

And the people plot in vain ...

By Bill Johnson



One of the many highlights of American Decency Association's spring conference, to be held at the Shack (June 2-4), will be my interview with Dave Agema.

My interview with Dave will follow Pastor Ron Workman's message on "Why do the Nation's Rage?"

The title and the theme of our spring conference is just that: "Why do the Nation's Rage" from Psalm 2.

The nations DO RAGE and this reality is not presently in a state of decline.

Let me give just a few examples. Keep in mind these examples aren't even scratching the surface.

North Korea under the heavy handed dictatorship of Kim Jong-un.

Kim Jong-un came to power in 2012 and has reigned as North Korea's premier strongman. His tenure has been marked by the desire to engineer a nuclear weapon that can reach the United States. The North Korean leader has staged more tests of his missile technology than the entire combined history of the previous leadership.

In another example, Turkish President Re-

cep Tayyip Erdogan has declared himself the victor in the recent Turkish election. His opponents are denouncing voting irregularities, but their protests are likely nothing more than the death rattle of democracy in Turkey. Turkey had been a key ally due to their secular government in the Middle East.

However, Erdogan will now continue building his long-sought Caliphate, suppressing such adversaries as remain in the media, in parliament, and among the electorate. He will align Turkey ever more firmly with fellow Sharia-supremacists abroad as well as at home, and with others hostile to the West in Russia, China, and elsewhere.

And, then, of course, there is Syria under the leadership of Bashar al-Assad who executed one of the worst chemical bombings ever in Syria turning a northern rebel-held area into a toxic kill zone with upwards of 100 people killed including many children.

Obviously, much more could be cited: Russia, China, Iran, Cuban, Venezuela.

A number of nations now have enough nuclear power that, if unleashed, could wipe out huge segments of the world population. What's all of this hatred and turmoil about?

Why DO the nation's rage?

This challenging question then will be followed by my interview with Dave Agema who, I believe, is very well equipped to field an hour long array of questions that I am preparing for him.

Why do I believe Dave is well suited to deal with this question?

Dave is a former Michigan State Legislator from the 74th District. Agema served three terms (the constitutional limit) in the Michigan House of Representatives, from 2007 to 2013, representing parts of the Grand Rapids area. He was elected at the 2012 Michigan Republican State Convention to the Republican National Committee, defeating incumbent Saul Anuzis.

Agema is a pro-life conservative, who is actively vocal in his opposition to same-sex marriage and civil unions, and in strong opposition to ISIS.

Dave understands the inner workings of the political world as he has tirelessly labored to help make it responsive to the needs of the people from a Christian world and life view. And make no mistake, it has vigorously pushed back against him.

For further information about the June 2-4 conference, see page 3.



From the desk of Bill Johnson

In 1987, I was teaching fourth grade in Fremont, Michigan. I was in my 18th and last year of teaching. I had sensed a call to combat pornography, obscenity and indecency and to encourage Christians to guard their hearts; to pursue holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. I Peter 1:15,16

Little did I know what God was calling me to or the ride that I was going to be on.

I struggled over the years wondering if God was calling me into a pastoral ministry. At times I was quite sure, and at others I wasn't. I earned a Masters of Religious Education from the then Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary (now Grand Rapids Seminary). However, by 1985 a couple of local area men had started an anti-pornography group. I got involved and after a period of time I became the leader. During the summer of 1985 and beyond, a couple of us went to stores throughout Newaygo County urging store owners to discontinue selling pornographic magazines and videos. We met with the county prosecutor urging him to enforce Michigan's obscenity law.

God has blessed this work from the very beginning throughout these 30 years.

During this time, there has been successful legislative work (passing a strengthened Michigan obscenity law) with the help of such individuals as noted Christian attorney Alan Sears. There has been numerous picketing ventures which includes the K-Mart headquarters in Troy, Michigan, the Playboy Club in downtown Chicago, the Justice Department in Washington, DC, the sex shop, Deja Vu, on Martin Luther King Drive in Lansing, Michigan and many others, debates with the ACLU of Michigan on a couple of occasions, being interviewed on numerous

radio and television shows including Fox News, MSNBC, and CNN.

There has been the activist work in driving over 15,000 advertisers off from advertising on Howard Stern's radio program resulting in him leaving terrestrial radio and with ADA being chosen to receive the "Salt and Light Award" from Dr D. James Kennedy in 2000.

I could speak of our faithful, long term work that resulted in Abercrombie and Fitch discontinuing the production and distribution of its highly inflammatory, pornographic magazine. It was an uphill, seemingly impossible battle, but God brought the victory!

When we were picketing, writing to advertisers, monitoring television shows, it is important for me to have you understand that it wasn't as if there were overwhelming numbers of people supporting our efforts even back then. There was never, at least for us, a sense of the "moral majority".

Strong leadership has always been a rare commodity in the church, the prosecutor's office, the courts, the legislature, the pew, the school.

Sounds kind of like Gideons band of 300 in the Bible!

Much more could be said, but this isn't meant to be a review of our history - though I admit it's hard for me not to just roll right into a fuller history as it brings great joy recalling the many evidences of God's hand in leading this ministry and leading me by faith to leave my full-time teaching position with the support of my wife, Jan.

I say all of this to point to the following: God has never let us down or forsaken us. He has shown Himself faithful as we have sought to do His will.

My rookie days are long past. I am a seasoned veteran.

I have been supported not only by the best wife an activist like myself could possibly have, but also by a great staff that makes me proud every day. In addition, our board has been faithful, strong, spiritual, and godly every step of the way since our inception.

And last but not least, we have been so graciously blessed with financial supporters - many solid friends who have supported us through thick and thin!

If it sounds like I am announcing my retirement from the work, I am not. However, I don't want to hinder my staff from growing into new roles. Your prayers to this end are appreciated!

The road is long and hard and often times thankless. We have had our victories but they are often few and far between.

Though the battle rages and is becoming increasingly confusing and complex with each month, God is able - and we are engaged and thankful to serve knowing that there are people like you who care as we do!

Your prayers, encouragement, and support mean more to us than ever before.

The years have not dimmed my passion for the work – if anything my burden has only increased as I see the moral and spiritual disintegration of our culture impacting families – including within the church. It is still my desire to use every opportunity to exhort, warn, edify, and inform. In the past I've traveled the state of Michigan speaking to church and community groups - adult Sunday School classes, Wednesday night programs, church services, etc.

It is my desire to expand this ministry outreach again. The need is great and the time is short. If your church or organization would be open to having me, or perhaps one of my staff, come and present on the issues of the day, our responsibility to be salt and light, and God's call for each of us to pursue holiness, please give us a call at 231-924-4050.

Why do the nations rage? Blessed are those who take refuge in Him.



These costs include all meals and a banana split served nightly. Meals may also be purchased ala carte for those who attend the conference only, and do not spend the night.

To register for a room call **The Shack at 231-924-6683** and ask for the ADA rate.

Also, call us at ADA to register for the conference. Let us know if you will be an overnight guest or coming just for the conference sessions. Call ADA at **231-924-4050**.

We are extending what we anticipate will be a very short-lived invitation to the first 100 registrants to attend what promises to be a spirit-filled weekend of timely information, fellowship, and spiritual challenge at the beautiful conference center based near American Decency Association's headquarters in Fremont, Michigan.

Call today to make your reservation.

Here are the logistics:

A WEEKEND CONFERENCE "Why Do the Nations Rage?"

**When: June 2-4
(Friday, Saturday, Sunday)**

**Where: The Shack Country Inn
2263 W. 14th Street,
White Cloud, MI 49349
ph: 231-924-6683
<http://shackcountryinn.com/>**

Featured Speakers:

Dave Agema, Former Republican National Committee Member, former state representative from Jenison, MI, former Airforce jet fighter pilot, former pilot for American Airlines.

Bill Johnson, Founder and president of American Decency Association, AFA's first named state director (1987-1999), Leading ADA for its eighteen years of existence.

Pastor Ron Workman, Long time Bible Church pastor having served in Illinois, Florida and Michigan. Ron is the founder of Interim Ministries Incorporated. He has helped many churches through times of pastoral transition.

Pastor Terry D. Slachter, Is the head of Reaching America Ministries (formerly Project Philip). Terry has pastored in Dearborn, Grand Rapids, Indianapolis and he is currently pastoring in Lamont, MI. Terry encourages and equips churches and individual Christians to sow the seed of the gospel.

Mary Beeke, Author of the book, The Law of Kindness. In it, Mary examines the idea of kindness, and gives helpful advice for putting it into action. She includes specific chapters addressed to wives, husbands, parents, teachers, and children.

Dr. Joel Beeke, International speaker and president of the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, author and pastor.

Further registration information and limitations:

There are 55 lodging rooms available.

Call early to register for either a room or to reserve a place to attend the conference even though you won't be an overnight paid guest.

\$240.00 (for two nights) Back view rooms
\$260.00 (for two nights) Lake view rooms
\$300.00 (for two nights) Hot tub rooms

Weekend Schedule

For a full account of the event go to www.americandecency.org or call 231-924-4050

Friday night

7:00 PM - Welcome and opening:
Bill Johnson, President of ADA
7:15 PM - "Why do the nations rage?"
Pastor Ron Workman
8:05 PM - "The peoples plot in vain"
Dave Agema (Q and A) with Bill Johnson
9:00 PM - Banana splits and fellowship

Saturday

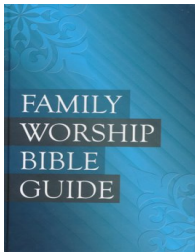
9:00 AM - Panel Discussion - ADA staff
9:45 AM - Mary Beeke:
"Reformation of our families"
10:45 AM - Break
11:00 AM - Panel Discussion
(M. Beeke, Agema, Slachter, Workman)
12:00 PM - Lunch served
12:30 PM - Free time
3:15 PM - A few words from
Bill Johnson plus PRTS book table
4:30-5:15 PM - Terry Slachter:
"The Lord sits on His Holy Hill"
5:30 PM - Buffet Dinner served
7:15 PM - Music ministry
8:30 PM - Banana split and fellowship

Sunday morning

8:00-9:00 AM - Buffet breakfast
9:30 AM - Worship service
Dr. Joel Beeke
10:30 AM - Closing and send off

Devotions: Life to the Family and Health to the Soul

by Steve Huston



“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” (3 John 1:4)

I’m sure John’s statement resonates with every Christian parent out there. Many hope that their children will stand on their shoulders—understanding better and gaining more sanctifying ground than themselves.

But that usually doesn’t happen without diligence on the parent’s part. One or two hours of church attendance per week, versus a constant, worldly bombardment of anti-Biblical beliefs the rest of the week, just doesn’t cut it. Even if your child attends a Christian school, **that is no substitute for the godly, daily instruction that God expects us—as parents—to provide.** Yes, God does the calling, saving, and sanctifying; but that doesn’t negate a father’s responsibility to prepare his children to hear from God. Train them in the fear of the Lord, admonish them to godliness, and assist them in a holy walk before an all-seeing God. Our goal should be to help them distinguish between truth and half-truth and to recognize the deceptions of the world, which the devil will use to allure their unsuspecting souls. Show them by example to desire a strong devotional life complete with prayer, developing within them a taste for desiring a life devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is why I’m so excited to share with you Dr. Joel Beeke’s book entitled *Family Worship Bible Guide*. This book includes **experiential devotions on ALL 1,189 chapters of the Bible**, and can be used **alongside** your preferred translation.

Every chapter of the Bible is covered devotionally, along with soul searching questions that are deep, yet easily understood. Dr. Beeke has a way of taking what would normally be seen as obscure chapters, and digging down deep. He brings down-to-earth application that will

be a blessing to all who have “ears to hear what the Spirit says.”

One such example can be found in Genesis 5. “What can I possibly say about a chapter which only covers Adam’s genealogy?” Open the *Family Worship Bible Guide* to Genesis 5 and read:

- 1. By God’s grace, strive to imitate Enoch. Enoch walked with God. Surely the secret of our Christian life is to abide in Christ: “Without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Spend time in the Word of God, praying, meditating, repenting of sin, and obeying God’s laws. Just as God took Enoch to heaven, so walking with God on earth is the best assurance that we will walk with God in heaven. ...*
- 2. The repentance and faith of the godly does not exempt them from death... [W]e are not ready to live until we are ready to die. What is the best way to face death?*

Whether it’s a book like Leviticus or one of the Minor Prophets that you might be hesitant to tackle because you’re not sure what to say, the *Family Worship Bible Guide* will—with the Spirit’s working—bring greater clarity and self-examination to your devotional time. It’ll also bring about points that you’ve probably not considered before, even when addressing familiar passages.

Reading the Bible is vitally important to one’s spiritual health and is life to the family. J.C. Ryle proposes: “Next to praying there is nothing so important in practical religion as Bible-reading. God has mercifully given us a book which is ‘able to make [us] wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus’ (2 Timothy 3:15). By reading that book we may learn what to believe, what to be, and what to do; how to live with comfort, and how to die in peace. Happy is that man who possesses a Bible! Happier still is he who reads it! Happiest of all is he who not only reads it, but obeys it, and makes it the rule of his faith and practice!”

Ryle ends his paper on reading the Bible with several exhortations to better living and exploration of the Word. One of them is specifically targeted to family devotions:

“Let us resolve to ‘honor the Bible more in our families.’ Let us read it morning and evening to our children and spouses, and not be ashamed to let men see that we do so. Let us not be discouraged by seeing no good arise from it. The Bible-reading in a family has kept many a one from the jail and the prison, and from the eternal fires of hell.”

There is nothing better that a family leader can do for one’s family than to lead them into the Throne of grace through prayer and point them to Christ in the reading of the Word. Let us take every opportunity throughout the day to point to the Bible as our standard because it is God’s standard. Let us be diligent in having daily devotions with our family; asking God to bless the reading of His Word, and the family partaking of it.

Having owned, read, and reviewed many books on the Bible, I have found no better resource of this high caliber or help in discussing EVERY chapter of the Bible. With a puritan’s passion and care for breaking forth the Word of God, Dr. Beeke has humbly covered each chapter of the Bible in such a way that one’s personal or family devotions will be deeply enriched. I highly, humbly, and prayerfully recommend the *Family Worship Bible Guide* to you.

To order, see enclosed response card.

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Bill Johnson, President and Founder
bjohnson@americandecency.org

Staff

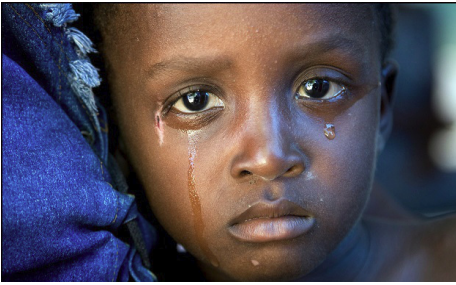
Lisa Van Houten
Kimberly Cargill
Chris Johnson
Steve Huston

P.O. Box 202
Fremont MI 49412-0202
Phone: 231-924-4050
Fax: 231-924-1966
www.americandecency.org



FGM - Islam's War on Women

by Lisa Van Houten



As a nation of immigrants, the U.S. offers a wealth of cultural traditions to enjoy. Here in Michigan we have cities such as Holland that celebrates the Dutch heritage of its settlers with a yearly Tulip Time Festival. Or go to Frankenmuth - Michigan's "Little Bavaria" for Oktoberfest.

Then there's Livonia, Michigan, a suburb of metro Detroit. Livonia, referred to by some as "Little Palestine" due to its growing Muslim population, is now famous – rather infamous – for another "cultural" practice that reportedly has been occurring there for over a decade – female genital mutilation.

Yet this horrific practice is not a cultural tradition like wearing wooden shoes or eating bratwurst. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a barbaric tenet of Islam and Shariah law.

In an ideology that treats women as chattel, FGM is used to control women, mutilating their genitals to prevent any enjoyment of intercourse either before or after marriage and sealing the opening of the vagina – which then is cut open to consummate marriage. This grisly practice often causes a host of health problems, including complications in childbirth. FGM is routinely performed on Muslim girls – usually before the age of 12, sometimes on infants.

The issue of FGM recently came to light when a Detroit area doctor, Jumana Fakhruddin Nagarwala, was arrested in a FBI sting operation for performing this illegal procedure on two seven year-old girls. The girls and their mothers, immigrants from Somali, traveled from Minnesota to Michigan, as the children were told they were going for a "special" girl's weekend. Instead they were taken to a Livonia clinic where Jumana Nagarwala performed this grotesque procedure.

Nagarwala was arrested as a result of a federal investigation. Authorities believe she has performed this practice on other young girls going back as far as 2005.

"Female genital mutilation constitutes a particularly brutal form of violence against women and girls — it is also a serious federal felony in the United States," Acting U.S. Attorney Daniel Lemisch said. "The practice has no place in modern society and those who perform FGM on minors will be held accountable under federal law."

Female Genital Mutilation was outlawed in the U. S. in 1997, yet this is the first case brought under the law. Is this the first time FGM has occurred in the United States? Far from it. According to a recent study: "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that 513,000 women and girls in the United States were at risk of or had been subjected to female genital mutilation/cutting in 2012, a threefold increase from its 1990 estimate."

Potentially half a million young girls in the U.S. have been victimized, yet this is the first time the federal government has brought a case in the 20 years FGM has been outlawed!

The Left has turned a blind eye to the brutality of Islam. The media will go to great lengths to cover up the connection of acts of terror to Islam and Shariah Law. And in spite of the fact that Islam promotes the abusive practice of FGM, liberal feminists are silent. Linda Sarsour, the Muslim woman who organized the Women's March on Washington, has ignored the issue of FGM. So have all the Hollywood feminists who railed against the Trump administration during the Women's March. Yet when Islam engages in an actual "war on women," against their own wives and daughters, liberal feminists ignore these very real victims.

According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 200 million women and girls have been subjected to FGM worldwide, with 3 million more each year. Yet the Left ignores this violence in order to protect their false narrative that

Islam is a "peaceful" religion. You don't see Baptists or Catholics engaging in such violence— imagine the (rightful) howls of outrage if that were the case. Where is the outrage against Islam and Shariah Law?

The Left's acquiescence plays right into Islam's hand in their quest to implement Shariah Law, not just in the Middle East, but in Western countries as well. The fact that it took 20 years to prosecute a case of FGM demonstrates that our legal system and courts are allowing Shariah Law to gain a foothold in the United States.

Somali-born Ayaan Hirsi Ali, herself a victim of FGM at the age of 5, now an advocate for women and an outspoken opponent of FGM and honor killings, stated that radical Islamists "*envision a regime based on Shariah, Islamic religious law. They ... take it as a requirement of their faith that they impose it on everyone else.*"

Ali went on to state: "*...they see the forcible imposition of Shariah as their religious duty ... They exploit their fellow Muslims' respect for Shariah law as a divine code that takes precedence over civil laws. It is only after they have laid this foundation that they are able to persuade their recruits to engage in jihad. There is no equality between men and women in their eyes, either legally or in daily practice.*"

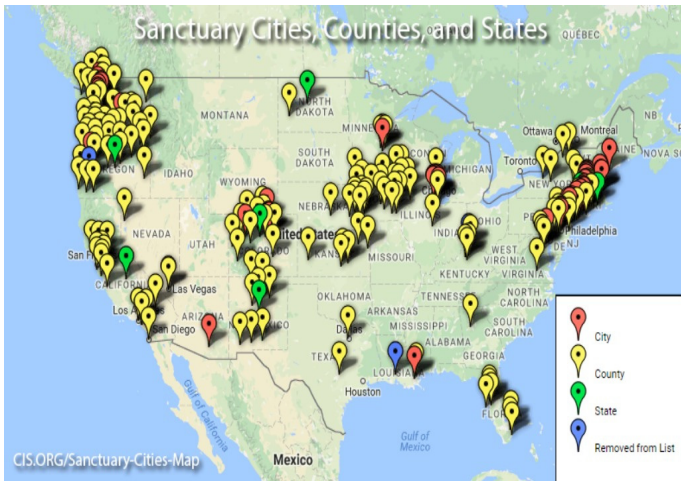
I leave you with what this quote from the Qur'an: "*Men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. ... As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them.*" — Qur'an 4:34

The Word of the One True God says this: "*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ...*" Ephesians 5:25

Which system would you like to see prevail in our nation? If we remain silent to the violence of Islam – even against their own daughters – we could one day be one nation under Shariah Law.

Sanctuary Insanity

by Lisa Van Houten



There's a fundamental problem in our nation when lawbreakers are protected at the expense of citizens. That was hammered home recently when two illegal immigrants brutally raped a 14 year old girl in a Rockville, MD high school bathroom. The 17 and 18 year old suspects had been stopped at the U.S. border, but under Obama's policies were still allowed to enter the United States illegally. When the attack occurred, these two men were enrolled as freshmen in the Rockville high school.

This is only one in a rash of horrific crimes committed by illegal aliens in recent years. **Kate Steinle**, shot and killed while sight-seeing with her parents in San Francisco by illegal immigrant Juan Lopez-Sanchez who had found "sanctuary" in San Francisco after having been deported five times. **Mirta Rivera**, a grandmother and nurse, shot and killed by two illegal immigrants who were living freely in the same apartment building despite being under federal orders for deportation. **Marilyn Pharis**, a 64-year-old Air Force veteran, raped and murdered in her home by an illegal immigrant from Mexico who had been arrested six times in the previous six months – yet had not been deported. For each high profile criminal act committed by illegal aliens, there are many more that the public hears little about.

When illegal immigrants are arrested, law enforcement officials in many jurisdictions are being instructed not to contact U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) regarding their immigration status.

Instead, they are often released back into the community only to commit additional crimes. In the case of Kate Steinle, her killer was a seven-time convicted felon, but was on the streets again as a direct result of San Francisco's sanctuary city policy. Even though ICE had filed a detainer to have Sanchez held in custody until he could be picked up, San Francisco authorities released him – leading to the murder of Steinle.

Hans von Spakovsky, writing for the Daily Signal, details some shocking statistics regarding criminal aliens and repeat offenses: According to the Dept. of Homeland Security, in just one eight-month period in 2014, more than 8,100 deportable aliens were released by sanctuary jurisdictions. Three thousand of them were felons and 62% had a prior criminal record. Nineteen hundred of them were later rearrested a total of 4,300 times for 7,500 different criminal offenses. A 2005 report from the Government Accountability Office that examined the criminal histories of 55,322 illegal aliens in federal, state, and local prisons revealed that they had been arrested 459,614 times and committed almost 700,000 crimes—an average of almost 13 offenses per illegal alien. Those crimes ranged from murder to robbery to sex-related offenses. **Behind these statistics are millions of Americans who have been victimized – crimes which wouldn't have taken place if our immigration laws were enforced.**

As Attorney General Jeff Sessions stated recently: ***"Failure to deport aliens who are convicted of criminal offenses puts whole communities at risk ..."***

It's especially concerning when those sworn to uphold the law, are instead aiding criminals. In January, Oregon judge Monica Herranz helped an illegal immigrant, Diddier Salazar, escape arrest from ICE

agents. Salazar was in court facing DUI charges while federal Immigration officials waited outside the courtroom to detain him. **While the ICE agents waited, the judge allowed Salazar to escape through a private exit.**

This judge is not an isolated case. Federal law requires state and local agencies to inform ICE when they have illegal immigrants in custody. Yet all across the country, local officials are ignoring and obstructing federal law. **In a growing trend, cities and even states are declaring themselves "sanctuaries" for illegal immigrants.** In California, a "sanctuary state" bill is on the verge of becoming law. The bill prohibits all California enforcement agencies from assisting with federal enforcement of immigration law. The state of Maryland – where the horrific rape of the 14 year old girl mentioned above occurred – is also considering similar legislation, seeking to protect illegal aliens from deportation at the expense of their own constituents.

Recently the city council of Lansing, Michigan voted to become a "sanctuary city" – only to rescind the vote after hearing from community leaders. U.S. Rep. Mike Bishop, whose district includes Lansing, called the city's sanctuary policy "completely reckless" and stated that it ***"sends a dangerous message that local governments or individuals can simply pick and choose which laws they wish to follow. Not only have they completely ignored the input and safety of legal residents and families in Lansing, but they have disregarded every immigrant who has followed the law by coming into our country the legal way."***

After eight years of lax enforcement of immigration law under President Obama, the Trump administration is sending a strong message that such disregard for the law will not stand. In recent weeks Sessions has warned that the Justice Department will cut off federal funding to sanctuary cities and the Department of Homeland Security has begun publishing a weekly list of crimes committed by illegal immigrants.

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Sanctuary Insanity

[Continued from Page 6]

That's not sitting too well with mayors of sanctuary cities who are vowing to defy federal law. Rahm Emanuel, Obama's former chief of staff, now mayor of Chicago, defiantly stated: *"I want to be clear: We're gonna stay a sanctuary city."* New York Mayor Bill De Blasio illogically claims enforcing immigration law will make his city less safe, as he stated: *"Here in New York City and in cities across the nation, this executive order could in fact undermine public safety and make our neighborhoods less safe."* And I'd love to see Boston Mayor Marty Walsh follow through with his claim to turn his office into housing for illegal immigrants rather than see them deported: *"If people want to live here, they'll live here. They can use my office."*

Yet looking at this issue from a Christian worldview, isn't there Biblical precedent for sanctuary cities - such as the Old Testament "cities of refuge"? Yet James K. Hoffmeier writing for Religion News Service explains: *"According to these biblical passages dealing with the practice of sanctuary in the Bible, it is clear that its purpose was limited exclusively for offenders who had accidentally or unintentionally killed someone, thereby providing a place where their case could be heard. Sanctuary was never intended as a place to avoid "the law" and the consequences of criminal behavior, but to allow the law to take its proper course rather than unwarranted vengeful retaliation when it was not called for. Consequently, American cities ... that offer sanctuary for foreigners who have broken American laws regulating entry to our country cannot claim to be following the practice described in the Bible. Rather, they are twisting biblical statutes to political ends and subverting federal law."*

What will be the ultimate price of such lawlessness? It not only impacts jobs and national security, but the very safety of our families.

Use the enclosed postcard to thank Attorney General Jeff Session for his efforts to uphold our nation's immigration laws.

ISIS' Preferred Prey

by Chris Johnson



I wonder if you're like me. Whenever I hear the words, "Christian martyrs," an image of robed and sandaled early church members in a Roman arena with a hungry lion in the foreground immediately appears in my mind. **Why is that?**

The Palm Sunday attacks in Egypt are a reminder that we don't need to look so far back in history to see Christians suffering for the sake of their Lord.

As Coptic Christians gathered to celebrate the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem, suicide bombers attacked two different churches, resulting in a death toll of nearly 50, while injuring 100 more.

Egypt's ISIS branch took credit for the massacres, which is of course not surprising, particularly as they recently referred to Copts as their "priority and [their] preferred prey."

Thousands of years have passed since the days facing lions in the Roman Coliseum, yet Christians in the region are still considered "prey."

Samuel Tadros, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom shares this sentiment: *"The names of rulers may have changed, from Roman and Byzantine emperors to Muslim caliphs and governors, discriminatory laws changed from the Muslim rules of Dhimmitude, to the exacting, oppressive laws of Egypt's present-day rulers, but the nature of the Coptic plight has not."*

He continues, *"Copts are bound by the unique history of a church, a history of suffering. Holy Week may be focused on the pain of Christ, but for the Copts, their pain is seen and felt through His. They have carried their redeemer's cross on the way to Golgotha, just as they carry a tattooed*

cross on their arms."

The mortal struggle of Coptic Christians in Egypt is only one example of modern Christian martyrdom, though. John L. Allen, Jr., writing for the British online magazine, *The Spectator*, defines the massive scope of the persecution of Christians in our time.

According to the International Society for Human Rights, a secular observatory based in Frankfurt, Germany, 80 percent of all acts of religious discrimination in the world today are directed at Christians. Statistically speaking, that makes Christians by far the most persecuted religious body on the planet.

According to the Pew Forum, between 2006 and 2010 Christians faced some form of discrimination, either de jure or de facto, in a staggering total of 139 nations, which is almost three-quarters of all the countries on earth. According to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, an average of 100,000 Christians have been killed in what the centre calls a 'situation of witness' each year for the past decade. That works out to 11 Christians killed somewhere in the world every hour, seven days a week and 365 days a year, for reasons related to their faith.

What a disservice we do to our spiritual brothers and sisters when we forget or trivialize the sacrifices they've made for the beliefs we share – beliefs which we in the U.S. rarely have to sacrifice *anything* for.

From the comfort of our church auditoriums it is hard to believe that people are dying for hearing and believing the sermons we struggle to pay attention to.

Let us resolve to bring our fellow Christians before the Lord in prayer, that He would uphold them and give them hope and courage in their struggles.

Let us also pray for Christians that are our countrymen, that we would be emboldened by the sacrifice of these forgotten martyrs, to stand for God's truth in our secularized culture.

National Day of Prayer & Curtis Bowers event

May 4 & 5

by Steve Huston



Thursday, May 4, 2017 is the National Day of Prayer. People all over our country will be gathering to pray—seek out a place near you. If you live in the West Michigan area, come join us at Veterans Memorial Park—in Fremont—at noon. Ron Workman and Curtis Bowers will be leading us in a time of prayer and focusing on our great neediness, which only God can meet. Join us as we pray for a healing of our nation, our government, the church, our families, and our individual brokenness.

The following evening - Friday, May 5 at 7:00 PM—the Curtis Bowers family will be at the American Decency Association (203 E Main St, Fremont, MI).

Curtis Bowers and his family have travelled all over this great land, singing and presenting the research they've done regarding their documentaries "AGENDA" and "AGENDA 2." Their harmonious voices and the truths they bring in song and speech will be a blessing to all who attend.

Along with this mini concert, Curtis Bowers will be talking about the danger our country faces as communism has infiltrated our government and school system, and the impact of our society's continuously declining morals and culture. He makes the point that these things aren't happening in a vacuum; rather, they were planned and are being carried out with precision, for the purpose of destroying America.

Many of the adherents to these deadly ideologies—young and old—have no idea that they are being duped into their very own destruction. All they see is what would appear to be reward without effort, foolishly ignorant of the fact that one day "the piper must be paid."

If you've seen the Bowers' "Agenda"

films, no doubt you've been impressed by Curtis Bowers' careful research and logical explanations. He's even more impressive in person.

Perhaps what is most impressive about this man and his family is their consistent pointing to Jesus in all they do and say, and their constant reminder that **we have a responsibility to share the truth about Jesus.** After all, He is our only hope.

**Join us on May 4 and 5.
You'll surely be blessed!**

A Tasteful Change

by Lisa Van Houten



Long time readers of this newsletter know that American Decency has targeted the Hardee's/Carl's Jr. restaurant chain for their pornographic ad campaigns. Soon after CEO Andrew Puzder took the helm of the company 16 years ago, Hardee's/Carl's Jr., a subsidiary of CKE Restaurant Holdings, began a series of erotic ads featuring models such as Kate Upton and Paris Hilton – and ADA began urging people to contact the company.

At first, ADA would hear directly from Puzder in response to our calls/emails of concern. However, soon he turned a deaf ear and the sexualization continued - and ADA's boycott began. Each year the ads pushed the envelope further and further, receiving much backlash.

We were dismayed when President Trump originally chose Andrew Puzder as his candidate for Labor Secretary. Yet in February Puzder withdrew his name when pushback from Republican senators proved he would not get enough votes for

confirmation. During the confirmation process, news broke of alleged spousal abuse charges Puzder's wife had made in 1990. Some senators also raised concerns about the pornographic depiction of women in Hardee's/Carl's Jr. ads under Puzder's leadership.

Now not only is Puzder out as potential Labor Secretary, he is also stepping down as CEO of Hardee's/Carl's Jr. And with that change in leadership is coming a change in advertising strategy. **The company has announced it is leaving behind their pornographic ad campaigns and, refreshingly, focusing on selling their sandwiches – not sex.**

Speaking to Stuart Varney on the Fox Business Network, Puzder spoke of the new ad direction that is coinciding with his departure. "... *I may certainly like the ads we've been running a long time, but the younger guys can get that on the internet.*" He added, "*Look, young hungry guys aren't as affected by the racy ads ... [The ads] don't have as much of an impact.*"

I know one person who would especially be happy to hear of this new ad direction – unfortunately he passed away in 2008. I'm speaking of the original owner of Carl's Jr. and CKE Restaurant Holdings, Carl Karcher, who started the chain with a single hot dog stand in 1941. Karcher spoke openly about his Christian faith and, according to an article in Los Angeles Daily News, his religious views were tightly woven with his business. Karcher served as chairman and CEO of the company until its own board of directors voted him out in 1993. Karcher objected to the sexualized ad campaign that began after his departure from the company and according to an Associated Press report in 2008, Karcher was **"heartbroken that a company he founded on Christian principles has taken such an amoral act."**

While Karcher isn't here to rejoice, we at ADA are thankful that this company has finally turned away from the pornographic ads that have tarnished the name of Hardee's/Carl's Jr. for years.