

## From Our Pastor

### October 27, 2018

Warm Sabbath Greetings to everyone!

Interstate 95 (I-95) is the main Interstate Highway on the East Coast of the United States,[3] running parallel to the Atlantic Ocean coast, serving areas from Florida to Maine. In general, I-95 serves the major cities of the Eastern Seaboard and metropolitan areas. It is also now known as the "highway of destruction." The reason is Fentanyl. A very strong painkiller, fentanyl, which is synthesized to resemble other opiates such as opium-derived morphine and heroin has become the number one killer of illicit drug users in the nation. It is fifty times more addictive than heroin. Interstate 95 connects the most lucrative markets for selling fentanyl. Currently deaths from fentanyl overdose total 80 per day nationwide and some news outlets reported 50,000 fentanyl deaths in the past year.

Strangely, the state of New Hampshire leads the nation in deaths per capita due to fentanyl use. Manchester police and fire departments report that they are being called constantly to help young adults who have just fallen down unconscious in public places. Nationwide, over 668 kilos of fentanyl was seized in 2016, enough to kill every American.

In August the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) published report on the record number of American drug deaths. According to the estimates, drugs - particularly fentanyl - are now deadlier in the US than HIV, car crashes and guns. Just 2mg of fentanyl - the equivalent of a few grains of table salt - is a lethal dosage for most people, and even exposure can cause a fatal reaction, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Fentanyl is now being mixed into other drugs, so often users cannot be sure of what they are using.

This past Wednesday President Trump signed a new bill in an effort to tackle the country's opioid epidemic. "Together we are going to end the scourge of drug addiction in America," he said as he signed the bill. The legislation, dubbed the Support for Patients and Communities Act, will boost access to addiction treatment and other interventions to mitigate the opioid epidemic, from law enforcement efforts against illicit drugs to combating the over prescription of opioids.

Legislation to slow the manufacture and distribution may help, but the real problem is: Why do perfectly healthy people begin using stimulating or hallucinogenic drugs? According to the Foundation for a Drug Free World, "People take drugs because they want to change something about their lives. Here are some of the reasons young people have given for taking drugs: to fit in, to escape or relax, to relieve boredom, to seem grown up, to rebel, to experiment. They think drugs are a solution. But eventually, the drugs become the problem."

Jesus Christ taught, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10). When people comprehend the incredible truths about the Kingdom of God, the need for drugs disappears. Life is not boring and the future holds great promise. The real solution to finding peace, happiness, and purpose in life is found in the pages of God's word. Perhaps King David expressed it best in Psalm 16: "You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

The answer to the opioid crisis on I-95 and across the nation is to teach God's word to adults and our children. Our Creator knows how our mind works and has provided the only way of life that works.

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