards. But there was no immediate option for a better alternative. So Sandra remained at the antiquated zoo until fall of 2019. Then she moved to central Florida’s Center for Great Apes. Center director Patti Regan spoke on the orangutan, saying that Sandra “is adjusting to the new climate, environment, and the other great apes at the Center.”

Google Claims Quantum Breakthrough

Google announced it has achieved a breakthrough in quantum computing. The technology giant says it has developed a quantum processor, called Sycamore. Sycamore took just minutes to complete a complex calculation. Google says that the world’s best supercomputer would require hundreds of years to find the result. The feat could open the door to even more mind-boggling and blazingly fast advances. Imagine spending only moments to find a new medicinal compound, to crack an encrypted code, or to expand whole artificial intelligence systems. Such practical uses are probably still decades away, scientists say. But the latest findings, published in the scientific journal Nature, suggest that the new leading technology will progress. Powerful nations are investing in quantum computing developments too. Last year, President Donald Trump signed a measure to spend more than $1.2 billion over five years for quantum computing research.

Quiz My Reading:

1. a, 2. a, 3. b, 4. b, 5. c, 6. a, 7. c, 8. d, 9. e, 10. c

Mind Shift: Answers

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020 WORLD TEEN 29
1. Why did the U.S. Customs agency detain several containers of imported goods at port?
   a) The companies that manufactured those goods are suspected of using forced or child labor.
   b) The goods are suspected to be illegal contraband, such as weapons and drugs.

2. How did art experts decide that Cimabue had painted Christ Mocked?
   a) Analysts compared everything from color and size to facial expressions and wormholes.
   b) Art experts found a tiny signature that read “Cenni di Pepo,” Cimabue’s nickname.

3. What are some of the problems employers at ski resorts have in finding workers?
   a) Many resorts do not have enough ski business to be able to pay minimum wages for many workers.
   b) Ski resorts are far from big cities where potential employees live, and resorts have a lack of available inexpensive housing.

4. Name two strong economic sectors according to recent job data.
   a) retail and manufacturing
   b) healthcare and professional and business services

Quiz My Reading

1. violates
   a) cheats
   b) desecrates
   c) supports

2. internment
   a) confinement
   b) vacation
   c) quarantine

3. groundbreaking
   a) constructive
   b) revolutionary
   c) restrictive

4. appraised
   a) insured
   b) critiqued
   c) evaluated for worth

5. clamored
   a) grudgingly agreed
   b) refused
   c) requested passionately

6. sector
   a) economic division
   b) area on a graph
   c) projected improvement

Viz-Quiz

Which combination of these are mentioned in “Numbers To Notice” on page 10?

1. COSTCO
   2. McDonald’s
   3. THE HOME DEPOT

Mind Stir

1. Why do you think people watch unemployment numbers to gauge the health of their economy?

2. Do you think it is wrong to purchase goods produced by forced or underpaid workers?
Real Faith | Real Learning | Real Life

“More than education – transformed lives.” Dr. Martin Giese, President

Students will know the Bible and handle it rightly, interpreting it properly for personal and cultural application. Students will have a knowledge of human thought, history and culture adequate to understand and critique worldviews, to communicate effectively a Christian worldview to others, and to interact meaningfully with their own and other cultures.

oakhills.edu | (888) 751-8670 | admissions@oakhills.edu
LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES that help students live out their faith with CONFIDENCE.

Impact 360 Institute offers students and young professionals from all walks of life transformative worldview and leadership experiences like Impact 360 Fellows gap year, Impact 360 Immersion and Propel summer experiences for High School students, and Impact 360 Masters for graduate students.