

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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READER VIEW | PASTOR EDWARD G. RICE

Bible-believers know the truth

In his June 26 letter in your paper, Gary A. McCaslin worded well the necessity of stomping out all the conservative Bible-believing fundamental churches that remain opposed to the LGBT agenda.

The LGBT community will not be at liberty to practice and promote their complete agenda while these Bible-believing Christians have the freedom to practice their faith and preach it on our streets. What they call the "Word of God" is even older than McCaslin intimates.

The Roman emperor had nothing to do with it, nor did the Roman religion that he formed in the 4th century. The conservative Bible-believing Christians, which McCaslin wants to silence, actually believe that those 66 archaic books written down by 40 different men over a period of 1,592 years, are the infallible words of Jehovah God. They believe that 27 of those books, written over 1,900 years ago, which they call the New Testament, were penned and authenticated

by 12 ordained apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

They further allege that those 27 antiquated books authenticate the 39 older books that they call the Old Testament. As to how one would silence this vocal few so that the LGBT community can have universal acceptance, with nobody calling them "sinners," not calling "sodomy" an abomination of God, I suggest you first go to the history books. They have already been crucified, boiled in oil, thrown to the lions, tortured, beaten, burned alive with their Bibles, imprisoned and banished. They don't even believe in evolution, for crying out loud.

I contend, therefore, that it is Gary McCaslin who needs to hear the truth, not the Bible-believing Christians. They are indeed founded on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Truth, the Word, according to God's Holy infallible Word.

Baptist Pastor Edward G. Rice is a Steuben County resident.

POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

Clear-eyed path to prevention

In a local newspaper column earlier this year, city of Hornell Police Chief Ted Murray expressed his concern over the availability of heroin in the city and how it destroys young lives. In part, he wrote, "For those who purchase hard street drugs, know that it is not just your own health you are placing in peril. The money you spent is fueling a criminal enterprise whose very existence depends on enslaving others (even your children) to a life of hardcore drug usage."

More recently, it's been reported that Ithaca city police are seeing a spike in heroin-related arrests. The story included a comment from the treatment director at Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services that the number of clients pointing to heroin as their drug of choice rose three-fold in the last five years.

In other words, across the legislative district I represent, from Hornell in the west to Ithaca in the east, law enforcement has put heroin on the short list of ever-growing drug concerns and challenges. Several times over the past year I've written, with ever-increasing concern, about the spread of meth-related criminal activity throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions. Add heroin to the near weekly reports of another meth-related arrest or lab discovery somewhere in the region, and it's a potent, powerful threat to public health and safety.

Any number of factors are at work and producing a perfect storm of

these drug-related alarms, including:

- It's long been a common rule of thumb among law enforcement officers and drug treatment professionals that an economic downturn is worrisome – that as the economy slumps and financial pressures mount, drug abuse increases.
- As states, including New York, have moved to clamp down on prescription drug abuse, other substances, like heroin -- less costly and widely available -- increasingly become a drug of choice.

It's a vicious cycle. The illicit use of prescription medicines has become one of the nation's fastest-growing drug problems. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 15,000 people die every year of overdoses due to prescription painkillers. The problem is a acute among young adults and teens.

Last year the State Legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo enacted a landmark law called the "Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescribing Act," commonly known as I-STOP, which puts New York at the forefront of addressing the challenge. I strongly supported I-STOP's enactment. In 2010, over 22 million prescriptions for painkilling drugs were written in New York State -- not including refills. That's a stunning figure in a state where the entire population is less than 20 million.

But the cycle of drug abuse and addiction is so hard to combat. Confront



TOM O'MARA

prescription drugs, and law enforcement increasingly report that people arrested for heroin were often first hooked on painkillers.

In response, the Ithaca Police Department is now offering a new narcotics tip line for the public to report narcotics-related activity: 607-330-0000. Murray set up an email address (Tip@cityofhornell.com) "for anyone in the Hornell community who wishes to report any perceived illegal drug activities ... If you or a family member is caught up in an addiction, get help!" Same goes for regional sheriffs and other police agencies that continually encourage the public to report suspicious activity in their communities and neighborhoods.

The first and, in so many ways, most important line of defense against illicit drug use and drug trafficking is public awareness, cooperation and education. On this front, regional law enforcement continues to perform outstanding service.

The State Senate this year approved anti-meth measures I sponsored or co-sponsored. But we need to convince the Assembly leadership, which for so long has stood as an immovable roadblock on too many efforts to enact tougher laws, to act. The dangers and downsides

associated with any illegal drug cannot ever be taken lightly or dismissed out of hand. Too often the abuse of one drug leads to the abuse of another, more addictive, dangerous and destructive substance. So the word needs to keep going out to:

- Our young people about the dangers of substance abuse, in all its forms.

- To those caught in the terrible spiral of addiction and abuse, that there are ways out and treatment is available.

- To those whose purpose in life is to peddle drugs and profit from it, that we're not going to tolerate it. Murray expressed it well when he wrote, "Our police department is blessed with talented officers who will aggressively continue to pursue those who possess or sell any dangerous illegal drugs. We recognize, however, that the best enforcement efforts come through community support and cooperation... For those who bring heroin and other hardcore drugs into our community, know full well, we will seek you out, we will arrest you and you will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

We need to stay focused on this three-pronged response: Awareness. Education. Enforcement.

It's a clear-eyed path toward prevention.

State Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, represents New York's 58th Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and part of Tompkins County.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Don't make Him change his mind

TO THE EDITOR | While I was having my morning devotions, I ran across a Biblical reference. All I could say was, "Oh my".

This particular scripture is found in the book of Jeremiah, chapter 18, verses 8-10 via the Living Bible paraphrase. It states:

"Whenever I (God) announce a certain nation or kingdom is about to be taken up and destroyed, then if that nation renounces its evil ways, I will not destroy it as planned.

"And if I announce that I will make a certain nation strong and great, but then that nation changes its mind and turns to evil and refuses to obey Me, then I too will change my mind and not bless that nation,

as I said I would."

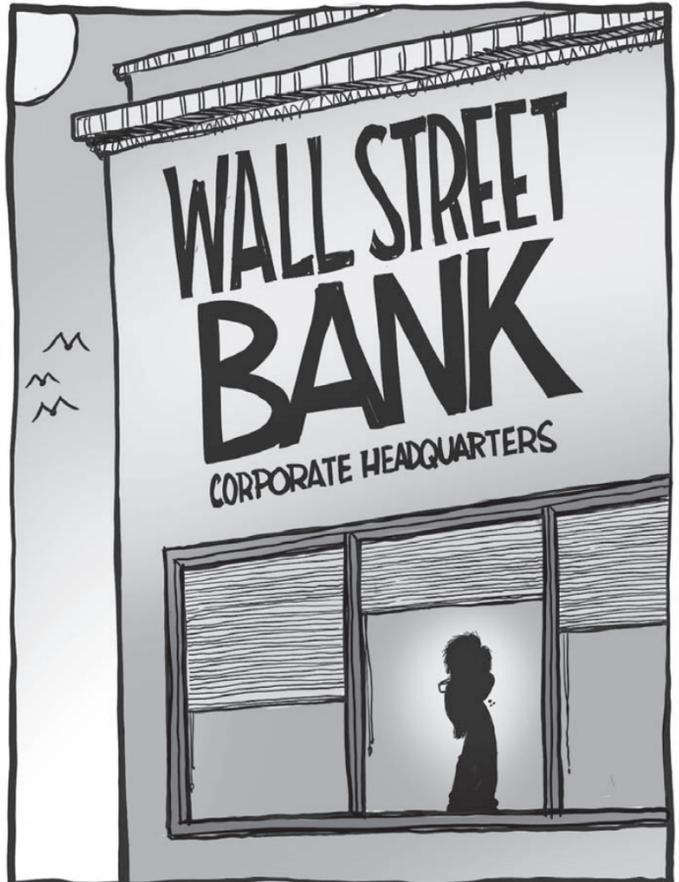
Hope for that second nation mentioned is also found in the Bible. It's in Chronicles 7:14 via KJV.

"If my people (Christians), which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from Heaven, and forgive their sins and will heal their hand."

To prevent God from changing His mind, as mentioned in the second nation, it behooves Christians to give serious thoughts to all of the above, and follow the II Chronicles references.

Elouise Hults,
 Beaver Dams

ANOTHER VIEW



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