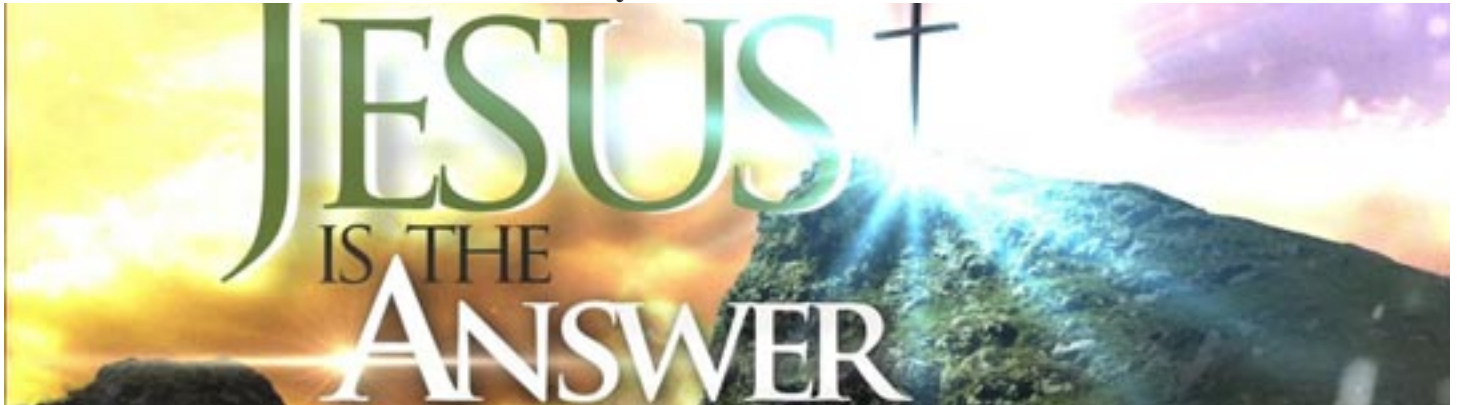


Jesus IS the Answer - BUT - Are we asking the right question?

By Steve Huston



Indeed, we live in perilous times! One quick read through the beginning of Second Timothy chapter three and one would think the Apostle Paul was looking through a time portal, straight into the heart of the United States of America 2023. **Midwest values have shrunk, the Bible belt has loosened, and our spiritual pants, nationally, have slipped down, exposing our nakedness and shame.** Yet, like Daniel's spiritual description of Israel in chapter nine of his book, we have such "confusion of face" many, perhaps most, don't feel the shame that is rightfully ours. (Jeremiah 6:15 gives a fuller description.)

Today's perilous times did not happen in a vacuum nor did they come about overnight. What happened nationally is what happens individually when we do not keep (hold as precious and live by) the Word of God, the transcending eternal truth which rules the temporal world God has created.

The spiritual decay of this once great nation has led to our moral decay, which, in turn, has led to our great national weakness. Like a once strong and stalwart tree which has been decayed from within, America looks strong, but when the right storm comes along, that tree – our nation – will come crashing down "and great [will be] the fall of it." (Matt. 7:24-28)

To catalog our national atrocities would

take more room and more energy than I have. Suffice it to say that we were a nation which was founded upon godly principles; we were a "light shining on a hill." However, because of our sin, what once was is no longer and that light is now so very dim, if not snuffed out altogether. Make no mistake, there are individuals and some churches whose light continues to shine, but, nationally, we are divided, in chaos, "truth is fallen in the street" and righteousness has been run down next to it.

We must look to the future Biblically, recognizing what will be the lot (notice: I did not say the end) of those who will walk in the way of God, instructing others in godliness, making Christ alone their hope and refuge. Isaiah warns: "*he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.*" (59:15) And Paul, after sharing his experiences, states plainly, "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*" (2 Tim. 3:12)

That's plain enough; **what, then, can we do?** The only thing we can do – give those around us the answer they need regardless the cost. Light is the answer to darkness; salt is the answer to corruption; bread is the answer to hunger.

Jesus is the answer for our dark, corrupted, hungry, nation and world – not just for today; Christ and His way have

ALWAYS been the answer! But, what's the real question?

The question isn't, "How can I have a better life" or "How can I improve my family, nation, or world situation?" The question is, "How has my Creator commanded me to live?" and "How can I best glorify, honor, and praise Christ?" In other words, **is Christ (Christianity) a means to an end or is He the end?**

J. Gresham Machen hauntingly lays out this poignant truth which begs the question, moving us to penetrating self-examination: **"Are we using Christ or are we allowing Christ to use us?" for what is Christianity but Jesus living in us and through us; it is not merely a political, national, or familial fix-all.**

"Christianity will indeed accomplish many useful things in this world, but if it is accepted in order to accomplish those useful things it is not Christianity. Christianity will combat Bolshevism; but if it is accepted in order to combat Communism, it is not Christianity: Christianity will produce a unified nation, in a slow but satisfactory way; but if it is accepted in order to produce a unified nation, it is not Christianity: Christianity will produce a healthy community; but if it is accepted in order to produce a healthy community, it is not Christianity:

[Continued on Page 4]

Personal Note from the President



In my lifetime, the world has experienced wars and rumors of wars; harshness and travail; also, peace, tranquility, kindness and goodness.

Some people can't say they experienced peace, tranquility, kindness and goodness in their lifetimes. But, most Americans still can (born prior to 2000?). The greatest generation paved the way for that reality, having fought and been victorious in World War II – defeating Nazi Germany and the Japanese. Their victory led to generations of peace, prosperity and freedom. But little did we know that even as victory had rightfully been declared and enjoyed, there were enemies within being skillfully and deceitfully planted. Things were changing – and not for the good.

It has been recognized over the years that we let the Soviet Union off the hook as President Franklin Roosevelt had a special relationship (Roosevelt was duped) with Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin ([American Betrayal](#), Diana West, 2013). West's research coupled with that of M. Stanton Evans, ([Black Listed by History](#), 2007) document the opening for communists to undermine and exploit America. It is graphically documented in Curtis Bowers' "[Agenda: Grinding America Down](#)".

The strategy of communists has been the long march through American institutions: infiltrating and taking control institution by institution. These institutions include our universities, churches and seminaries, the military, corporations, media, libraries, text books. Obviously, there are exceptions. Not all have succumbed, but the communist agenda to destroy from within is still unfolding - indeed rapidly unfolding.

And how much a part of that has been play-

ing out for a long time? I have already referenced the works of Diana West, M. Stanton Evans and Curtis Bowers. The following quote is from James C. Bowers (father of Curtis). *The Associated Press wrote summarizing China in 1972 that the United States could accept a Communist takeover of South Vietnam, if it evolved after a withdrawal of U.S. Forces. The A.P. story also revealed that Kissinger told the Chinese Communist dictator that, the United States respected the North Vietnamese and said, 'We have had no interest in destroying it or even defeating it.' Do the surviving wounded soldiers from Vietnam still around in their wheelchairs realize that they were fighting a war that the top American official told the enemy we have 'no interest in winning.' Unbelievable, but true! Kissinger is still alive and is treated as a dignitary and foreign policy expert by our media. Strange, isn't it?* [Taken from [The Naked Truth](#), by James C. Bowers, Sc.D, page 19]

Bowers' book is a litany of such falsity. *"The White House on Monday [As reported by Fox News, 12-19-11] defended Vice President Joe Biden for saying that the Taliban isn't an enemy of the United States despite the years spent fighting that militant Islamic group who gave a home to Al Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden while he plotted the September 11 terror attacks. If the Taliban is not our enemy why are we fighting them and why are innocent Americans and others dying in the process? What happened after this preposterous statement came out? Nothing!* [Taken from [The Naked Truth](#), by James C. Bowers, Sc.D, page 20]

And how can any of us forget the travesty of the Afghanistan withdrawal within just the last eighteen months. You may recall that in the later months of the Trump administration there were plans to withdraw most of the American troops from Afghanistan. It was recorded that the withdrawal would be systematic with civilians and support staff removed first before withdrawing the military personnel and with their departure, the removal of the twenty-four billion dollars-worth of military armaments and material.

President Biden was just months into his

presidency when on July 2, 2021, the U.S. abandoned Bagram (Afghanistan) airfield in the middle of the night. It was already very clear that things were going to turn ugly. The treasured, highly upscale Bagram base provided more ability to stage aircraft and was centrally located to many important destinations. More importantly, by the haphazard abandonment of the base, 13 Marines were needlessly killed and untold numbers of innocent American citizens and friendly non-citizens were captured, and/or murdered. Why does our government conduct our business in such a manner that destroys America and lifts up our enemies?

Bowers' book was written to analyze a specific portion of a book written by W. Cleon Skousen, published in 1958 titled [the Naked Communist](#). The portion was called "45 goals of the Communists as of 1958." Dr. Bowers lists them all and comments upon each of them. Below are just a few samples: *Current Communist Goals (1958) 3. Development of the illusion that total disarmament by the United States would be a demonstration of moral strength. 17. Get control of the schools. Use them as transmission belts for socialism and current Communist propaganda. Soften the curriculum. Get control of teacher's associations. 20. Infiltrate the press. 25. Break down cultural standards of morality by promoting pornography and obscenity in books, magazines, motion pictures, radio and television. 26. Present homosexuality, degeneracy, and promiscuity as 'normal, natural, healthy.' 28. Eliminate prayer or any phase of religious expression in the schools on the ground that it violates the principle of 'separation of church and state.'*

As the years have passed, we have seen our country decline while at the same time maintaining avenues of prosperity - to prosper superficially that is. Many goals described above in Bowers' book were being fleshed out.

That is where we find ourselves. ***But watch thou in all things. Endure afflictions. Do the work of an evangelist. Make full proof of thy ministry.*** ~ 2 Timothy 4:5

Controlling the Climate - or Controlling Us?

By Lisa Van Houten



When it comes to forcing electric vehicles (EVs) on the American people, the Biden administration has gone from the bully pulpit to bully tactics. They first tried offering thousands of dollars in taxpayer-funded subsidies as a bribe to purchase EVs, but since that has failed, Biden is now issuing unconstitutional edicts to coerce Americans to comply with the Left's demands. Biden recently issued a decree through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which will require that by the year 2032, 67% of all new cars sold in the U.S. must be electric. For comparison, last year only 5.8% of new car sales were EVs.

This mandate will require stringent changes to emissions regulations which will in essence make the combustible, gas-powered engine untenable. As Rep. Chip Roy [R] tweeted, "*Biden's radical EPA is trying to regulate your car's engine into OBLIVION.*" Americans recognize that electric vehicles can't compete with gas-powered vehicles, both in performance and price; last year the average price of an EV was \$64,338 while the average cost of a compact gas-powered car was \$26,101. In addition, it takes hours to fully charge an EV to be able to drive a distance of 200 miles.

And that's assuming our already strained and vulnerable electrical grid can provide the additional power needed. Note to Joe Biden: It can't. California has already given us a taste of what's ahead for all of us if this lunacy isn't stopped. Last summer Californians often saw rolling blackouts when electrical demand couldn't keep up with supply and they were told to set their air conditioners to 78 and avoid charging their EVs. Only 4% of the cars on the road in California are EVs. Yet if California can't keep the power on for that small percentage, what will happen when 67% of cars - or even 100% if Gov. Gavin Newsom gets his way - are EVs? It will be impos-

sible to enhance our electric grid and build the estimated 500,000 EV charging stations needed to support tens of millions of electric vehicles on American roads. While our nation sits on vast resources of oil and natural gas, the Biden administration is pushing unreliable solar and wind energy, the components of which are produced in China, not to mention the domination China has on battery production.

Biden's aggressive efforts to force Americans to buy EVs only increases our nation's reliance upon China, empowering a communist regime that has made it abundantly clear they want to dominate the United States. China has a chokehold on the global rare earth mineral market, essential for producing batteries. China produces about 75% of all lithium-ion batteries, the mining of which is far more environmentally harmful than oil drilling or fracking. In addition, a majority of cobalt and graphite processing and refining capacity is located in China. Those three critical minerals, in addition to copper and nickel, are vital for EV batteries. China has also been aggressive in purchasing control of African mines, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where child labor is used in horrific conditions to mine these rare earth minerals.

Yet in the U.S., Biden's environmental regulations have essentially prevented the mining of minerals. For example, in 2022, the U.S. produced no graphite, less than .01% of global cobalt, less than .01% of global nickel, and about 6% of global copper, federal geological data showed. In January, the Biden administration issued a 20-year mining ban in a Minnesota area that holds 95 percent of the nation's nickel reserves and 88 percent of its cobalt.

Under Donald Trump our nation was energy independent; under Biden **we will be at the mercy of an enemy, Communist China, to power our nation.** Knowing how vulnerable our electric grid is to sabotage, an EMP attack, or even ice or wind storms, why is there such a push to force people away from gas powered vehicles and stoves?

It's not really about controlling the climate; it's about controlling us. Protecting the environment is just the excuse they're using

to implement a globalist, neo-Marxist agenda where we are subjects to a centralized, "all-powerful" regime. If the government is allowed to issue authoritarian dictates forcing major industries to produce a product (EVs) and compel us to buy it, if we want the "privilege" to travel, we are well on the way to full blown socialism. It's part of the effort to undermine free market capitalism and implement government control over every aspect of our lives. Leftists want to dictate everything: the size of your home, what appliances you can use, what temperature you can set your heat or air conditioner at, what type of car you can drive - and even how much meat you can eat.

Globalists such as Bill Gates are pushing for synthetic, lab-grown meat substitutes. As I write this, New York Mayor Eric Adams has just declared war on meat, stating: "*All food is not created equal. The vast majority of food that is contributing to our emission crisis lies in meat and dairy products.*" In response, Adams is cutting meat from the menus of New York City schools and public hospitals. The New York Times also chimed in, lecturing that: "*Americans will have to eat differently if they want to rein in climate change.*" No more cheeseburgers for the peasants.

Proverbs 29:2 tells us, "when the wicked rule, the people groan." Or perhaps we could say, when the wicked rule the people don't eat meat or drive gas-powered cars.

Will the American people relinquish their freedom to tyrants or will we remind those in power that they work for us and are accountable to God. Their authority is not their own, but given by God and bound by the Constitution. Alexis de Tocqueville warned about the despotism of the ruling class controlling the people until they become "a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd."

Whatever evil the future brings to our beleaguered nation, God's people can rest in the assurance that the Good Shepherd will be our comfort, and thus we can say:

"I will fear no evil."

**Jesus IS the Answer - BUT
- Are we asking the right question?
(Continued from Page 1)**



Christianity will promote international peace; but if it is accepted in order to promote international peace, it is not Christianity. Our Lord said: 'But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you' (Matt. 6:33). But if you seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness in order that all those things may be added unto you, you will miss both those other things and the Kingdom of God as well.' (Christianity and Liberalism; p. 162)

What are our motives in presenting truth to the culture? Are we loving God and others or are we loving ourselves, hoping for self-preservation and longing to simply conserve what once was? Are we promoting Jesus or is it self-promotion by using Him?

Throughout our nation's history, and today, there are those in authority who have, nationally, "sold us down the river," undermining us politically and spiritually for earthly gain. They will one day stand before the Judge of all the earth, answering for what they have done. Let us take great care that we aren't similarly, yet unwittingly, doing likewise in promoting a political or spiritual point for temporal gain.

Puritan writer Ezekiel Hopkins makes my point: "Our souls are worth more than ten thousand worlds and yet we seek to gain a small part of this one. The god of this world has blinded man's eyes and cast a strange mist before them so that they cannot discern what is very evident: namely the instability and vanity of all earthly enjoyments. Whatever God has made is good, but if it is considered the greatest good, it turns into vanity. It is vain to expect happiness and contentment from the world whose crosses are greater than its comforts. There are two seasons especially when the soul needs relief and comfort; when the conscience is

troubled and in the hour of death. In each of these the world is vain and useless. Should the never-dying soul be neglected? Alas! Most busy themselves to heap up temporal riches. But this is giving the souls husks. Our Saviour brands the rich man a fool when he stuffed his barns with corn at the neglect of this soul. What folly it is to purchase a vain world at the loss of our precious souls! What great losers they are to gain the world, and then at last lose the world with their souls!"

As perilous times increase and as "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived;" as good is called evil and evil is declared good, making sin to abound, "the love of many shall wax cold." Increased numbers will trade their souls in exchange for a perishing world. There will be precious few who will depart from evil in such times and fewer yet who will live godly in Christ Jesus. As I've pointed out, persecution shall be their lot, but, if they are in Jesus, not their end.

One such man who has departed from evil is Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. At the beginning of his embattled career, the Left attempted to kill his confirmation with fraudulent sexual harassment charges. Today, as Gary Bauer reports, "The neo-Marxist left has launched yet another jihad against Justice Clarence Thomas. This time, multiple left-wing journalists with nothing better to do are digging into his friendships, examining his vacation travel and the most absurd details of his personal finances."

Justice Thomas has been made a prey. These smear campaigns are fueling the Left's call for investigation and impeachment, regardless of his love for the USA, our Constitution, and faithful jurisprudence.

One needn't be a Supreme Court justice to be persecuted, simply stand on the truth, living a holy life, and, in these perilous times, animosity as you've never witnessed will search you out. Truly stand for Jesus, not simply to preserve a way of life. **I exhort you to shore up your soul today; it's the only thing of real value you possess.**

Inappropriate Content?

By Steve Huston



Have you heard of the "January 6 Prison Choir (J6PC)"? It's a group of J6 political prisoners incarcerated in a Washington DC jail who, according to *The New American Magazine*, "sing a heart-stirring, solemn rendition of 'The Star-Spangled Banner' over a prison phone line. Their verses are interspersed with President Donald Trump reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, while somber, ambient tones play in the background. The song ends with prisoners chanting, 'USA! USA!'" **Ironically, this number-one hit is entitled "Justice For All."**

In case you're wondering if this is just some political ploy, it isn't. Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) shared images and tweeted, "Every night at 9PM, J6 defendants sing the National Anthem at the DC Jail. And we were there tonight."

Unbelievably, when I went to YouTube for the express purpose of listening to these political prisoners sing OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM, a warning stated that it may contain inappropriate content for some users! I actually had to sign in to confirm my age!

What exactly does YouTube find offensive? **Is it The Star-Spangled Banner, the Pledge of Allegiance, or that someone might ask, "Why are there political prisoners in D.C.?"**

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It's Not Hypocrisy, It's Hierarchy

By Chris Johnson



Back in the midst of the 2014 midterm elections, former Vice-Presidential candidate Sarah Palin, riding a high of popularity and persuasive power, published a map which drew attention to key congressional races. The notable candidates were pointed out on the map with the crosshairs of a scope to illustrate where conservative energy needed to be especially “targeted” in those elections.

Then, a week later, U.S. Representative Gabby Giffords and 18 others were victim to a mass shooting in Tucson, Arizona. In spite of the fact that language of “targeting” and crosshairs graphics were common in political literature at the time, and in spite of the fact that the shooter, Jared Loughner, leaned left if anything, Palin was excoriated by the liberal media for her “violent rhetoric” in her electoral map in the days ahead of the shooting, to the point of the New York Daily News saying she had “Gabbie Gifford’s blood on her hands.”

The latest shooting to make the news sparked political comment as well. *After an LGBTQI+ shooter killed three small children and three adults at a Christian school in Tennessee, leaving behind a manifesto which the public has not been allowed to see, White House Spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre came to the podium to make this statement: “LGBTQI+ kids are resilient. They are fierce. They fight back. They’re not going anywhere. And we have their back. This administration has their back.”* The same media who placed the blame of Gabby Giffords shooting at the feet of Sarah Palin were silent, even when further acts of violence were committed in the following weeks, as we’ll explore in a moment.

It is almost reflexive, at this point, to see the imbalance of the regime reaction on these occasions and respond ourselves with accusations of hypocrisy. But hypocrisy requires

that the people we’re accusing have a standard to violate. And we are assuming in that accusation that their standard is the same as ours, roughly summed up as “liberty and justice for all.” Yet, if anything has become clear in the last few years, it is that the left is not claiming that standard at all.

As summed up succinctly by conservative commentator Auron Macintyre, “it’s not hypocrisy, it’s hierarchy.” The left has shown that they’re not concerned with justice unless it’s for the people who advance the ideas they like, which of course means there’s no justice at all.

As we’ve written in previous newsletters, under this president dozens of pro-life activists have been arrested for the high crimes of blocking sidewalks, while the rash of arson against family centers has resulted in precisely 0 arrests. Think of the “peaceful protests” which burned down neighborhoods in 2020 while our current Vice-President helped raise money for the bail of those involved. Meanwhile, the January 6 patsies still languish in prison, uncharged. Recall under Obama the IRS’ careful attention to conservative organizations, while those on the left went unmolested.

So, we conservatives might as well drop the charge of hypocrisy. They’re not violating their principles, they’re violating ours. It’s not that they don’t see the injustice, they simply believe they are justified in perpetrating it. It’s not hypocrisy, it’s hierarchy. And conservatives don’t deserve justice in their worldview.

That’s what we’re up against.

It was most recently evidenced towards Riley Gaines. In her own words, “*On April 6, I was invited to visit San Francisco State University to do exactly what I’ve been doing the past year: sharing my personal experience competing against a biological male and explaining why it’s critical that we protect the female category in sport. I’m a former 12x All-American swimmer and have been speaking out after tying biological male Lia Thomas at the NCAA championships last year...*” Gaines goes on to explain what happened after her speech: “*In the hallway, we were only met with even more profane, vengeful protesters who were*

ready to attack. Uniformed campus police came to our aid. We were forced into another room in the hallway, where I was barricaded for over three hours. In those hours, the mob screamed, chanted, and yelled...

“From inside the room, I could hear the protesters trying to negotiate money from me for my safe passage home.”

This happened within 2 weeks of the White House’s announcement that “*the administration has [LGBTQI+ activists] back.*” Is it any wonder there are no repercussions?

On the contrary, the Biden administration is reinforcing the position of these violent activists by supporting new rules for federal funding of schools under Title IX. “*The proposed rule would establish that policies violate Title IX when they categorically ban transgender students from participating on sports teams consistent with their gender identity just because of who they are.*”

If the new rule is enacted, schools will have to choose between protecting the privacy and dignity of their students and receiving the massive federal grants that keep their doors open. It’s not hard to guess which way that choice will go.

But, it’s not hypocrisy, it’s hierarchy. Liberty and Justice for the left. A “right to privacy” for their political allies. “Safe spaces” for a select group of people.

Our nation’s vision of equal rights and human dignity were based on Biblical principles, and you can’t have the one without the other.

The purpose of this article isn’t to whine about where we find ourselves in this day and age, but to point out that our focus right now can’t just be on elections or political power. We need to rebuild a culture on the foundation of God’s Word. The church must be distinctive, not only in our witness to the world, but in our love for one another. When the world has found that their “identities” have left them hollow and hopeless, where will they find answers? Church of God, it must be with us.

When Restraint is Removed

By Lisa Van Houten



Mobs of rampaging teens looting stores, burning vehicles, attacking bystanders; city streets filled with junkies, human feces, and homeless encampments; violent offenders released from jail only to repeat their crimes over and over again. This is the picture of Democrat-led cities across the nation - cesspools of crime where lawlessness goes unpunished and undeterred. Often led by George Soros-backed prosecutors, such as Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg, these cities have adopted soft-on-crime policies where criminals are protected, public safety is ignored, police are defunded, and felonies become misdemeanors – unless you're Donald Trump.

As of June 2022, of the 30 American cities with the highest murder rate, 27 were led by Democrat mayors. The top three were Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York. In New York City there were 100 people murdered in the first 99 days of 2023, according to data published by the New York Police Department. During that same period there were 408 reported rapes, 4,102 robberies, and 6,742 felony assaults. On Easter weekend in Chicago, 20 people were shot in rampant gang violence; the previous weekend saw 21 people shot. In Chicago, so far this year car thefts are up 151%, sexual assaults and robberies are each up 23%, and major crime reports are up 104%.

Leftist policies such as defund police, the elimination of bail, and the reduction of most felony crimes to slap-on-the-wrist misdemeanors have demoralized the police force who know that even if they arrest lawbreakers, they'll be released. Cities are experiencing a significant loss of police officers; Chicago had a net loss of 2,641 officers between 2020 and August 2022.

And with no consequences for perpetrators,

smash-and-grab thefts have become so commonplace that businesses can no longer afford to remain open. Major retailers, as well as small businesses, are pulling out of these Democrat-run cities due to millions of dollars in losses from theft. For example, Walmart just recently announced the closure of half of their stores in Chicago, after closing all of their stores in Portland, OR. Shoplifting has essentially been legalized where leftist district attorneys refuse to prosecute thefts under \$1,000.

While these leftist policies have fostered out-of-control crime in American cities, the root causes go even deeper than radical district attorneys and mayors. The sexual revolution led to the breakdown of the family, which has led to the breakdown of society. **There is an epidemic of fatherlessness in our nation.** In 1950, the number of out of wedlock births was 4%; now 51% of all children in America are born out of wedlock. The number of Black American children growing up without a father is even higher – 65%. The results of these statistics are devastating. Data shows that 75% of inmates grew up without a father. Mary Eberstadt, writing at First Things, reports: *“the murder problem is largely a gang problem, and the gang problem is largely a daddy problem. ... ‘A high percentage of gang members come from father-absent homes . . . Through gangs, youth find a sense of community and acceptance. In addition, the gang leader may fill the role of father, often leading members to model their behaviors after that individual. . . . Having a father in the child’s life greatly reduces the likelihood of a child joining a gang.’”*

In addition, 63% of youth suicides come from fatherless homes, those without a dad are 32 times more likely to become homeless, and are 14 times more likely to rape a woman. Promiscuity is also tied to fatherlessness.

Boys growing up without a father haven't seen a healthy, loving relationship between a husband and a wife. They don't have a model to show them how to be an honorable man who fulfills his role to provide for and protect his family. There is no modeling of commitment or male responsibility. And

with the legalization of gay marriage, we're now told fathers are expendable – kids can have two mommies. Since 2018, the government doesn't even release statistics about fatherlessness because our culture says that mothers and fathers are interchangeable.

Yet even deeper is the ultimate cause of the chaos in our cities and in our culture. Theologian Albert Mohler recently stated: *“Many people want to reduce all sin and wrongdoing, even criminal behavior to some kind of socioeconomic explanation. That’s basically all a secular society has.”* But Mohler said the real root cause is our sinful natures. **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”** Jeremiah 17:9.

Mohler went on to state that Americans *“have been unraveling the entire moral fiber, the moral structure of Western civilization ... that’s based upon very clear Biblical principles of morality. Eventually, you end up with people who basically demonstrate what it looks like for a restraint to be gone, for inhibitions to be gone, and for people to follow example after example of horrifying behavior. ... If God’s restraining grace is taken away from a society, the list of horrible things happening just continues.”*

“We as Christians understand that there is no solution for the basic problem of the human heart that comes from within ourselves, or that can be arranged by society. ... Policies and laws? They can suppress, to some extent, the full expression of human evil. But the problem is in the heart and the only solution for the problem in the heart is the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Lasting change can only come from an obedience to God's Word, which gives us our marching orders to preach the good news of Jesus, build godly families and churches, care for the fatherless.

May God use us to “repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.” (Isaiah 61:4)

Prayers for Lisa

By Bill Johnson



I am taking the liberty to give an update on Lisa Van Houten, my friend and colleague of so many years – who has worked by my side since almost the very beginning of my years in full-time ministry first - with American Family Association of Michigan (1987-1999) and now through the years together with American Decency Association (1999-present).

Lisa, as most of you reading this are aware, has been seeking a kidney donor for nearly two years as her kidneys have been in decline. Her need comes through a genetic condition – that took the life of her father when Lisa was only seven. This rare condition already, too, has resulted in the need for two of her siblings to have to have kidney transplants – both successfully in earlier years.

We have known the time was coming when the decline of her kidneys was going to call for her need to begin dialysis. She has been going to Grand Rapids quite regularly month after month for a number of months as they do blood work and monitor the health and function of her kidneys. Without getting too specific on the numbers, it has become clear that as she continues to prayerfully await the gift of a kidney, the timeline trend is indicating that she needs to prepare for dialysis.

In the weeks ahead, Lisa will have to have a port inserted in her abdomen. After three weeks of healing from the surgery, she will then be scheduled to go to Grand Rapids for three consecutive weeks – as dialysis is begun - she will be undergoing daily instruction as to how to do dialysis on her own in home. She will do this for eight hours nightly.

I know that there are those of you who have taken Lisa’s need very seriously and have

kept her in your prayers. There have also been two individuals who sought to donate their kidney and went through tests to determine if they would be a match. We so appreciate their heart’s desire to come along side Lisa in this very special way. After careful examination, they weren’t found to be a match.

I am writing to ask that if there is an individual who continues to bear this burden for Lisa or anyone just now becoming acquainted with this need, please go to the Lord and seek His face in regard to the need of this very special friend of many and servant of the Lord.

For more information, please call me at 231-924-4050 or email me at bjohnson@americandecency.org In the meantime, please join with me in praying for Lisa.

National Day of Prayer Thursday, May 4, 2023



We have been involved with the National Day of Prayer from 1987-2023. One learns a lot from experiencing faithfully the times and trends of a culture, a society, a nation. More importantly, one watches the hand of God with wonder at His faithfulness and His dealings with the United States. I don’t know the heart and mind of God, but I observe that God has not looked the other way regarding the sin of our nation.

I recall our gatherings here in Fremont at City Hall for what AFA coined the concept of the National Day of Prayer, “Meet at City Hall”. It was AFA founder and former President Don Wildmon’s idea to take our events to community city halls nationwide and pray in front of our city halls – recognizing that not only our national government agencies, but our local governments needed the Lord and His wisdom and

thereby our prayers. All across this state and nation there were many who took up that charge – organizing National Day of Prayer events all across this country.

It was a simpler day. There was largely a sense of unity and trust.

As the years went by I saw (as many did) growing concerns emerging in America. And, yet, there remained that sense of prosperity, military superiority, civility. However, all was not well. Our schools, our churches, homes, corporations, media, entertainment, hospitals were being degraded.

I wondered when the first Thursday of May (National Day of Prayer) came yet again and again how it could be that God would allow our country to still be so prosperous and secure. On and on the years went by until perhaps the most recent years. Has God taken His hand of protection off from America? Massive societal sin (as well as personal sin) has multiplied consequences. God is still God and He is still on the throne!

National Day of Prayer event
Theme: “God is Still on the Throne”
Location: American Decency
203 E. Main Street, Fremont, MI
Date: Thursday, May 4, 2023
Time: Noon – 1:00 PM EST

Prayer times will include:

- * Invited virtual guests Rep. Joseph Fox and MD Perkins, producer of “In His Image.”
- * Prayers from God’s people as God leads, including: prayers for the persecuted Christians around the world; praying against the culture of death and for the culture of life; prayer against the satanic attack against Michigan, including the demonic attack in Big Rapids; for anointing upon our churches; and a return to sanity for our military.

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: Be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, When his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. ~ Psalm 2:10-12

A New Perspective on An Old Truth

By Chris Johnson



We got a little preview of summer a few weeks ago here in West Michigan. Teased by a few days over 80 degrees, the flowers started to grow, the trees began to bud, and the brown lawns and hay fields became so, so green - especially by the light of a brilliant sunset.

Surrounded as we are by fields, with a patch of woods to the west out our kitchen window, our neighborhood is privy to the kind of sunsets people drive for – views fit for a calendar or a postcard. It's not unusual for my wife or I to call the household to that window and look at the sunset that God made for us to enjoy – an audience to His Glory and creative power.

One of the most amazing things about sunsets is that they happen whether anyone sees them or not. Visit Lake Michigan or the Gulf of Mexico, or the West Coast, and at dusk a crowd will gather to see the natural glory of it. Oftentimes, however, the clouds sit on the horizon, a curtain between the heavenly beauty and the earthly audience, and the crowds go home disappointed. But the beauty is still happening behind the veil. Sometimes a gleam breaks through to remind us what we're missing.

This isn't something we often think about, but who is that for?

Psalm 19 tells us, "*The Heavens declare the glory of God,*" but sometimes God is the only one observing that declaration. This shouldn't surprise us. "*For from Him, and through and to Him are all things,*" Romans 11:36 reminds us. In other words, everything that exists came from God, it continues to exist by way of His effort, and it continues to exist for His purpose and pleasure.

And we know, it brings Him pleasure, because when He was done creating all of it, Genesis tells us He said, "very good."

That's a short little phrase that's used to summarize a lot of things, but how often do we think about the particulars that were included in that judgment?

One of the simple pleasures in my life is when my little flock of free-range chickens and ducks makes its way around the house every morning. The longer you watch them, the more fascinating they become. The chickens can't see their feet, so they scratch in the dirt for seeds and grubs, take a few steps back to see what they uncovered, peck, and repeat. God calls this "very good." My ducks throw their weight from side to side while they walk, with their chests puffed out way beyond their webbed feet, their wings tucked up like an old Victorian gentleman carrying his walking stick, and the little dark markings that curl up on the side of their bills, looking for all the world like a smile. They look so self-important marching around the yard, always on the hunt for better snacks. My rooster, who has never read a children's book, still somehow knows it's his duty to march around the house at 5AM, jump up on the porch, look through our window, and crow at the top of his lungs to let us know that the sun will be up sometime in the next few hours. This is not good, in my opinion, but God disagrees, so I guess we'll give it to Him.

My birds exist for Him and through Him and to Him, as do the grubs they eat, as do the roots and bits of leaves the grubs eat, and so on. Every little critter fighting its way through towering forests of our yards that we squash without a moment's remorse is a manifestation of God's imagination, made by His carefully chosen Word to be right there, right then.

All of this came to mind when I came across a devotional by the seventeenth century Puritan, Ezekiel Hopkins. My introduction to Mr. Hopkins was unfortunate in that it happened by way of a line of thought I took issue with, which from what I understand of his legacy must be rare. I agreed even with the ultimate point he was trying to make, but the way he took to get there I found did a disservice to the creative genius and majesty of God. Here's what Mr Hopkins had to say: "*What is gold and silver, but diversified earth, and hard and shining clay? The*

richest perfumes are but the clammy sweat of trees. The softest silks are but the excrement of a vile worm. The most expensive wines are but puddle-water strained through a vine. Our choicest delicacies are but dirt, cooked and served up to us. Fancy and custom have conspired together to cheat us. The truth is, the world is much better in show than in substance."

All of this, Ezekiel Hopkins used towards his purpose of reminding us to take care against allowing ourselves to fall into idolatry of these things, and that is a reminder which we all need to hear. Constantly.

So much so that I share his purpose in my writing this piece of criticism: Is it not more glorious to turn his points on their head? Or, I would argue, to place them back on their feet.

It is not the humility of the gold and silver and perfume and silk and wine and delicacies that magnify God's name, but the fact that He makes such glorious things from such humble beginnings. How can we be tempted to worship the glorious gifts of this world when we walk humbly with the Maker and Giver of those gifts? In fact, those wondrous works are the least of His transformations, for He can even take sinful men and make them saints.

God is glorified when we receive His gifts with humility and wonder, in the knowledge that we deserve none of it, but in recognition that none of His gifts are measly. "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change,*" James 1:17 tells us. And He is not stingy with His gifts.

This, too, is a reminder we all need in times like these. Let us live thankful lives unto the Lord.

