

## Who are they after?

By Bill Johnson

**IN REALITY  
THEY'RE NOT  
AFTER ME  
THEY'RE AFTER  
YOU**



**I'M JUST IN  
THE WAY**

President Trump is under attack AND so are we! His accomplishments are detested, and, the left is not fond of those who support him: People like many of you!

Here is a short list of President Trump's accomplishments. He is opposed/ detested (in part) for the following:

- Almost 4 million jobs created since election.
- More Americans are now employed than ever recorded before in our history.
- Increased our coal exports by 60 percent;
- U.S. oil production recently reached all-time high.
- United States is a net natural gas exporter for the first time since 1957.
- Withdrew the United States from the job-killing Paris Climate Accord.
- Cancelled the illegal, anti-coal, so-called Clean Power Plan.
- Secured record \$700 billion in military funding; \$716 billion next year.
- NATO allies are spending \$69 billion more on defense since 2016.
- Process has begun to make the Space Force the 6th branch of the Armed Forces.
- Confirmed Supreme Court Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh.
- Withdrew from the horrible, one-sided Iran Deal.
- Moved U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.
- Issued Executive Order to keep open Guantanamo Bay.

- Concluded a historic U.S.-Mexico Trade Deal to replace NAFTA.

- Protecting Americans from terrorists with the Travel Ban, upheld by Supreme Court.

- **Imposed tariffs on China in response to China's forced technology transfer, intellectual property theft, and their chronically abusive trade practices.**

- Net exports are on track to increase by \$59 billion this year.

- **Improved vetting and screening for refugees, and switched focus to overseas resettlement.**

- Began BUILDING THE WALL. Republicans want STRONG BORDERS and NO CRIME. Democrats want OPEN BORDERS which equals MASSIVE CRIME.

**The evidence of the strong detestation on the left towards President Trump and those who support him is exhibited by the national media on a daily basis, as never before.**

Speaking to CNN recently, Hillary Clinton was asked about restoring civility in our political discourse. She said:

*"You cannot be civil with a political party that wants to destroy what you stand for, what you care about. . . If [Democrats] are fortunate enough to win back the House and/or the Senate, that's when civility can start again."*

Mrs. Clinton neglects to realize that the Republicans—by and large—have been civil even though she and her cronies desire to destroy all that we hold dear.

Quoting Gary Bauer from his *End of Day* report of October 10, 2018: *The peaceful transition of power, which depends on respect for civility in politics, is the foundation of our constitutional republic. Sadly, it seems the left has rejected this essential principle. ...*

*In the wake of the Kavanaugh hearings, which most Americans believe were a "national disgrace," [Mrs. Clinton] just called for more incivility toward Republicans!"*

**My desire in sharing this with you is to help you, our readers, be aware of the lengths to which the Democrat party and their alliances have been elevating their opposition to not only President Trump but those who support him and his policies.**

Here are some recent occurrences which should have our solemn attention:

- Sen. Ted Cruz and his wife were driven out of a restaurant.
- Several Republican senators were recently

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**From the desk of Bill Johnson**

**King Cyrus and Trump - weeping and shouts of joy.**

Some of you Bible-literate folks know that Trump is sometimes referred to as a type of King Cyrus because Cyrus was not a believer. He was secular to the core. Yet, by the hand of God, Cyrus, set the Jews free after years of captivity in Babylon to return home to rebuild the temple and worship their God!

“The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, .... The Lord God hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God), which is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:1b - 3).

**CYRUS IS STIRRED BY THE SPIRIT.** God uses Cyrus to rebuild the temple, and when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests led the people with cymbals and singing – lifting up their voices in praise to the Lord!

Then these powerful words in Ezra 3:12-13:

*But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.*

I saw a clip of a massive crowd gathered at a Trump rally chanting “USA, USA” – with a large American flag in the background. My heart leapt as I saw the enthusiasm

of those thousands gathered. I wept and rejoiced. Do you think many of those in attendance weren’t experiencing the same thing? Oh yes, I think so.

America, though so deserving of the wrath of God, is yet a nation with many praying believers - burdened and sorrowful over the sins that beset our once great land.

Yet America is still standing on the shoulders of the Founding Fathers. America is still the land of the free. It still is the last great hope for freedom around the world! If America goes down, what do you think happens? America is far from perfect. **But, the light of the Gospel - preaching truth, righteousness, salvation, repentance, holiness and love is still plenteous. Many are hungry to share it, preach it, and live it!**

America is also marked by corruption at the highest levels, increasingly inundated and bludgeoned and influenced by communism, Marxism, socialism, Shariah supremacists, leftists with great aggression passionately laboring to destroy us from within and without. They hate the Constitution. They hate Biblical Christianity, purity, holiness, Biblical marriage, national sovereignty, the preaching of the word of God.

**There is more than a political war going on here. It is a spiritual war like we haven’t seen before in our lifetimes. Is Trump a Cyrus type?**

I don’t know if Trump is a Cyrus type. Much more could be said about this. But, regardless of how friendly the White House is towards our cause, the question is, “IS America worth fighting for?”

**IT IS!** And, say what you will about those large groups gathering around Trump across America, those folks have not given up on their country.

They know that America is at a crossroads and they see in Trump a man who wants to “Make American Great Again”.

So that justice would return. So that life and lives would be treasured. That America would love and appreciate and defend their freedoms peacefully and diligently.

**There is much work to be done – by all of us.**

*The people quickly worked to reinstitute the sacrifices. It is a good sign when we sense that we need to have our sins blotted out and we need to know God’s favor through His appointed sacrifice, Christ Jesus, to whom all the sacrifices pointed (Heb. 7:27). How eager is your heart to run to Christ’s sacrifice for forgiveness? How long do you linger in guilt before confessing your sin? Why?*

*The joy of those who witnessed the foundation rising was mixed with weeping. Is it not true that often the Christian’s joy is mixed with weeping? As long as believers dwell in flesh, we carry this tension of rejoicing and weeping with us (2 Cor. 6:10), until the day when every tear shall be wiped from our eyes (Rev. 21:4). Then joy will be unmixed, but, incidentally, there will be no temple (Rev. 21:22). Why is that? What do we know about that day?*

**Thoughts for Personal/Family Worship  
Reformation Heritage Study Bible  
Ezra 3**

May we work diligently to “reinstate the sacrifices,” laying down our lives for the Lord’s namesake.

Without a return to true sacrifice and humble obedience to God, the wall Israel had been building around Jerusalem would have been of no benefit. To have this strong wall built yet leave the people rotting, broken, and empty inside would be a great waste. Any wall defending a spiritually empty and broken people would be of little use, seeing that destruction from within is more hazardous than numerous threats from without. The same could be said for our country today—we need a revival like Israel would experience later in the book of Ezra.

A great America is one that has humbled itself before God.

Contact Kimberly at 231-924-4050 to purchase your own copy of Thoughts for Personal/Family Worship Bible Guide for \$10. Bill Johnson and other staff find it to be a valuable asset in personal and family devotions. Get yours today!

# Leadership America Needs

By: Steve Huston

**THERE'S POWER  
IN YOUR VOTE.  
SPEAK OUT. BE HEARD.**

James A. Garfield, 20th president of these United States, while serving in Congress, stated at the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1876: *“Now more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature ... If the next centennial does not find us a great nation... it will be because those who represent the enterprise, the culture, and the morality of the nation do not aid in controlling the political forces.”*

We stand at this same critical juncture today; especially when we read headlines like the following: *“Christian Group Launches Nationwide ‘Revival’ Tour to Oppose Republicans in Midterms.”* Garfield’s thoughtful criteria are vital for launching a campaign either for or against particular candidates, not simply making our decisions based on one’s party affiliation. Let us look for and vote for those who are intelligent, brave, and pure. The America that our founding fathers passed down to us deserves such leadership and representation even if her people act in a manner which would suggest otherwise. Only God can make America great again, but it is such leadership which helps to move people to lawfulness and right thinking, putting America on the path to being great once again. You see, **leadership drives to a destination and personnel is policy.**

In years gone by, **statesmen** were plentiful; but now, mostly **politicians** have taken their place. Men, by and large, would stand firm in their lawful convictions regardless the personal costs. Today, feelings have

replaced truth and law, agenda and avarice have pushed morals and virtue aside, and very few people understand what it is to have a fiduciary duty in either business or politics. This is not merely a matter of Right vs. Left; **it’s about what is right!** This is another reason why we must consider leaders and would-be leaders; and then vote wisely.

Don’t be discouraged; recognize that there are some from each branch of our government who exemplify the correct way to represent America and her citizenry, even though imperfectly. It’s our job to increase that number by voting rightly and encouraging others to do so.

In the Executive branch we have President Trump. “Make America Great Again” is more than just a campaign slogan; this brave man is doing his best to make it a reality, despite all the opposition from every corner—including within his own political party. Whether dealing with foreign countries, enacting public policies, or placing people in positions of authority, this president is attempting to put America first. Instead of writing his many accomplishments here, I will point you to Bill’s front page article.

Nikki Haley has been a shining star, fulfilling her position at the United Nations. Standing for America, verbally pitting herself against those who would desire to either harm or destroy our country, being a true ally for what’s right regarding other countries (Israel for one), this intelligent and brave woman well deserves one blogger’s headline: *“As Haley’s Comet Passes, the UN Itself Must Now Become a Fallen Star.”*

From the Judicial branch we have witnessed the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh. Regardless the low blows, false accusations, and demonic vitriol which has spewed from the Left, this justice showed intelligence and bravery as he weathered these storms, refusing to sink to their level. We have some justices who abide by the rule of law instead of changing the law, upholding the Constitution according to their oath.

Congressionally speaking there are those who stand strong on every front, even against the Muslim Brotherhood which has so infiltrated the highest levels of our government, men like Ted Cruz and Mike Lee to name only a couple.

Here’s something important to understand though, the more strong, *“intelligent, brave and pure”* representatives we bring into these positions, it has an effect on “fence-sitters” or those who are not typically so strong when the Left becomes dangerous, unhinged, and out of control.

For one recent example, I would point you to the Democrats’ embarrassing incivility and unethical, if not potentially illegal, treatment of Brett Kavanaugh during the confirmation process. It was during this show of hubris when the Left thought they had no one who could or would rein them in that Lindsey Graham felt a righteous indignation which propelled him off the fence to declare not only his support for Justice Kavanaugh, but the need to chastise those who were doing their best to unfoundedly destroy him and his family.

It was also at the end of this fiasco that Susan Collins spoke with dignity and clarity, pointing to the importance of fulfilling constitutional duties as opposed to playing partisan politics.

Time doesn’t permit me to lift up other statesmen or expose others who endeavor to destroy this great nation. I do urge you, however, to look carefully at those candidates who are on the ballot and see if they are moving our country nearer or further from constitutional idealism. Are they supportive of those who are doing their best for this nation and its citizenry or are they standing in the way of good policy because they don’t like the man behind it.

I don’t ask you to vote conservatively because of dead traditions, but rather to preserve the purifying flames of liberty, freedom, and righteousness. As Gustav Mahler stated, **“Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire.”** This is the leadership America needs.

# Who are they after?

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“doxxed” or had their personal information leaked to social media sites.

- Prominent celebrities have talked about blowing up the White House and were pictured holding the severed head of the president.

- “Progressives” are fantasizing about killing Justice Kavanaugh.

- A Minnesota public school teacher encourages someone to “take one for the team and kill Kavanaugh.”

- Antifa is routinely harassing and even attacking conservatives.

- A GOP congressman [Rep. David Kustoff, a Republican, and his aide Marianne Dunavant] was run off the road by a crazed liberal.

- A Republican senator [Rand Paul] was viciously beaten.

- A Republican House leader [Steve Scalise] was shot and nearly killed by a radical socialist.

- Senator Tim Kaine (running mate of Hillary Clinton for Vice-President) called on his fellow Democrats to “fight in the streets.”

- Aggressive protesters confronted Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell at a restaurant.

- And the list continues to grow almost daily.

**I turn again to Gary Bauer’s End of Day (10/8/18) as he highlights the nature of the spiritual warfare that screams out for our attention.**

*The left’s growing extremism, which is engulfing the Democrat Party, and its embrace of physical violence is a blaring alarm for our constitutional republic.*

*I know some of you get irritated by the president’s tweets. But in one statement [recently] he demonstrated why Republican voters chose him and not another*

*establishment politician in 2016. The president tweeted:*

*“You don’t hand matches to an arsonist, and you don’t give power to an angry left-wing mob. Democrats have become too EXTREME and TOO DANGEROUS to govern. Republicans believe in the rule of law -- not the rule of the mob. VOTE REPUBLICAN!”*

*That sums up the stakes in this election, my friends.*

***After what we have just witnessed in the Kavanaugh confirmation, every conservative should be willing to crawl over crushed glass to vote this November!***

A word about our “enemy.”

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephesians 6:12,13*

It’s been a long time since we’ve seen a leader lead by putting America (and her citizens) first, regardless of the personal attacks and cost. It’s been many years since we’ve had a leader who would honor the military, protect our liberties, actively fight against socialism and Christian persecution even when it’s not popular. True American leaders protect and they lead by the Law of the land even when they seemingly face a tsunami of threats, character assault, propaganda, and Deep State antics. Contemporarily we have seen very few leaders like this; but I am grateful for Trumps, Cruzes, Colbecks, and others of their brave type.

The abusive “Kavanaugh process” should be enough to convince us that Democrats in power are a great danger to all conservatives. Besides thinking that you and I are “dregs,” “deplorable,” and unworthy of receiving any civility, they desire to do away with our First and Second Amendment rights, push for open borders even though a few years ago they weren’t, and the list goes on. Like him or not, we can’t close our eyes to the fact that President Trump does indeed stand between them and us.

May we exercise godly leadership whether in high or so-called low positions—that God would be glorified. God wouldn’t have us shrivel up into cowards; on the contrary, we are called to be wise as serpents and gentle as doves. The Word of God calls His people to stand boldly in the evil day having done all to stand.

President Trump does stand between us and our temporal enemies; but more importantly, Jesus alone—the King of kings and the Lord of lords—stands between us and ALL our enemies, temporal and spiritual. He may allow us to go through times of testing, incivility, and unrest; but Jesus will never leave us or forsake us.

Let us remember that this world is not our home; yet this is where we are called to walk faithfully after He who has called us. In light of these things, let us diligently and consistently put our faith and trust in Him, speaking the truth and standing for right.

**Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:14-17**

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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



# A State Going to Pot?

by Steve Huston



November 6 will soon be here and if one lives in Michigan they will be voting on the **legalization of recreational marijuana.**

There are several ways to view the legalization of this drug—societal safety, economically, politically, and religiously to name a few.

Since Colorado was the first state to legalize recreational marijuana, let's see how legalization worked out for them. They have data with which we can forecast what the good citizens of Michigan could reasonably expect to find in their state, in the years to come, if they should choose to pass proposal one.

From an **economic view**, Fortune reports that *“in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, Colorado took in \$105 million in tax revenue from marijuana sales.”* That sounds good, but Gov. John Hickenlooper still **doesn't rule out recriminalizing it.**

There might be several reasons why Colorado would consider making marijuana illegal again. The one that Governor Hickenlooper points to is crime. *“Since 2013, Denver has seen its crime rise as the national average has fallen. In 2016, the crime rate was up 4%, with violent crime rising 9%.”* Considering that marijuana was legalized recreationally in 2014, it's more than coincidental.

When it comes to *societal safety*, Governor Hickenlooper, gives warning to other states and their governors. As reported by the L.A. Times, *“We didn't regulate edibles strongly enough at first, ... He cited a spike in emergency room visits by kids who had eaten marijuana products and two cases in which young adults who had reportedly consumed marijuana edibles died — one after shooting himself and the other after*

*jumping off a hotel balcony.”*

If we are going to open up our state to legalized recreational marijuana and the infused products that naturally come with it - marijuana-infused foods and candies - **I would hope that our lawmakers would have the foresight to develop and implement a strong infrastructure of regulations that would be consistently and stringently enforced.**

There are a surprising number of “pot edibles” available to the public, which brings danger to unsuspecting children. Dr. Sam Wang, a physician at Children's Hospital Colorado, states, *“Ingestion of edible products continues to be a major source of marijuana exposures in children and poses a unique problem because no other drug is infused into a palatable and appetizing form.” This would explain the “increase in emergency room visits for kids under 9 who ingested pot after recreational shops opened.”* (L.A. Times)

Societal safety goes well beyond the children though. The Denver Post reports: *“The number of marijuana-related automobile fatalities in Colorado, as measured by the drug's chief psychoactive ingredient, hit 77 in 2016, the latest in a series of sharp increases in recent years. Fifty-one of those drivers had levels of that substance, called Delta 9 THC, above the threshold for cannabis impairment under Colorado law.*

*“And according to a survey done by CDOT last year, just over half of marijuana users said they had gotten behind the wheel of a vehicle in the last 30 days within two hours of using the drug.”*

An article on “Teen Brains Hurt More by Marijuana than by Alcohol” states that *“teens who smoke marijuana daily are 60 percent less likely to graduate from high school or college than those who never use - and seven times more likely to attempt suicide.”*

How does marijuana affect the workplace and coworkers? Occupational Health and Safety states:

*“Marijuana use has been linked to an increase in job accidents and injuries, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse notes that the short-term effects of marijuana include impaired body movement, difficulty with thinking and problem-solving, memory problems, and an altered sense of time.”*

*“The drug impairs attentiveness, motor coordination, and reaction time and impacts the perception of time and speed. Studies from the National Institute on Drug Abuse have found that marijuana negatively impacts driving performance, and other researchers have found that acute use of the drug increases the risk of crashes and fatal collisions.”*

*“Issues with attendance and productivity also can arise from marijuana use, and morale may be impacted.”*

*“In the 1970s, marijuana had a content of THC (marijuana's active ingredient) of about 1 percent. Today, THC content is nearly 13 percent, and some strains are advertised as having a THC content of around 25 percent or higher.”*

Ironically, that \$105 million tax revenue is used, according to Fortune magazine, *“to create housing programs, aid mental health programs in jails and contribute to health programs at local middle schools.”* I say ironically because CNN tells us, *“The state's rate of homelessness rose 5.3% from 2013 to 2017, according to data from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Nationally, the rate of homelessness dropped 8.6% in the same period.”* And The Gazette reports, *“Harry Bull, the Superintendent of Cherry Creek Schools, said, ‘So far, the only thing that the legalization of marijuana has brought to our schools has been marijuana.’”*

**Politically, it's important to ask if this is constitutional.** After checking with politicians and others who are scholarly about our Constitution, I find that there are no real clear answers. The consensus is that it is up to “We the People” of the state.

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## A State Going to Pot?

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Let me be brief and blunt as we look at **the spiritual aspect** of this controversial subject. Although there are many verses one could point to, let us look at Ephesians 5:16-18, where Paul calls us to 1) **Redeem the time**, 2) **understand the will of the Lord**, and 3) **be not drunk with wine, but to be filled with the Spirit**. Here, the point is not the wine so much as the being drunk—or not in control of our full faculties. Perhaps oversimplified, but as I said, brief.

As I listen to proponents from both sides of the debate, there are very few of those in favor of marijuana legalization who make their case based on marijuana use itself. Either they want to point to the problems with alcohol abuse and misused prescription drugs or use the allowance of those substances as a reason for legalization. If one uses the argument that marijuana should be allowed because alcohol abuse is just as bad as or more dangerous than marijuana, or that prescription drugs alter one's mind as well, they aren't valid arguments. There are valid concerns; so let's address those issues rather than adding to them.

**Legalizing marijuana just pushes the line for others to cross.** Not all will, but many do. Remember when the speed limit was 65 mph? Some would drive 70 mph claiming that the police will give you a 5 mph grace window. But those who would not think of driving 80 mph then, easily do so now that the speed limit is 70 or 75mph.

I urge you to think about all the facts we have brought to light here. ***Are these things worth the legalization of a substance that hinders families, jobs, clear thought, and so on? It WILL affect our society and your family.*** Yes, the same can be said for other substances; but then let's deal with those substances. **Let's not add to our troubles.**

## Who's Using What?

by Chris Johnson



"Are you using your device or is your device using you?" veteran actor Denzel Washington asks. "Can you put it down? Can you turn it off?"

"What is the long-term effect of too much information?"

He continued, "We have to at least ask ourselves, 'What is it doing to us?'"

The actor is referring to the constant connectedness made possible by the pocket sized internet machines that 95% of Americans carry around with us every day.

According to Pew Research, over two thirds of Americans use Facebook, not to mention the other social sites. Almost three quarters (74%) of Facebook users check the site at least once per day and 45% of users get their news from Facebook.

Are we using our phones or are our phones using us? Washington may have meant that to be a rhetorical question, but anyone who's paid attention to the outspoken tech insiders who have come out in recent years knows that the answer is incontrovertibly, "both."

When every service you use is tracking the way you use their service and selling that information to advertisers, you are a product using a product to make yourself a better product.

To quote former Facebook employee Sandy Parakalis, *"Facebook is a fundamentally addictive product that is designed to capture as much of your attention as possible without any regard for the consequences... all of those consequences ladder up to the business model of getting people to use the product as much as possible through addictive, intentional-design tactics, and then*

*monetizing their users' attention through advertising."*

The services we use are not just monitoring our use, they are feeding us particular information designed to make us use it more. Specifically, they purposely shepherd their users towards outrage, because outrage needs an outlet and the most convenient outlet is social media and when you visit the social media site you see the advertisements there and they get paid.

As Christians, that funnel toward fury and addiction ought to concern us for our own efforts to follow Christ, but that is not the only way that mobile devices can threaten to change their users.

Author Tony Reinke wrote a book entitled, "12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You," and in an article at DesiringGod.org, he sums up each point. Here are just a few:

1. We Get Addicted to Distraction
3. We Crave Immediate Approval
6. We Become Like What We "Like."
8. We Get Comfortable in Secret Vices.

It's a wonderful article for Christians serious about using their devices for the glory of God, it can be found here: [bit.ly/2yp4t7y](http://bit.ly/2yp4t7y).

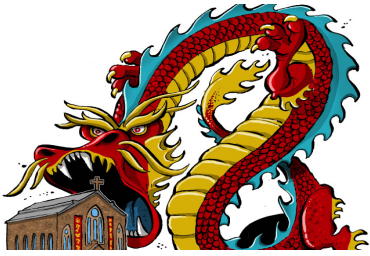
I still use a Smartphone and have accounts with social sites, but it is helpful for me to be reminded by comments like Denzel Washington's to keep an eye on how I use it.

Am I leaning too heavily on Facebook posts to form my own opinions? Am I posting just to farm "likes" to feel good about myself? Am I maintaining digital relationships that would be inappropriate in the real world (and thus are in the digital world as well?) Am I using the curated images and articles on my phone to distract me from the real world messes that I am responsible for?

The internet can appeal to our most bestial interests and, in many cases, is designed to do so. Just like the real world, there is ample opportunity for sin, but even more opportunity to fulfill our creative purpose in glorifying God.

# Taking a Hammer and Sickle to the Cross

By Lisa Van Houten



**“China, in many ways, represents the broadest, most complicated, most long-term counterintelligence threat we face,”** stated FBI Director Christopher Wray before a Senate Homeland Security Committee hearing. And, Wray ominously warned, “it affects every sector of our economy, every state in the country and just about every aspect of what we hold dear.”

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, who also testified before the Senate, shared those concerns, stating: “China absolutely is exerting an unprecedented effort to influence American opinion. . . They’re bringing everything they have to bear. They’re playing a long game trying to influence us in every way possible.”

In last month’s newsletter we highlighted some of the growing threats China poses to our national security. Truly, the half has not been told. Communist China has been systematically infiltrating American companies and universities, engaging in cyber warfare and industrial espionage, and stealing military secrets. As you may recall, in 2015 China hacked the Office of Personnel Management and stole security clearance information of thousands of federal employees in a devastating cyber attack. And as the Washington Times reports: *“Beijing has successfully recruited FBI agents and State Department employees as spies, and has used information from U.S. informants to kill more than a dozen CIA sources inside the regime.”*

A few recent examples highlight Chinese aggression. As China seeks to forcibly claim control of the entire South China Sea, a Chinese destroyer nearly collided with a U.S. warship after conducting a series of “increasingly aggressive maneuvers.” Then on October 10, the Justice Department announced the arrest of yet another Chinese spy who

compromised U.S. aviation and aerospace companies. This followed an explosive report from Bloomberg Businessweek about the **espionage efforts** of a secret unit in the Chinese military which targeted the Pentagon, government agencies, and numerous U.S. companies by slipping microchips into their computer servers. This could allow Chinese military hackers to gain control over the servers and access all information. **The security implications of such hacking are massive.**

Vice President Mike Pence issued a strong indictment of China as he spoke at the Hudson Institute recently. “What the Russians are doing pales in comparison to what China is doing across this country,” Pence said. “And the American people deserve to know it.” In contrast to previous administrations, President Trump is not tolerating communist China’s aggression.

But Chinese aggression doesn’t stop at cyber warfare or espionage against the United States. As Vice President Pence went on to state: **“And when it comes to religious freedom, a new wave of persecution is crashing down on Chinese Christians, Buddhists, and Muslims. Last month, Beijing shut down one of China’s largest underground churches. . . For China’s Christians, these are desperate times. . .**

The Congressional-Executive Commission on China recently issued its Annual Report documenting in great detail China’s abhorrent human rights and religious freedom record.

In recent years, Christianity has been rapidly growing within the communist regime. It’s estimated that there are 67 million Protestant and Catholic Christians within China. However, **as revival spreads, under President Xi Jinping, persecution is also growing.**

As the Associated Press reports, the Chinese government is cracking down on Christianity, destroying crosses, closing down churches, burning Bibles, and forcing believers to sign a paper renouncing their faith. Chinese Communist Party officials have raided Christian homes

to remove religious symbols, arrested church members, and seized churches. In the Henan province, which has one of the largest Christian populations in China, over 7,000 crosses have been destroyed.

The suppression of religious freedom is part of an official campaign to “Sinicize” Christianity [to infuse with Chinese influence] by demanding loyalty to the atheist Communist party and removing any potential challenge to the regime’s power.

The Rev. Bob Fu, a former Chinese house church leader, who immigrated to the U.S. in 1997 and founded the persecution watchdog organization China Aid, testified before the House of Representatives that the Chinese government is implementing a five-year plan to make Christianity more compatible with socialism in which there will be a “rewrite” of the Bible to include Buddhist and Confucian teachings and reflect Chinese ethics of socialism.

Fu also stated that state-sanctioned churches that have crosses on the inside must “put up pictures of Chairman Mao and Chairman Xi [Jinping] on both sides of the cross. In the beginning of every church worship service, the choir of the church has to sing a few communist revolutionary songs praising the communist party before they can sing the worship songs.”

Over the last several months, local governments across the country have shut down hundreds of private Christian churches. One of them was led by Guo, a 62-year-old Chinese shopkeeper. In March, police officers and local officials suddenly showed up at the church on his property, dispersed the congregation and ordered that the cross, a painting of the Last Supper, and a displayed Bible verse be taken down. They ordered that all services stop until each worshipper registered with the government.

Such harassment is a growing and alarming trend. At many churches the government has banned children and Communist party members from attending and barred believers from being baptized. In March,

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## Taking a Hammer and Sickle to the Cross



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a prominent Chinese house church leader was sentenced to seven years in prison after he built Christian schools. And half a dozen Christians were sentenced recently to up to 13 years in jail. In Henan, on a single Sunday morning, 31 churches were shut down. All that is left of one house church is broken glass and torn hymn books strewn among the rubble of a knocked-down wall, after nearly 60 officials stormed the church without warning. Armed with chainsaws, they demolished the church and confiscated Bibles and computers.

How many of us would show up on Sunday if we knew we might be arrested?

It's hard for us comfortable American Christians to imagine what our brothers and sisters in Christ face in China and in many places around the world where persecution is a daily threat. We don't have to worry about being thrown in jail, having our churches demolished, or our Bibles confiscated. However, as the Body of Christ, we are called to: "Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body." Hebrews 13:3

Sunday, Nov. 4, is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church when Christians throughout the free world pray in solidarity with believers who live out their faith in the face of harassment, attacks, imprisonment, and even death.

In addition to praying for our persecuted brothers and sisters, consider ordering the "Save the Persecuted Christians" banner listed on our response card to display at your church or home as a reminder to all who pass by of the suffering our fellow believers face and our call to support them and remember them in prayer.

## God Bless the Broken Road - December 7

by Lisa Van Houten



The faith-filled movie, *God Bless the Broken Road*, tells the story of a young mother, Amber Hill, who loses her husband in Afghanistan and struggles to raise their young daughter in his absence. While paying tribute to those who serve in the United States Military, this film addresses the question of what do we do when we find ourselves on those broken roads in life? Who do we turn to? Where do we take our pain? Amber Hill never imagined she would find herself a widow and single mom. She feels robbed and is angry at God. She doesn't know how to help her 9 year old daughter, Bree, through her grief. And she's struggling with how to move on in all aspects of her life.

The movie, "*God Bless the Broken Road*," and the book it was based on, were written by Jennifer Graeser Dornbush, a native of Fremont, MI – also the home of American Decency Association. In fact, Jennifer's parents are good friends of this ministry!

Jennifer told us, *When I was writing the script, I had two top take-aways always on my mind. First, that God is always with us, even if we don't feel like He is or aren't seeking Him actively. He is always there and He is always providing us with amazing blessings, even when/if we don't acknowledge them. One of the keys to healing and hope on our broken roads are to turn our gaze to Him so that we can start to recognize Him along the path. When we turn to Him and humble ourselves, He can start to guide us and shape our brokenness into blessing.*

*The second take-away is the importance of community. I believe in the necessity of building actual, physical, community (not just having virtual community). We don't have to travel our broken roads alone. God has given us friends and family to lean on for support and encouragement. This can make a huge difference when we are go-*

*ing through trying times. I think so many people suffer from depression and suicide because they think they are alone. Mother Theresa said the greatest poverty we have today is loneliness because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.*

*So many people feel like this. They feel alone. They feel that no one understands or cares what they are going through. What a travesty. It's so simple to be there for someone. You don't have to be a professional counselor or therapist to help someone heal from a wounding. Sometimes the very best thing is to just take a moment from your day to pause, listen, and lend a hug or word of encouragement.*

*On the flip side, if you are traveling a broken road it can be difficult to let people into your pain. We see this in "God Bless the Broken Road" in the character of Amber, who lost her husband in Afghanistan. It takes a lot of courage to be vulnerable and ask for help. But here's the secret... people love you and want to help you and be there for you. Amber eventually hits bottom in order to find this out and finally surrenders. It's at that moment when her life starts to really find hope and redemption. Needing to be loved and cared for is not a sign of weakness, it's the way we humans need to relate to one another to build real and lasting communities. By the way, building community this deep requires that you get off social media, look up from your phone and have actual human contact!*

**American Decency Association is privileged to host a select showing of "God Bless the Broken Road" on Friday, December 7 at 7:00 p.m. at our headquarters at 203 E. Main St, in Fremont, MI.**

We are also thrilled that Fremont native, Jennifer Dornbush, the screenwriter and author of "*God Bless the Broken Road*," will attend the screening to introduce the movie and participate in a Q&A session after the viewing. To learn more about Jennifer and sign up for her newsletter visit: [www.jenniferdornbush.com](http://www.jenniferdornbush.com). Please come out for an inspirational evening and to be reminded of God's great love for us no matter what kind of road you are traveling right now.