

THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION

COURTESY OF SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS



Shen Yun: Fighting Persecution Through Art

*One principal dancer on a mission to kindle
justice in the hearts of audiences*

CATHERINE YANG

The curtain opens, and principal dancer Steven Wang leaps out, unfurling a banner in his hands. On it, five characters are written. They read: Falun Dafa is good.

For daring to utter these few simple words, tens of millions in China, including Wang's family, face severe persecution by China's communist regime.

Wang, a classical Chinese dancer, began his career nearly two decades ago when he was accepted into a professional dance academy at age 12. Today, he's a principal dancer with Shen Yun Performing Arts, the world's premier classical Chinese dance company, unique for its mission of reviving the authentic traditional Chinese culture.

For 5,000 years, China was a place where harmony between heaven, earth, and hu-

mankind was the central belief of society. The people believed their culture to be divinely inspired, and Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism had a strong influence on this society, which sought to uphold principles such as loyalty, integrity, kindness, wisdom, and justice.

It's a mission Wang is personally invested in.

"My father was persecuted to death," Wang said, in a video on the Shen Yun Creations website. Many artists in the New York-based performing arts company have been profiled on this new video site, telling stories about the faith and freedom they sought when they joined Shen Yun. As an American company, Shen Yun allows its artists to freely express their beliefs and culture, and share these with the world.

But many note a tragic irony: An arts company intent on saving the divinely

'This persecution never ceased,' Wang said. He remembers spending New Year's with his three older sisters and no parents at home.

inspired legacy of China's 5,000 years of civilization cannot even set foot in modern China still ruled by the Chinese Communist Party.

Wang himself couldn't go back to China when he learned of his father's death because of the Party's persecution, so he couldn't attend the funeral.

"I had no way of going back to see him one last time," Wang said. As of today, his mother remains in China and still faces persecution.

A Spiritual Legacy

The dancers in Shen Yun all meditate, and many Shen Yun performers practice Falun Dafa, a spiritual practice that teaches the three principles of "truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance."

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▲ By portraying figures from China's 5,000-year-old culture, Steven Wang hopes to uphold traditional principles like loyalty, integrity, kindness, wisdom, and justice.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS



Male dancers in a Shen Yun Performing Arts performance.

“They only told me they were doing fine. But you can probably imagine—you could tell from their withered faces that they’d been tortured.”

Steven Wang, principal dancer, Shen Yun Performing Arts

Shen Yun's Upcoming Performances

Boston	Massachusetts	Nov. 13-14
New Brunswick	New Jersey	Nov. 20-21
Minneapolis	Minnesota	Dec. 3-4
Des Moines	Iowa	Dec. 4-5
Omaha	Nebraska	Dec. 7-8
Charleston	South Carolina	Dec. 18-19
San Jose	California	Dec. 22-27
Hartford	Connecticut	Dec. 26
San Diego	California	Dec. 28-29
Fort Lauderdale	Florida	Dec. 29-30
Berkeley	California	Dec. 29-30
Costa Mesa	California	Dec. 30-Jan. 1, 2022
Milwaukee	Wisconsin	Dec. 31-Jan. 2, 2022
Raleigh	North Carolina	Dec. 31-Jan. 1, 2022

For additional performance dates, please visit ShenYun.com/tickets

Shen Yun: Fighting Persecution

Through Art *One principal dancer on a mission to kindle justice in the hearts of audiences*

Principal dancer for Shen Yun Steven Wang speaks about the ordeals his family suffered in China for their spiritual beliefs.



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This tradition of spiritual cultivation had been a large part of traditional Chinese culture until communism came to power in the last century, intent on wiping out tradition. “I was around 8 when I first encountered spiritual cultivation,” Wang said. The youngest of four siblings, he was a mischievous kid who often got into trouble. But he remembered that when his mother and father started taking up spiritual cultivation, they changed. “Falun Dafa’s principles teach people to first change themselves, and ‘look within.’ Whenever you run into problems, don’t consider everything from your own perspective—think from the perspective of others,” Wang said. “As a result, our fam-

ily life became much more harmonious.”

His parents were no longer so short-tempered. They disciplined him with reason. He and his parents began to communicate more and had a good relationship. It would be short-lived: In 1999, the Chinese Communist Party, intent on eradicating Falun Dafa, set its sights on the 70 million to 100 million adherents of the spiritual practice. “There were mass arrests and persecution,” Wang said. His family suffered, too. “Communist policemen broke into our home, threw a frenzy of punches and kicks. Then they abducted my parents and made a huge mess in our home, and took away all our books of Falun Dafa teachings.” His parents were both detained, in separate prisons.

“Every time we went to visit them, they looked like they’d been starved. They never told me what it was like in there. They only told me they were doing fine. But you can probably imagine—you could tell from their withered faces that they’d been tortured,” he said. From that point, Wang never again experienced a stable family life. If his father was released, his mother would get arrested. “This persecution never ceased,” he said. He remembers spending New Year’s with his three older sisters and no parents at home. Eventually, Wang came to the United States to continue his dance career. While Wang was overseas, his father was tortured in prison and then released because the

“Our dance was based on true events, adapted for stage.”

Steven Wang

guards thought he might die while detained. In 2009, his father died from health complications, and Wang only learned of it a month later. “Cultivation is not a crime,” Wang said. “I could not go back to China, so all I could do was continue using art to expose this persecution.” Wang, like other members of Shen Yun, is unable to go to China. As individuals, they could face persecution, and as a group, the Chinese Communist Party won’t allow the company to enter China, for fear of its influence in spreading traditional culture. Two years after his father’s death, Wang performed the role of a Falun Dafa practitioner, holding up a banner in Tiananmen Square, during one of Shen Yun’s pieces. “Our dance was based on true events,

adapted for stage,” he said. “When the persecution began, there were many practitioners who went to Tiananmen Square to hold up banners in protest. “When I was portraying the practitioner being persecuted, I would draw upon my past experiences. These were things that really happened to people close to me. “I hope to use the form of art to raise awareness of the persecution going on in China [and] to kindle justice in more people’s hearts to oppose this persecution. “Then, one day, this persecution will finally come to an end.”

The Epoch Times is a proud sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts. For more information please visit ShenYunPerformingArts.org

A Loudoun County Warrior at Peace

Jon Tigges on standing up and speaking up for what he believes is right

TERRI WU

On June 22, more than 250 residents of a Virginia county piled into a local school board meeting. Most of them were there to voice their objections to a controversial critical race theory curriculum as well as proposed pro-transgender rules. Jon Tigges, a Loudoun County resident, was one of the concerned parents. While he was due to make remarks during the public comment session, the Loudoun County School Board cut the proceedings early, citing disruptive behavior by the crowd. But Tigges wanted to press on. “You could feel the tension in the room, and people started singing the national anthem,” he recalled the event to The Epoch Times. “It’s a public meeting; they have canceled the meeting. We have every right to continue to speak, whether they’re going to listen or not. There’s a whole bunch of cameras here. Let’s get the word out. Let’s let the rest of the world hear how we feel.” So he stayed and organized speeches from audience members who didn’t get a chance to comment during the session. “I knew I could stand up on a chair.

There’ll be enough people that knew me that would quiet everyone else and they would listen.” But after about half an hour, the superintendent declared the gathering an “unlawful assembly.” At that point, Tigges decided it was time to stand his ground, and refused to leave the room. So, he was arrested by deputies for trespassing. Tigges’s arrest thrust him into the national spotlight overnight. Within 24 hours of his release, he did a dozen media interviews, including on “Tucker Carlson Tonight” on Fox News. On Sept. 22, Tigges was found guilty of trespass, a decision he’s appealing. During the court hearing, Loudoun County School Superintendent Scott Ziegler acknowledged the unlawful assembly announcement as something “incorrect.” In Tigges’s view, what happened in Loudoun County is “a microcosm of what the rest of the country is facing.” “Every major institution in our country has been taken over by enemies of the Constitution. We spent the last more than 50 years losing it in retreat. It’s going to take decades to win it back,” he said. Many conservatives have described Loudoun County as “ground zero” in the

battle against lockdowns, critical race theory (CRT), and pro-transgender policies in schools; while liberal media outlets have referred to the county as a flashpoint in the “culture wars.” Either way, Loudoun, a wealthy county in northern Virginia, has become a showcase of grassroots disagreement with the policies and the way of governing by those in a position of power, elected or appointed. The county school superintendent has repeatedly said that the schools don’t teach CRT, a doctrine that contends that U.S. institutions and society are systematically racist. However, some parents and teachers say that the school system instills in teachers tenets from CRT, particularly in so-called “equity training,” which then has a trickle-down effect on students. For Tigges, CRT, which ostensibly promotes racial equality, in fact, drives more division, and runs “completely counter the value this country was founded on, which was to unite people.” An agritourism business owner, Tigges’s fight began way before June. In 2020, he took action against the state’s lockdown policies: Last June, he sued Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam so that he could reopen his business; for more than six months, he

protested against the COVID-19 lockdown every Friday morning in front of the county government building in Leesburg. Since his arrest, Tigges has continued to speak up against the county policies virtually and in person. What makes him so fearless and perseverant when others who share his views are afraid of speaking up? Surprisingly, “peace” was the theme throughout the interview. “It wasn’t fun to be arrested. It wasn’t fun to have the head bashed into the paddy wagon,” said Tigges. “But I knew at that point: I had complete peace. God was going to use this to shine a disinfecting light on the Loudoun County School Board. And he did.”

At Peace With Life and Death

“The greatest paradox of living is that you have to die to live,” he said, adding that he didn’t mean physical death, but more like making a tough choice or letting go of the fear. The first time he found peace with death was in northern Iraq in 1996. He was in a safe house protected by the Peshmerga, the Kurdish branch of the Iraqi armed forces. On the first night, he believed that he could die at any moment. He relinquished a lot of fear upon realizing his life was not in his own hands. Tracers were going by his window, and his thoughts were relentless, too. He wasn’t supposed to be there. Before the trip to Iraq, he learned that he had been selected for

a doctoral program in Colorado. Then, he learned that a general’s favorite might be chosen for the program in his place—though he was assured that this wouldn’t happen. Later, he was informed that unfortunately he had lost his seat in the doctoral program. And in addition, the Air Force was sending him to Iraq for four months. Knowing that he shouldn’t be at the front of the line for Iraq, he had a choice: to raise the issue or simply go. And the timing wasn’t great. His fourth child was just one month old, and his widowed father-in-law was scheduled for open-heart surgery. Eventually, Tigges decided to “step forward faithfully and have confidence” in God’s plan. Following that, “an amazing peace struck,” he said. His experience taught him that “being afraid of a virus or some bully politician or administrator is ridiculous.” “We have nothing to fear. If you’re doing the right thing for the right reason, truth wins in the end,” he said. Right Here and Right Now Similar experiences have occurred many times since then when he was up against challenging situations. “It’s not always pleasant,” he said, but doing the right thing for the right reason resulted in things working out by themselves in the end. How he ended up in Loudoun is also such a story. After 9/11, his work in the Air Force



Jon Tigges at Zion Springs, his wedding and bed-and-breakfast venue, in Hamilton, Va.

brought him to Virginia from Montana, reluctantly so. When a stroke disabled his father-in-law, he decided to invite him to move in. As a result, he bought a lot in Loudoun to build a custom residence that could host a family of eight and a grandparent. Yet shortly before the construction finished, his father-in-law died of another stroke. By that time, the financial crisis had hit;

Tigges had to stay in Loudoun to pay off some bills. He looked into acquiring property for event business, but all deals fell through. Then, after the barn in the last agreement burned down in a fire two days before closing, he and his wife thought of moving back west. The next day, while trimming trees, a neighbor who had crossed Tigges’s path informed him of two lots for sale. Within two weeks, they finalized the deal, and Tigges had a business to run. He said that he didn’t want to leave Montana. He didn’t want to build his place initially, but it was the right thing to do for his father-in-law. Then, it led to a business opportunity. He didn’t want to deal with the government anymore, but running a business put the government right in his face. “God has continually challenged me in those ways. And when faced with it, just to be able to say, ‘Am I supposed to take care of my father-in-law? He has no place to go.’ ‘Yes, then we will make the sacrifices to do that.’ ‘Am I supposed to stand up against tyranny when it’s in your face? And no one else wants to be the plaintiff; then I need to be the plaintiff. I need to be willing to put time and treasure and fight back against clear tyranny.”

Patriot Pub Alliance

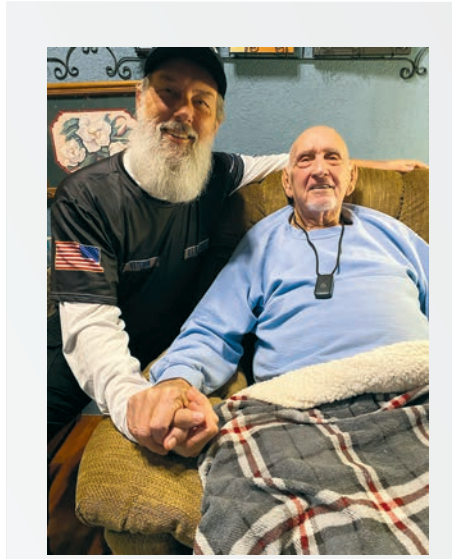
In April, Tigges hosted the first “Patriot Pub” event at his 24-acre farm in Hamilton, Virginia. He wanted to offer people a venue to meet and discuss in person. His event busi-

ness made it possible. As a start, he invited those who joined the protests in Leesburg, Virginia, in 2020. Shawntel Cooper, the woman in one of the first viral videos of public comment during a Loudoun County School Board meeting in May, was one of the early Patriot Pub guests. “It was cold outside, but it was about to be spring,” Cooper told The Epoch Times about her first meeting of about 20 people in April. She credited Patriot Pub as the “backbone of the beginning of everyone’s fight, taking a stand for their freedom,” adding, “everyone in the community has played a part in being warriors.” And Patriot Pub has kept up its momentum. In September, Tigges rolled out a Patriot Pub Alliance mobile app to “mobilize action” and build on “crowdsourcing initiatives.” He said it would be the mobile platform to help conservatives self-organize without censorship from Big Tech. “I’ve got to stop saying, ‘Who’s going to do something?’ ‘When there’s an opportunity for me to do something, then I need to step forward. We can’t live anymore in a world where we vote every other election and think that ‘I’ll take care of myself,’” Tigges said. Through the Patriot Pub events, “people connect in a much deeper way. And they begin to trust one another and go to bat for one another,” Tigges said. “And that’s why, on June 22, I felt completely unafraid to stand there and be arrested. As I knew, I had hundreds of other people that had my back and still do.”

ALL PHOTOS BY ANITA L. SHERMAN



It was Navy veteran Robert Houk's last wish to go trout fishing. Veteran's Last Patrol made that happen with the help of Davidson River Outfitters in North Carolina. Houk served on the USS New Jersey during World War II.



Roger, a volunteer with Veteran's Last Patrol, visits Bill, a Vietnam veteran in the hospice.



Veteran's Last Patrol founder Claude Schmid visits with Stan, who was a gunner's mate on the battleship USS Missouri during World War II. He witnessed the Japanese surrender ceremony in September 1945.



A World War II veteran living in a hospice facility in New Jersey expresses his delight at a visit from Veteran's Last Patrol.



Roy Johnson salutes at his honor ceremony hosted by Veteran's Last Patrol.



Roy Johnson as a young Army soldier.

Heart, Healing, and Going Home

Veteran's Last Patrol makes a difference for veterans in hospice care

ANITA L. SHERMAN

Veteran's Last Patrol, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Spartanburg, South Carolina, is on a mission to connect veteran volunteers with veterans who are in hospice care.

When friendships matter the most, a volunteer from Veteran's Last Patrol can make all the difference for a veteran who may be alone during end-of-life care. While some enjoy the closeness of family and friends, others have lost connection with loved ones and the military community.

Robert Houk served in the U.S. Navy during World War II on the battleship USS New Jersey. In hospice care, his mobility is limited and days are spent in a wheelchair.

"Can I get out on the river one more time to fish?" he asked a volunteer with Veteran's Last Patrol. His wish to catch one more trout was granted with help from Davidson River Outfitters in North Carolina this past summer. Once again on the river (in a chair), he was able to breathe the fresh air, enjoy the serenity of a summer's day, the gentle flow of the river, and smile while holding a freshly caught trout.

The stories of veterans in hospice care are touching and a stark reminder of who better to be served than those who so valiantly served us.

Serving in the military is an exceptional experience. Bonds are formed. While the decades may have passed, often rekindling that time of connectedness with one who has experienced similar memories is comforting as the veteran approaches his or her final days. Some stories are more easily shared veteran to veteran.

The Man Behind the Mission

Retired Army Col. Claude Schmid is at the helm of Veteran's Last Patrol. Schmid retired in 2013 after 31 years of military service in combat units around the world.

"As a young boy, when I was around the table with my brothers, my mother would tell us of her volunteer work with a local hospice, about the decline and adversity faced with end-of-life issues," Schmid said.

His mother's experiences made an impression on him.

As wounded soldiers were returning to the United States, it was Schmid's job, as a representative of senior military leadership, to greet them (usually on planes) as they returned to the United States from Iraq or Afghanistan. Depending on the extremity of their injuries, family members would often be with them, having first flown to Germany.

It wasn't an easy assignment. Schmid would thank them for their service, offer sympathy and any assistance he could, and ensure that they were properly looked after during their transfer to a medical facility.

"They needed companionship and to share their stories," Schmid said.

His mother's stories of hospice care, his own military experience, and supporting wounded warriors got his wheels turning.

"I started checking with various hospice facilities and found that they were often lacking when it came to volunteer help," Schmid said.

Schmid's thoughts immediately went to veterans, particularly those spending their last days in hospice care.

“We're part of a team. Whether they patrolled the air, sea, or land, this is their final chapter, and this is one final way for us to serve.”

Claude Schmid, founder, Veteran's Last Patrol

To date, Veteran's Last Patrol has served more than 1,000 veterans with some 200 volunteers, and the list is growing.

"We certainly partner with other veterans' groups," said Schmid, acknowledging that for the veterans that volunteer, "it's not easy—you never really see the approach of death up close ... and you develop a rapport."

"It's our way of serving other veterans but you have to be willing to deal with end-of-life issues," said Schmid, adding that the organization is constantly trying to recruit volunteers.

Operation Holiday Salute 2021

Last year, **Veteran's Last Patrol** received and delivered **30,000** holiday cards to veterans in hospice care around the country. Americans across the nation participated in this amazing operation to bring a little joy to veterans on their Last Patrol.

This year their goal is **50,000** holiday cards. You can help by sending cards addressed to "Dear Veteran" or "Dear Hero" to Veteran's Last Patrol, 140B Venture Blvd., Spartanburg, SC 29306. The deadline is Dec. 3, 2021.

Donations are appreciated to help defray the costs of packaging and postage and can be made online at VeteranLastPatrol.org or mailed by check.

For more information, see their website at VeteranLastPatrol.org or call 864-580-8005.

Schmid mentioned a recent veteran he had connected with. "He's 93, served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam."

He also recalled the story of another veteran.

"Your sense of hearing stays longer. This veteran couldn't see and couldn't speak [so] the volunteer would read to him. He enjoyed listening to music so the volunteer would play music from his phone. He played 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and the veteran started to sing along with the words. It was amazing."

Ways to Help

Veteran's Last Patrol, which is entering its third year of operation, is currently active in 17 states: Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Kentucky, Ohio, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada. Schmid is keen on growing its network of volunteers nationwide.

"You don't have to be part of a local group or chapter. Many are individuals in different parts of the states," he said.

"As we grow, we'll increasingly help folks partner and set up chapters in their areas with other volunteers."

Schmid went on to talk about the organization's three core missions.

First and foremost is offering friendship and companionship to a veteran who is in hospice care. Once a relationship is established, volunteers will usually visit at least once a week.

Hosting honor ceremonies is another way to remember a veteran's service.

"We try to hold a last honor ceremony while they are still alive," which could include a certificate from Congress, handmade quilts, and other gifts. "It's a way to say thank you one more time."

As a young Army soldier, Roy Johnson served during World War II as part of the post-Japan Occupation forces. He was responsible for keeping the electricity going for U.S. forces communications. After serving in the military, he was a Winn-Dixie supervisor for 40-plus years and a huge Clemson fan.

"You help me remember those big events from a long time ago," he said at an honor ceremony celebrating his military service.

Many veterans are alone. Offering emergency assistance is another way to help particularly if the veteran is handicapped.

"We'll bring the necessities of life or offer pet care," said Schmid.

A Heartfelt Reaction

While still in the military and spending a lot of time with wounded warriors, and leading up to the start of Veteran's Last Patrol, Schmid reflected on their individual stories and journeys.

What are the motivations for serving when the consequences could be so dire?

He came up with what he refers to as the H-E-A-R-T factor based on the answers he was given.

H stands for honor.

"It was my honor," said Schmid. "I heard it over and over again. It was an honor to serve."

The "E" and "A" stand for the excitement and adventure factors that motivate many young men and women to join the service.

Schmid related another incident with two returning, injured soldiers.

"One was in better shape than the other. They were getting off the plane and I encouraged the one to go and get something to eat, that he must be tired from the long flight," said Schmid.

"He told me that he didn't want to go, that until his buddy was ready to go that he wasn't going."

Rapport. That was Schmid's R. Schmid related a story about another soldier.

"I went into this aircraft. There were four or five family members watching their son who was in a very sophisticated medical bed. He was severely injured. The husband was trying to console his mother. I was talking with them and asked why he had decided to serve," remembered Schmid, noting that they appeared to be from a small town somewhere in America.

"They all served," said the soldier's wife proudly, and she told Schmid of the multiple generations in their family who had served in the military.

Tradition. The T in HEART.

'We Owe It to Them'

From his mother's example to his time spent with wounded warriors, Schmid has found a way to honor vulnerable veterans as they spend their last days in hospice care.

"We're part of a team," Schmid said. "Whether they patrolled the air, sea, or land, this is their final chapter, and this is one final way for us to serve."

"We're obligated all the way through their last patrol. We must stand by them."

If you know of a veteran in hospice care who could use friendship and support, or if you would like to learn more about Veteran's Last Patrol and how you can make a difference, go to their website at VeteranLastPatrol.org or call 864-580-8005. You can reach Claude Schmid at cshmid@veteranlastpatrol.org

Anita L. Sherman is an award-winning journalist who has more than 20 years of experience as a writer and editor for local papers and regional publications in Virginia. She now works as a freelance writer and is working on her first novel. She is the mother of three grown children and grandmother to four, and she resides in Warrenton, Va. Anita can be reached at anitajustwrite@gmail.com

Max McLean on C.S. Lewis and His New Film 'The Most Reluctant Convert'

DUSTIN BASS

For some, disaster brings opportunity. That's what happened for Max McLean and his stage company, Fellowship for Performing Arts (FPA), which engages audiences through art from a Christian worldview.

It is no secret that McLean has a great affinity for C.S. Lewis. He and his company have turned works by Lewis into stage plays, such as "The Screwtape Letters," "The Great Divorce," as well as performing Lewis's tragic love story called "Shadowlands." In fact, the moment the country came to a screeching halt on March 15, 2020, Lewis and FPA had just finished a two-week run of "The Great Divorce" in Houston.

As the weeks turned into months, McLean and his company found ways to continue creating and performing. The company performed online events, worked on scripts, and actually managed to reach a larger audience. Then opportunity knocked.

McLean had had conversations with UK director Norman Stone, who had directed the original BBC television version of "Shadowlands," about possibly turning one of FPA's most impactful and successful plays into a film: "The Most Reluctant Convert: The Untold Story of C.S. Lewis." In September 2020, the film industry in the UK reopened for a brief period.

"In June of last year, we were working on the screenplay, and Norman said, 'You know, they're opening up filmmaking in Britain in August, and since nobody's worked since March, I can get a really good crew and a really good cast if we're ready to go,'" McLean said in a recent interview with "The Sons of History."

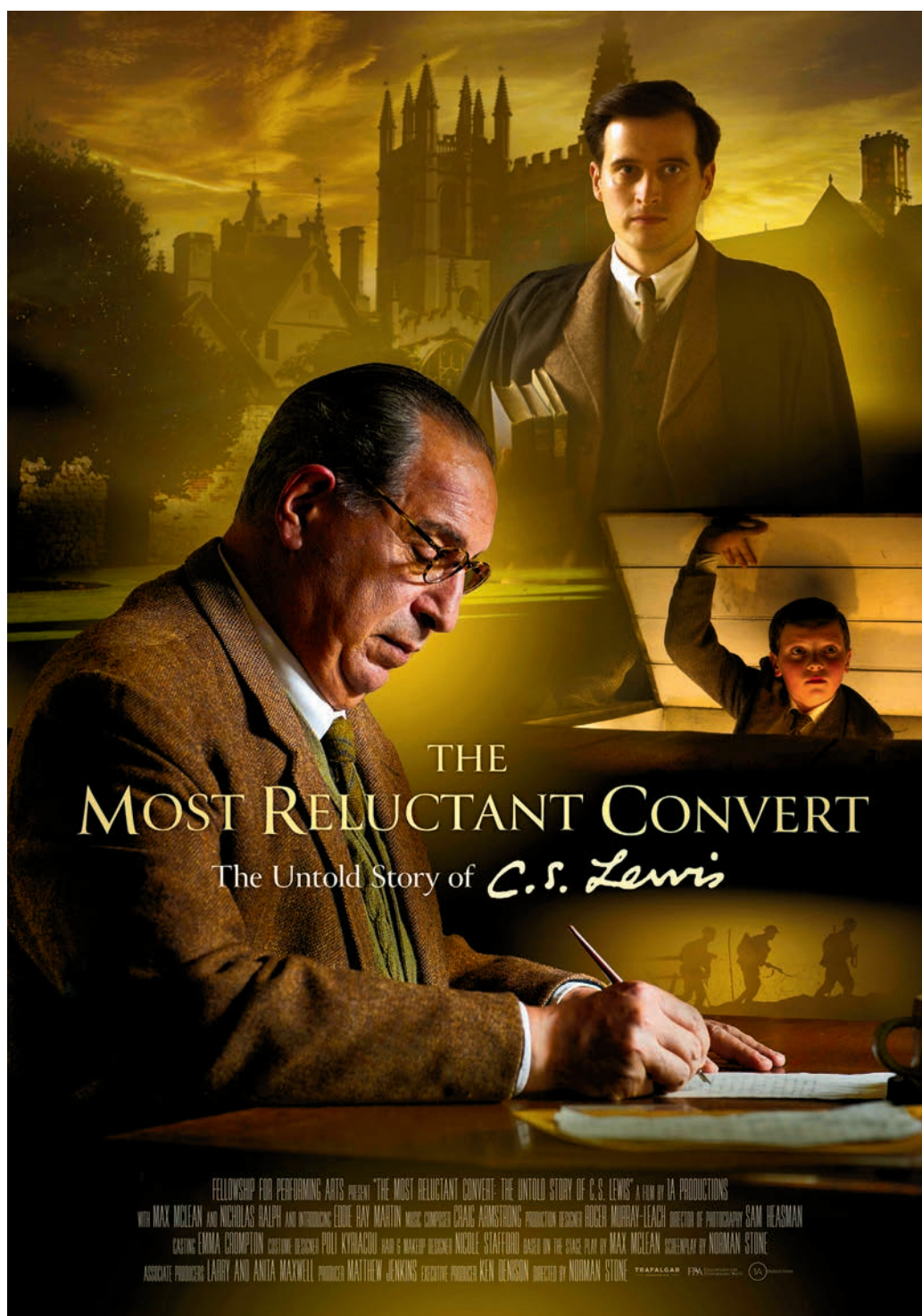
"I said, 'If you can confirm that and make sure that the locations we need are available, I'll go to my board.'"

Stone confirmed the locations and hired crewmembers who had worked on the films "No Time to Die" and "Murder on the Orient Express." McLean got approval from the board and obtained the film rights from the C.S. Lewis estate (FPA already had the stage rights). By Aug. 31, McLean was on a plane to London.

"[I] arrived in London, quarantined for two weeks, began shooting in mid-September and finished shooting mid-October," McLean said. "And here we are, one year later, about to release the film."

The film hit theaters nationwide on Nov. 3. In the film, three actors play the role of Lewis, covering his childhood to his older years. McLean plays the older Lewis, primarily as the film's narrator. Eddie Ray Martin plays Lewis as a young boy. Nicholas Ralph plays Lewis as a young man, covering 15 years of his life, including his time as a student at Oxford University, as a soldier in World War I, and throughout the journey of his conversion from atheism to Christianity.

Ralph may be recognizable to many for his role as James Herriot in a new adaptation of the hit British TV series "All Creatures Great and Small." Landing Ralph was



another opportunity that was extremely timely. Shortly before McLean landed in London, the first episode of "All Creatures Great and Small" aired.

“All of those emotional memories that I had, working on stage, I could bring to the film.”

Max McLean, actor and founder, Fellowship for Performing Arts

"Norman's wife saw the first episode, liked it, and we hadn't cast the younger Lewis yet," McLean explained. "Norman's wife said, 'You should check out this guy, he's really good.' Norman did. He called his agent. And he said he would do it. No one really knew if 'All Creatures' was going to be a hit or not. They hadn't even picked up a second season. He was still a relative newcomer

with very little attention paid to him. I don't know if we could get him now, but he was available then [laughs]. He's been a joy to work with and he's fabulous in our movie."

For McLean, playing the role of Lewis on film proved quite different than on stage. For starters, the stage production is a one-man performance with McLean monologuing in a replica version of C.S. Lewis's study. The film, however, had 15 actors, 190 extras, and was shot in 17 locations. It also required him to shoot parts of the screenplay out of the typical ordered sequence.

"All of those emotional memories that I had, working on stage, I could bring to the film," he said. "I had to take a 30-second or a one-minute scene, I had to use my emotional memory from the stage play so I could get it and be 100 percent engaged. Luckily, I had that experience to bring to the film."

Few people are as experienced with Lewis's works as McLean. Whether on stage or now on film, McLean captures the essence of what made Lewis arguably the most important and impactful Christian of the 20th

century: humorous, straightforward, and philosophically complex. McLean has dedicated his life to Christianity and the arts, and has worked to combine the two in a way that is thought-provoking and entertaining.

McLean is hoping viewers of the film will find themselves provoked into thinking about God, Christianity, and the meaning of life. If there ever was a time when people have had time to consider the idea of God, it has been during the pandemic.

"Lewis had a great antipathy to Christianity. He didn't want anything to do with it. He saw God as this great interferer and all he ever wanted was to be left alone," McLean said.

"I think people can relate to that. It recognizes our deep desire to pull away from God. I do think that the questions Lewis asks in the film resonate. Christians have their doubts that need to be answered. Many of the reasons unbelievers disbelieve is because no one has really taken the time to answer their questions. Lewis didn't believe that rational arguments create belief, but he thought the lack of them destroys conviction. He knew that what is proved may not be accepted, but what no one defends is soon abandoned. That's where things were in Lewis's day in the '30s and '40s, and that's certainly where we are today."

Doubtless, the pandemic provided an opportunity McLean didn't anticipate taking until years later. It is also doubtless that McLean and FPA made the most of that opportunity. The film is beautifully shot, well-acted, and highly engaging. It moves well from his childhood to his adulthood, all while an older C.S. Lewis narrates, and at times is present in his own past (a parallel to Dickens's "A Christmas Carol").

The movie has a Christian message, but it may be just as applicable to non-Christians as to Christians. The movie presents the understandable struggle of a brilliant man sorting through the idea of God's existence. As Lewis wrote in "The Problem of Pain," he was asked to consider whether the universe in which we live—ridden with crime, terror, war, disease—was the work of a "benevolent and omnipotent spirit,"

he writes, "all the evidence points in the opposite direction. Either there is no spirit behind the universe, or else a spirit indifferent to good and evil, or else an evil spirit." These are deep reflections necessary for every person to ponder, and this is where the story begins.

After watching the film, the viewer is left pondering what McLean calls Lewis's "big idea."

"Lewis's big idea was that there is another world, and that is where we come from," he said. "Lewis helps me to desire that other world and takes me out of being so bonded to this world. He also has this marvelous line that I quote all the time, 'If I find in myself a desire that no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is I was made for another world.'"

Dustin Bass is an author and the co-host of The Sons of History podcast.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION:

Remembering a 'Spirit of Togetherness' in the Neighborhood

→ Advice from our readers to our young people

Here are a few lessons I'd like to share for the Next Generation from my 85 years of living.

Our Neighborhood

As a kid in the city, we played with every kid on our end of the block; race or creed didn't matter. We were each an equal part of our playing community. Our friends were important, especially when we took care of our younger siblings or watched out for the safety of the neighbor's younger children as we played. Together we supported and stood up for each other, whether in a neighborhood squabble or on the school ground. Our spirit of togetherness was tight when we were indoors or scrambling around outside. We had huge imaginations, whether it was

where to place a bridge for our little cars and trucks in the yard or how to build a tent hideout in our bedroom.

“As a kid in the city, we played with every kid on our end of the block; race or creed didn't matter.”

Dale Best

Our Personal Habits

If we were in organized scouts or not, we tried to be mindful of each of the following areas of life: Trust, Loyalty, Helpfulness, Courtesy, Kindness. Most often we told the truth when interrogated. We tried to obey our parents whether other kids obeyed theirs or not. We always showed respect for our elders.

It was such a pleasure to use the public

library. Reading transported our minds to far-off places, and we learned many new things. We were encouraged to save part of our allowance and any money earned from returning pop bottles. We were proud to start a little bank account of our very own where we could save money in order to buy something special. That ability always gave us real satisfaction.

Good grades in school were expected, and we attempted to make them. The goal of perfection on tests didn't ruin our lives.

Religion was part of our lives. We looked forward to dressing up to go to church. The rules we learned may have saved us from several disasters in our lives.

Next Generation, I hope these will help you along the roadway of life.

"What mattered still matters; being a kind generation. As it was then, it can be today, when we care about others."

— Dale Best, Virginia

ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES



Some children play marbles in the street, circa 1955.

What advice would you like to give to the younger generations?

We call on all of our readers to share the timeless values that define right and wrong, and pass the torch, if you will, through your wisdom and hard-earned experience. We feel that the passing down of this wisdom has diminished over time, and that only with a strong moral foundation can future generations thrive.

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to:

Next Generation, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001

Pastor: Do Champions of Socialism Realize That Karl Marx Held a Deep Belief in God?

Radio host and author David Jeremiah discusses the dangers of socialism

JAN JEKIELEK & MELANIE SUN

Karl Marx, the father of scientific socialism, once wrote that he knew he was born to God but was chosen for hell, author and radio host Dr. David Jeremiah said of many of the “aha! moments” he experienced in his year-long study of socialism, during which he read everything he could find on the ideology, including what motivated Marx in his ideological writings.

People don’t realize that Marx’s socialist theories are all based on a fundamental belief in the existence of God, but a hatred and opposition to everything God has taught, Jeremiah said.

“You know, socialists don’t believe that there is no God—they’re not atheists,” he told EpochTV’s “American Thought Leaders.” “They’re anti-God.”

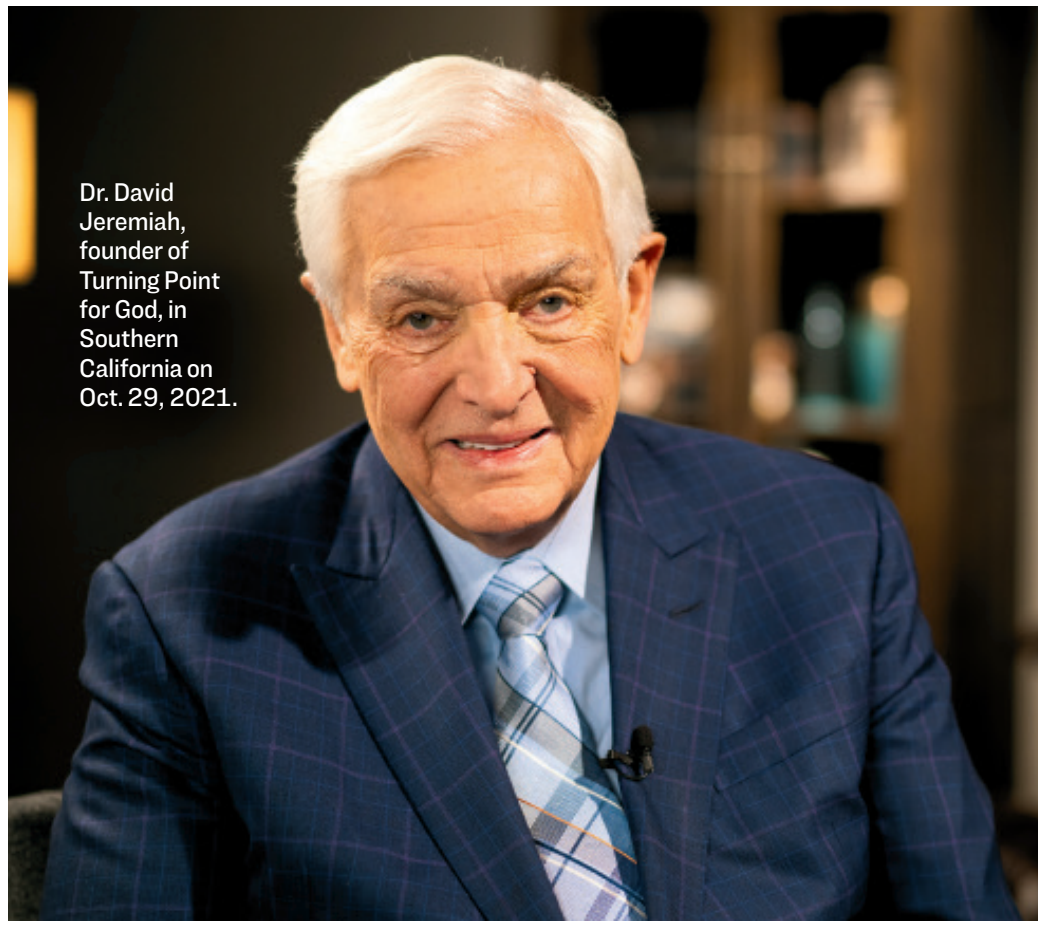
“In fact, Karl Marx ... was a cheerleader for the devil,” he said of his research, which he said has given him a new way of viewing trends in news and social policy that he believes can help Americans understand the social turmoil in the country right now.

Jeremiah, a pastor and founder of Turning Point Radio and Television Ministries, recently released a book to share his findings about the dangers of socialism titled “Where Do We Go From Here?”

“Just about every chapter in this book, in some way or another, goes back to things that I learned about socialism,” he said. “And now, what is so amazing to me is, because I’ve sensitized my mind and heart to all of this, every day on the news, I see vivid examples of what’s happening and how it’s affecting us as a nation.”

The culture of canceling everything you don’t agree with has bred the roots of totalitarianism in American society, Jeremiah warned.

He listed various negative trends: parents being told that they shouldn’t have any say over the content taught in schools, Republicans and Democrats not being able to agree to disagree, and Christians being fired from their workplaces for sharing their faith. These are examples of how Marx’s socialist ideas are eroding unity among people.



Dr. David Jeremiah, founder of Turning Point for God, in Southern California on Oct. 29, 2021.

Censorship of ideas isn’t what Jeremiah grew up with in America, but has become normal social behavior in 2021.

In his book, Jeremiah describes socialism as ‘a deadly virus [that] is quietly spreading throughout our nation—far more lethal than COVID-19.’

“There’s nothing that is really true that should be afraid of challenge,” Jeremiah said. “If it’s true, it’s true. It shouldn’t be an issue for it to be challenged, because truth will win, no matter what the challenge is. But if it’s not true, then you can. So all the stuff that’s going on right now is interesting to me in light of that discussion, because ... most of it is lies.”

In his book, Jeremiah describes socialism as “a deadly virus [that] is quietly spreading throughout our nation—far

more lethal than COVID-19.”

But he warned that “most Americans are totally unaware of the threat that it poses to our way of life.”

“It’s like smoke coming under the door. You just see it a little bit, but it’s no big deal. [But] if we don’t become aware of it, it’ll be very destructive.

“That’s why I wrote the book,” he said. “I wanted to help people understand.”

He said that many readers have since told him, “You answered all the questions I didn’t know who to ask.”

“What I wanted to do is help them see the connectedness between so many of these things that are happening to us,” he said. “I wrote about the tearing down of monuments; it’s just not a bunch of knocking kids out there trying to have fun knocking monuments down. ... Completely obliterate history so you can write a new one; that’s all part of how this whole thing works, that’s all a part of socialism.”

“Get rid of the things people hold dear, destroy the things that are at the core of who they are as people—their family, their church, their marriage—and then come into that vacuum, and bring all of this rottenness called socialism. And if people understand that, it makes them aware,” he said.

“We need to have an awareness of this because it’s deadly. It will destroy everything. “Venezuela is a perfect picture of where we’re headed if we don’t stop this. It’s amazing to realize, just in our lifetime not long ago, Venezuela was the richest country in that part of the world. People had the same standard of living that we do.”

Jeremiah said he hopes that talking more about the truth of socialism and its anti-God beliefs will help more people understand the problems of today.

“One of his [Marx’s] key phrases was to wipe God out of heaven and capitalists off the earth. That was his two-fold program,” he said. “There’s a lot of university students who were captivated by this.”

“It’s really scary to me ... some of the statistics I cited in this book really bear that out, that young people between 18 and 25—I think 60-some percent of them—think socialism is cool, it’s OK; more than anything else because of all the free stuff they get promised in the process.

“But when they understand the roots of socialism, it makes them stop and think,” he said.

He said he has seen many young people wake up to the truth about socialism.

“It leaves them empty,” he said of what often happens when socialism takes hold of a person’s psyche. “It takes them to a place where they don’t want to go, and they don’t realize it on the journey.

“All of a sudden, they wake up one day, and it doesn’t have anything to breathe into them, and they realize that. I see that a lot.”

Jeremiah said the church isn’t free of socialism either, with some people claiming to be practicing Christian socialists.

“Sometimes, they like to cite passages in the Bible, like in the book of Acts where they all held things together. But that wasn’t socialism; that was just a bunch of Christians sharing what they had during a tough time.

“There is no biblical basis whatsoever for socialism, either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament ... because socialism is totally at the opposite end of the spectrum from what it means to be a God-fearing person,” he said.

In his research, Jeremiah said he hasn’t found one good story about socialism.

“All the reading I did and all the stuff I studied, everybody talks about it, I can’t find one good story that ends right because socialism is evil, and it takes people down, it doesn’t lift them up,” he said.

Social Media Isn’t Going Away, but Parents Can Equip Children to Resist the Harms

ERICA KOMISAR

In September, the Wall Street Journal reported on internal Facebook research findings indicating that social media is particularly hard on the mental health of teenage girls. “We make body image issues worse for one in three teen girls,” read one slide from an internal meeting. The WSJ also reported on another slide that read: “Thirty-two percent of teen girls said that when they felt bad about their bodies, Instagram made them feel worse.”

The WSJ exposé on Facebook and Instagram has now resulted in two congressional

hearings on the negative effects of social media on children, including one held on Capitol Hill on Oct. 26.

As a therapist, it isn’t news to me that social media dampens the self-esteem and body image of teenagers, although it helps to have empirical evidence to prove what we have known for years. We can only hope that Facebook and Instagram integrate these findings into making their platforms less damaging to children’s self-image. However, social media is here to stay. What then can parents do to inoculate their children from the self-esteem-draining effects?

Ideally, the best thing that a parent can do for their child is to help them cultivate emotional security and a foundation of healthy self-esteem before they reach adolescence. This means being physically and emotionally present from birth through adolescence, modeling good self-esteem and body image for them, being aware of their environmental, social, and emotional challenges, de-emphasizing achievement and emphasizing connection, and getting help for them early rather than later in their development.

It is also critical to monitor for any signs of body image issues that may arise during adolescence. I have heard some parents say things along the lines of: “Kids will outgrow their self-critical and self-disparaging or harsh feelings about themselves or their bodies.” This is an act of denial; parents should never ignore any early indications that their children may have an eating disorder or body distortion, no matter how subtle the signs. Self-acceptance and self-love are not a given but the result of the belief that we are imperfect

but loveable, and it is the responsibility of parents to do their best to instill this belief in their children. By doing so from an early age, children, especially teenage girls, will have less trouble with social media-inspired body-image issues.

It is also critical to monitor for any signs of body image issues that may arise during adolescence.

Another thing parents can do is to check their own perfectionistic tendencies. Perfectionism has become an obsession in our society, and the bar continues to be set higher as each of us has continually increasing, all-access internet passes to see the best of the best of everything across the world. Perfectionistic tendencies and unrealistic expectations of ourselves and our lives are expressed not only in the focus on superficial traits and body images, but in lifestyle, achievement, and social expectations. If parents get swept up in constantly comparing themselves and their lives to what they see on social media, this characteristic will rub off on their children.

Finally, I would agree with Professor Twenge’s recent Institute for Family Studies blog post and recommend that parents not allow social media until at least middle adolescence, or ages 14 to 18, and only allow it in a limited way from the beginning. An adolescent girls’ brain is particularly susceptible to the harsh criticism and increased demand for perfection on

social media, so the longer you can delay it the better. The longer a young girl has to develop a supportive social group and to learn to accept her strengths and limitations without social media, the better. Parents can play a big role in helping their daughters celebrate their strengths and accept imperfections before they have access to social media. Once they have access, I encourage parents to set limits on social media and internet usage from the beginning, when they first start using a smartphone. It is far easier to set limits from the start than to try to implement them later.

At the end of the day, we cannot keep social media from influencing our children. It is unfortunately here to stay. The best thing we can do is ensure that children enter into adolescence with a full tank of resilience and a well-rounded sense of their own self-worth, lovability, and attractiveness—based not on how thin or tall or short they are, or how big their breasts or noses are, but on their innate value as human beings who we love unconditionally. As parents, we can de-emphasize the outside and emphasize the inside. We cannot eliminate social media from children’s lives, but we can set them up for success rather than failure in our parenting approach.

This article was originally published on the Institute for Family Studies blog.

Erica Komisar, LCSW, is a psychoanalyst, parent guidance expert, and author of “Being There: Why Prioritizing Motherhood in the First Three Years Matters” and “Chicken Little The Sky Isn’t Falling: Raising Resilient Adolescents In The New Age Of Anxiety.”

MUSIC

A Musical Visitation to the Zenith of Song: 6 Composers

RAYMOND BEEGLE

Thirteen hundred years have passed since the birth of Western Europe’s great musical tradition. Gregorian chant, first heard in the eighth century, is mother to a miraculous offspring including motets, cantatas, sonatas, operas, concertos, and symphonies, but perhaps most miraculous, the most unlikely of all her children, is the 19th-century German “Lied,” translated literally, “song.” The life of her remarkable child spanned hardly more than a century; Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Hugo Wolf, and Richard Strauss, produced their songs and then fell silent, leaving no significant progeny.

Of course, people have been writing songs since writing came about, and people continue to do so. But the phenomenal outpouring of great music in this genre, songs generally for one voice with piano or occasionally orchestral accompaniment, is unprecedented, matchless, a miraculous phenomenon in our cultural history.

Perhaps the expanded role of the piano is its most remarkable characteristic. In earlier times, even with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart or Joseph Haydn, accompaniments were a relatively simple affair, hardly more than a few chords, as in folk songs. The accompaniments gave a harmonic outline to the vocal line. However, with Schubert, for example, the piano underwent a metamorphosis, becoming the hum of a spinning wheel, the rustling of a linden tree, or the chatter of a small brook.

The spiritual power of these songs lies in the concurring elements of great music, great poetry, profound subject matter, simplicity, and deep sincerity. When all these qualities were united, thoughts, visions, feelings that had seemed inexpressible, were given expression.

Songs at Their Summit

Hundreds of composers, many of them distinguished and celebrated, wrote in this idiom, but we shall consider only the greatest among them: the six Titans mentioned above. Of these, seven of their works approach the ideal of perfection, that mysterious Promised Land that no man is permitted to enter. These six composers produced approximately 3,000 songs, almost all of them set to the best German poetry, and addressing the issues that every thoughtful soul is drawn to address.

Schubert’s ‘God in Spring’

God is always present in them; He is either looking at His children, or His children are looking at—or for—Him. He reveals Himself in the beauty and power of nature, as one hears in Schubert’s “God in Spring.”

“In his shimmering garments, You have sent us the Spring and set a crown of roses ‘round his head.’” Its beauty fills the poet, makes God the more apparent to him: “I will raise my song to the author of creation as long as I have my being.”

Schubert’s beautiful melody is supported by an accompaniment reminiscent of a harp, evoking the spirit of the Greek poet Anacreon, whose style Uz greatly admired.

Beethoven’s ‘New Love, New Life’

God’s presence is even found in the awakening of love of a young man for his mate. If it is true love, it is born of the spirit. Goethe, in his autobiography “Poetry and Truth” writes:

“The first propensities of love in an uncorrupted youth take altogether a spiritual direction. Nature seems to desire that one sex may by the senses perceive goodness and beauty in the other.”

In Beethoven’s setting of Goethe’s “New Love, New Life,” a youth asks himself, “Heart, my heart, are you in the bonds of this young blossom, her lovely form, her faithfulness, her goodness, so infinitely powerful?”

This rare confluence of genius in word and music makes palpable the power of love that has coursed through all of us, with its attendant fear, its exhilaration, and hope. It is as close a reflection of it as can be found in any work of art.

Robert Schumann’s ‘Silent Tears’

Just as in the extremes of joy, God is most apparent in the extremes of sorrow. One recalls Goethe’s phrase from in “Meister’s



PAVEL PHOTO AND VIDEO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Apprenticeship”: “He who has not eaten his bread with tears, who has not sat weeping at his bed in the sorrowful night, knows you not, ye mighty powers.” One grasps this truth in Robert Schumann’s “Stille Thränen,” (“Silent Tears”).

The words of Justinus Kerner set to Schumann’s music unite the outer reaches of sorrow with the outer reaches of beauty.

This rare confluence of genius in word and music makes palpable the power of love.

French baritone Stéphane Degout has performed the work in a live concert in Paris—a fortuitous and remarkable event. The artist is at his zenith just now, and this listener knows of no other at present that conveys such depth of feeling, technical mastery, and sheer humanity. If any singer today deserves the title “great,” it is Stéphane Degout.

Brahms’s ‘Moonlit Night’

Clarity comes when sheer happiness visits us as well; happiness is not always a matter of clamor or fanfare, nor is it limited to the transports of romance. Its roots lie deeper than that.

Brahms’s setting of Joseph von Eichendorff’s lyric “Moonlit Night” addresses a higher meaning. A man looks into the sky and absorbs its beauty and peace:

“It seems as if the heavens have quietly kissed the earth. ... The air passes over the fields, the wheat fields gently move. Trees rustle quietly in the star-clear night ... and my soul spread wide its wings, flew through the silent expanses as if it were flying home.”

Beauty and peace! Mankind is thirsty, starved for them, and when they come, they nourish him and direct him to a better, higher place—heaven—his home.

Wolf’s ‘On a Walk’
Perhaps the two emotional extremities, joy and sorrow, are superseded by another, still more profound element: the sense of wonder. “The highest that man can attain,” said Goethe in his autobiography, “is wonder; ... if the primary Phenomenon causes this, let him be satisfied; more it cannot bring; and he should forbear to seek for anything further behind it: Here is the limit.”

Wonder often comes unbidden and unexpected. Under a confluence of circumstances the world, existence, seems to show



Composer Franz Schubert in a watercolor by Wilhelm August Rieder.



Portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven, 1820, by Joseph Karl Stieler.



A lithographic portrait of Robert Schumann in 1839 in Vienna.



A photograph of Johannes Brahms in 1866 by Lucien Mazenod.



Composer Hugo Wolf in 1902.



German Romantic composer Richard Strauss. New York Public Library Archives.

itself in a marvelous light. Eichendorff describes such a beautiful moment, this time at sunset.

The singer is in a small village. The streets are bathed in light. He hears church bells and a beautiful voice singing from an open window; he sees an abundance of radiant flowers. “Long I stood, astonished, struck with joy. ... Oh Muse! You have touched my heart with love’s gentle breath,” he wrote.

Perhaps these lines remind us that Homer evokes the Muse in the opening lines of the *Odyssey*, and it was Milton’s “heavenly Muse” that “sang to the sages.”

The End of an Era

With the exception of Strauss’s “Four Last Songs,” the Muse took her leave of the German Lied during the opening years of the 20th century. Inspiration had vanished. Poets foresaw what scholars and political figures were blind to: Western civilization was in crisis and deadly trials lay ahead, when science would take precedence over the human heart, and all spiritual virtues would be abandoned.

In “Dover Beach,” the English poet Matthew Arnold wrote:

“The Sea of Faith/ was once, too, at the full, and round earth’s shore/ lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled. But now I only hear/ its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,/ retreating, to the breath/ of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear/ and naked shingles of the world.”

Strauss’s ‘Winter Vow’

In the manner of a simple folk song, Richard Strauss set words by Karl Henckell, who felt the same foreboding. In his “Winter Vow,” Strauss offers the ageless, and only recourse humankind has ever had in times of trouble:

“In these winter days, now that the light has dimmed, let us bear in our hearts what fills us with inner light ... let us say to one another in our solitude, day and night, we pledge blessed love.”

The historical winter Henckell and Arnold foresaw has come and passed. We are now in the midst of yet another winter with its storms of lies and violence, its denials of faith and tradition. Our recourse remains the same.

All translations, except those of Goethe, are by the author.

Raymond BeeGLE has performed as a collaborative pianist in the major concert halls of the United States, Europe, and South America; has written for The Opera Quarterly, Classical Voice, Fanfare Magazine, Classic Record Collector (UK), and The New York Observer. BeeGLE has served on the faculty of the State University of New York-Stony Brook, the Music Academy of the West, and the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. He has taught in the chamber music division of the Manhattan School of Music for the past 28 years.

It is easier to set limits early on—regarding phones and social media—than it is to try to implement them later.



TRAVEL

Traveling Back in Time in Southern California's Conejo Valley

Exploring Ronald Reagan's legacy and a local history of the Old West

CHANNALY PHILIPP

You wouldn't expect a chunk of the Berlin Wall to be standing in Southern California, amid its beach destinations and fashion-forward cities. But there it is, at the Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, perched high above the valley and overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The wall features a graffitied pink butterfly and flowers on the Western side—handpicked, it's said, by President Ronald Reagan himself. The drawing doubtlessly represented the hope for liberty and freedom.

In his speech at Brandenburg Gate on June 12, 1987, Reagan declared: "This wall will fall. For it cannot withstand faith; it cannot withstand truth. The wall cannot withstand freedom."

The library and museum, which opened 30 years ago in 1991, chronicles Reagan's terms. It's a must-see destination if you're in Southern California. What's on display—which is plentiful and demands a few hours to explore—is but a tiny fraction of the archives housed there.

History lovers will be on cloud nine, but even if you go with companions with less patience for historical things or with children in tow, they'll still be wowed by the cool factor of stepping onto the Air Force 1 that Reagan used to log more than 660,000 miles to 26 countries (as well as 46 states) as part of the face-to-face diplomacy that he deemed to be so important. On loan from the Air Force, it's the same plane that carried Reagan to Berlin to exhort Mikhail Gorbachev to "tear down this wall." (After that, take them on Marine 1, housed in the same pavilion.)

Different exhibits about Reagan's policies offer reminders of the threats our nation faced at the time and of the Gipper's attitude through those years. Alongside a homey communication style that was relatable to many Americans, he had a can-do spirit.

The presidential library houses a replica of the Oval Office during Reagan's tenure. He kept two plaques on the Resolute Desk, which read: "It can be done" and "There's no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn't mind who gets the credit."

But Reagan was also driven by the conviction that he was guided by something bigger than himself.

"As my time in Washington draws to its close, I've had occasion to reflect on the astonishing journey I've been privileged to make from the banks of the Rock River to this glorious site overlooking the mighty Pacific," he said on March 4, 1987. "The journey has not just been my own. It seems I've been guided by a force much larger than myself, a force made up of ideas and beliefs about what this country is and what it could be."

One of the most touching places on the site is the resting place of Reagan and his wife, Nancy. On the granite memorial, the inscription reads: "I know in my heart that man is good, that what is right will always eventually triumph, and there is worth and purpose to each and every life."

The Wild West in California

History comes alive at the Stagecoach Inn Museum in Newbury Park, where dressed docents give insight into local history. The museum is largely run by volunteers with a lot of heart.

The early pioneers and settlers are es-



An aerial shot of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum.

pecially interesting figures. Volunteers personify people from the era, from pioneering women to blacksmiths. The small museum's collection is truly fascinating to explore, including gems such as old irons of the time (the dangerous chore that was ironing back then gives you a real appreciation for our modern appliances) and the unexpected, such as incredibly intricate ornaments made of human hair and a room dedicated to gramophones of all shapes and sizes.

Kids will enjoy seeing the one-room schoolroom and ringing the school bell—and playing with some of the games of the time (stick and hoop, anyone?). Children apparently enjoy trying their hands at doing laundry the old way, with a washboard.

There are stagecoaches: It's impressive to envision one making its run on the beach in Santa Barbara, its wheels splashing in the surf. (It looks none too comfortable, either.)

A Leisurely Destination

When you've taken in your dose of history, whether at the Reagan library, the Stagecoach Inn Museum, or any of the other local museums, it's nice to be able to turn to some of the leisure activities that are the hallmark of a vacation in Southern California. Maybe you'll want to zoom down to Malibu's Zuma Beach, take a short 30-minute drive over the beautiful Santa Monica Mountains, or go shopping for Western gear at Thousand Oaks' 805 Work and Play—the personalized attention there is a pleasure.

The Old West is a piece of our country's history. Reagan felt most at home on his ranch, Rancho del Cielo ("Ranch in the Sky"), located north of Santa Barbara. When Gorbachev visited him in 1992, some months after resigning as leader of the Soviet Union and its dissolution, they rode around in a Jeep. The two exchanged gifts: for Reagan, a book of Russian proverbs, and for Gorbachev, a piece of our Western heritage, a Stetson hat.

The author was a guest of Visit Conejo Valley.



A piece of the Berlin Wall at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum overlooks the valley and Pacific Ocean.

RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM AND THE RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION & INSTITUTE



1. The wheels on this stagecoach are larger so the seating could be elevated above the ocean surf. 2. One-room schoolhouse at the Stagecoach Inn Museum. 3. A collection of old irons at the Stagecoach Inn Museum. 4. Inside the Newbury Pioneer House at the Stagecoach Inn complex.

THE EPOCH TIMES

IF YOU GO

Conejo Cash

As an incentive for visitors, the Conejo Valley tourism bureau is offering a \$100 gift card to guests who book a minimum of two nights' stay at one of 16 participating hotels in Agoura Hills, Thousand Oaks, or Newbury Park, as long as supplies last. For more info, see Conejo.com/conejo-cash.

Homewood Suites by Hilton Agoura Hills, located next to a Trader Joe's, feature suites with kitchenettes, which makes it nice for an extended stay or for families.

Reagan Presidential Library and Museum

The exhibit "FBI: From Al Capone to Al Qaeda" brings together many historic artifacts for the first time, from the raft and paddle used in the only escape from Alcatraz to the bullet-ridden Ford V-8 car used by Bonnie and Clyde when they met their demise. The exhibit runs until Jan. 9, 2022.

Where to Eat

Carnivores will find plenty to love at Bandit's Grill and Bar. There are a few locations of Jinky's Cafe in Southern

California. A closer look at the menu reveals healthy items, but also inventive and delicious twists—the owner is also a passionate chef. The family-run The Old Place, located in the Santa Monica Mountains, looks as though it came straight out of a Wild West movie set. The steakhouse offers food cooked over an open fire.

A Dose of Nature

About 140 miles of trails criss-cross the area. The peaceful Gardens of the World showcase the flora of a handful of spots from around the world.



President Ronald Reagan, commemorating the 750th anniversary of Berlin, addresses the people of West Berlin at the base of the Brandenburg Gate, near the Berlin Wall, on June 12, 1987. Due to the amplification system being used, the President's words could also be heard on the Eastern (communist-controlled) side of the wall.

MIKE SARGENT/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Stepping inside Air Force One is a highlight of the visit.

RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM AND THE RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION & INSTITUTE

The library and museum, which opened 30 years ago in 1991, chronicles Reagan's terms.



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 45, 2021

In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from falling hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



MELINDA NAGY/SHUTTERSTOCK

WHAT DID THEY CALL THE CARTOONIST OF THE CONTINENTAL ARMY?



THE YANKEE DODDER. GALINA DREYZINA/SHUTTERSTOCK

“Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, we shall pay any price, bear any burden, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty.”

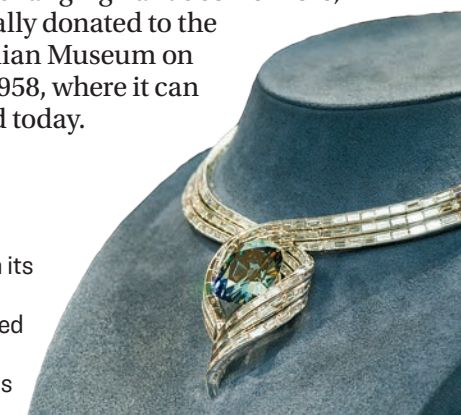
JOHN F. KENNEDY (1917–1963), 35TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

(PORTRAIT) HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; (FLAG) MARIAN WHEAT/SHUTTERSTOCK; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES



THE HOPE DIAMOND IS DONATED

Possibly the most famous diamond in the world, the Hope Diamond, was a 112-carat diamond brought from India to France by a merchant named Jean Baptiste Tavernier. Tavernier sold the diamond to King Louis XIV who had the stone cut and placed on a necklace. The diamond was stolen during The French Revolution. Its adventures continued, including being owned by King George IV of England. After exchanging hands some more, it was finally donated to the Smithsonian Museum on Nov. 10, 1958, where it can be viewed today.



The Hope Diamond in its temporary setting called Embracing Hope, in this file photo.

OTIS VAJ/ISTOCKPHOTO

TIM L. HITCHCOCK/REX USA/GETTY IMAGES

By Aidan Danza, age 15

THE MIRACLE OF WATER

The human race, collectively, tends to emphasize the rarer miracles.

Walking on water and healing illness miraculously with no instruments are rightly seen as miracles, but we've got to remember those big miracles that happen every day and enable life as we know it to go on, like water.

Water is everywhere. It comes out the tap, it comes in bottles in the supermarket, it falls from the sky as rain or snow, and it constitutes all the rivers and lakes. Water is essential for every form of life on earth, from the smallest bacterium up to the largest elephant, and of course, for humanity.

A scientist would say that water can dissolve (meaning to break apart until it can't be seen) many or most substances that it encounters. This fact is one of the factors that makes water so essential. Take a plant, for instance. Everyone knows that plants need water to live. Put simply, the reason for this is that the plant needs water to dissolve the nutrients that it absorbs from the sun, and then export it to other areas of the plant, much like how a boat flows down a river. The plant's cells (the small, basic pieces that combine to make up the plant, like a puzzle) also need

water to stay expanded, like a water balloon, and, since all the plant's cells are full of water and rigid, the plant can also stand rigidly and upright.

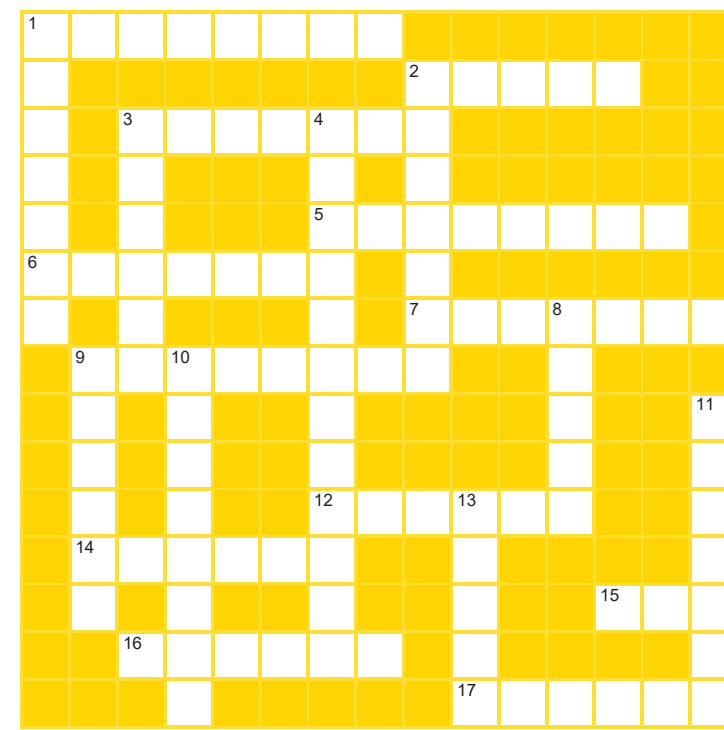
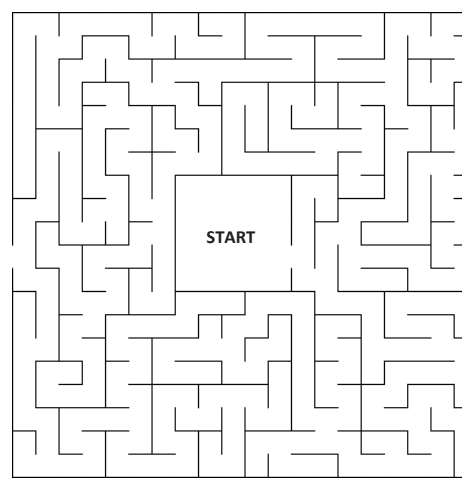
Although much more intricate and complicated, similar processes happen in the human body in our blood and our cells. Water can also protect the human body from dangerous substances like acids (to a point, of course) by neutralizing the substances in a chemical reaction.

Water is present in plenty for all life and is essential for it all. Water's properties fit the human body and the bodies of other life so perfectly that it can be considered a miracle. On the surface, it's so simple, but even on the surface, we know at least a little bit why water is so essential and how perfectly it fits the existence of life. If you really take a look, how could it not be a miracle?



TAL HOPKINS/REX USA/SHUTTERSTOCK

AMAZING ESCAPES!

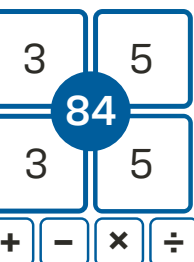


Down

- 1 "Ring bell for ____" (7)
- 2 Courage (7)
- 3 Military members ____ the flag (6)
- 4 Freedom from tyranny (12)
- 6 "If you want ____, prepare for war" (5)
- 9 Warfare (6)
- 10 Tangible tribute (8)
- 11 One who served in the military (7)
- 13 Ulysses S. Grant was a ____ General (5)

USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

Easy puzzle 1



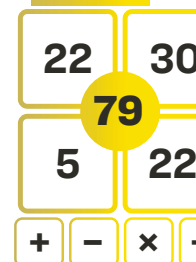
Solution For Easy 1
6 × (6 + 5) = 84

Medium puzzle 1

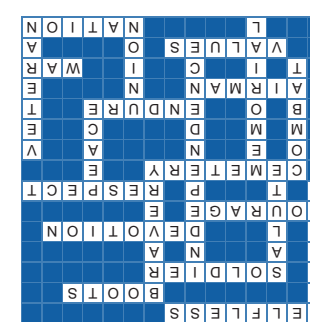


Solution for Medium 1
21 + 8 × (9 - 8) = 49

Hard puzzle 1



Solution for Hard 1
5 + 22 × 22 + 06 = 79



Across

- 1 Altruistic (8)
- 2 Combat footwear (5)
- 3 "It is the ____, not the minister, who has given us freedom of religion" (Charles S. Province) (7)
- 5 Allegiance to a cause (8)
- 6 Pluck (7)

Down

- 7 Esteem (7)
- 9 "Arlington" is one for Veterans (8)
- 12 Stick out (6)
- 14 Aviator (6)
- 15 All-out fight (3)
- 16 Moral beliefs (6)
- 17 'One ____, under God.' (6)

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