

On the Death of Thomas Gordon, Abortionist

By Becky De Nooy - American Decency Board Member



I was nearly ready for my daughter's wedding when I heard that Grand Rapids abortionist Thomas Gordon had passed away. Though we'd never exchanged even a single word, he was just one day older than my dad, and I'd seen him enough times to feel an uneasy connection with him. My gasp of shock and dismay at the news jarred the bridesmaids, who stopped their preparations to stare at me in alarm.

As an ardent advocate for life, my reaction baffled my husband, but for six years I had prayed outside Mr. Gordon's Fulton Street clinic. I saw him nearly every time I was there, and I sensed at some level that I knew him. I prayed for him creatively: for car trouble, for arthritic hands, for his deadly skills to falter, for his long-overdue retirement. Most often, though, I just prayed he would repent.

But around 8 a.m. he'd drive up, always assessing the assembled sidewalk counselors, street preachers, and prayer warriors as he waited to turn in his BMW. He'd re-read my sign, "Praying for you," and as he glanced at it, I sometimes waved discreetly. Usually he waved back, and seeing those murderous hands made me shiver. But he needed to know my sign was for him, too—especially for him—so for several months I waved anyway.

Nearly every time the abortionist turned into the clinic driveway, a preacher exhorted

him with Scripture, its message invariably rebuffed with an unkind gesture. As clients began arriving, the preacher would proclaim the Word through a loudspeaker pointed at the clinic, begging Mr. Gordon, his staff, and the mothers—O, they were mothers!—to flee to the arms of Jesus.

The clinic's parking lot lay behind it, and a pro-life group owned an adjacent house overlooking the lot. More sidewalk counselors stationed there pleaded, offering hope and help to expectant couples. And as Mr. Gordon hurried into his clinic, the counselors would plead with him also. The gospel call went out relentlessly on Fulton Street, giving Thomas Gordon every chance to respond.

By all appearances, he never did. Thursday, August 24, he arrived late to the clinic, middle finger jabbed angrily toward the street preacher a final time. He killed the children scheduled to die, then went home, unaware his name, too, was on the agenda. That evening, as tornadoes and windstorms ripped through the area, trees toppled across roads at both entrances to his gated community. After the call to 911, those downed trees prevented the passage of the ambulance for several hours, while violent winds grounded a medical flight. Thus passed from this life Thomas J. Gordon, abortionist, as helpless as the thousands of unborn children who had perished at his hands. What a fearsome appearance he must have

made before God that night, drenched in the blood of unborn children instead of the blood of Jesus!

After long years of praying for Mr. Gordon to cease his grisly work, my intercessions were finally answered, though not as I'd hoped. At some level, I knew him, and I grieved that one with so many opportunities to repent ignored them to the end, and chose obstinately to forge his own way in life and death. Thomas Gordon may have heard more gospel presentations and explicit calls to repentance than almost any other man in Grand Rapids. But those words of life hit a stone-cold mark, so far as anyone knows.

Do I betray pro-life convictions by lamenting, in part, Mr. Gordon's passing? Greatly I rejoice at the end of abortion on Fulton Street, but I grieve that it ended in his death, not his salvation. Surely the unspeakable tragedy of abortion meets more than its equal in the eternal tragedy of lostness!

I am so conflicted. God knows my pro-life heart needs Solomonic wisdom to weigh such grave matters aright.



"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9, NIV).

Personal Note from the President



The year was 1981 and I was in my 12th year of teaching in the public schools. Oh, what a class I had that year! I had blossomed into a pretty good teacher of elementary-aged children by that time. At least, I think that was the case. All year long we had bonded together – students to teacher and teacher to students - with reading challenges and contests, an overnighter in the gym for those accomplishing goals, acting out Aesop Fables with sweet, positive life messages, singing old folk songs. The class would sing to my piano playing of an old, beaten up, out-of-tune piano that I had picked up in the neighborhood for \$100.00. That was also the year President Ronald Reagan was shot and nearly killed in Washington, DC. All of this added to the need for unity, family and love of country. I taught the class the Ken Medema song, “*I See America through the eyes of love. I long for the people to be free. For if you see, put your hand to the job for there is work to be done as freedom’s song is sung—from sea to shining sea...*”

Anyway, we had bonded, that class and I, throughout the year and in the spring of 1981 we invited grandparents to come to our classroom to be entertained by our songs, Aesop’s Fables and just good, old-fashioned fun.

The grandparents loved it, and so did the kids. It was a wonderful time there in my classroom. I received such glowing affirmations from grandparents, parents and my class. As we finished the year, I couldn’t wait to start the next school year.

When the summer passed and a new school year was finally ushered in, I had a hard lesson to learn that year: don’t expect the new class to come in and have the unity, the amazing spirit of teachability and friendship

when they don’t know you and you, as a teacher, don’t know them. You have to build trust. Build relationship. Work together and play together for quite awhile to have an atmosphere like we’d had the year before - not only with the students, but with the parents, also.

So here is where I learned my life lesson. With all kinds of enthusiasm for the new class and the new beginnings, I wrote a letter to the parents which I’ll quote a large part of here. I have kept this mimeographed letter (you younger ones under 50 or so will have to look up mimeographed, if you aren’t familiar with the term) so that I would never forget. For you oldsters, remember those days before even fax machines and electric typewriters?

September 14, 1981. *Dear Parents, Increasingly I believe that there is a trend in our society to emphasize academics at the expense of a concentration on values, good and bad, etc. There is a tendency to shy away from dealing with behavior. But there is a consequence for ignoring such basics. I believe that our society is less stable because of our hesitancy to be upfront concerning the purpose of life – why are we here, who put us here, etc. Then as we ignore such discussion at school, the academics, the athletics become the focal point. As we ignore such discussion at school, a lack of direction results. For kids to spend the amount of time that they do at school, it is vital that poor attitudes and improper behavior be confronted. But, in addition, kids should hear their teachers speak encouragingly of rightness, goodness, honesty and truth. Occasionally, I would like to send notes home to share of the thing that we are dealing with. For instance, presently I have been spending time talking about the negative impact of TV viewing on viewers, young and old. I am convinced that too many families are letting the “tube” control them rather than families controlling it. Television is dominated by too much violence, profanity and sexual portrayals... It may be difficult to measure in terms of numbers and figures but behavior, values and attitudes are effected nonetheless. Much of TV humor is crass. It does not encourage family life and love and*

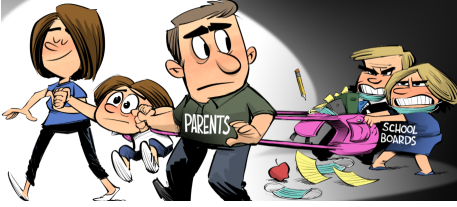
goodness and truth. But even as I write this, I know that there will be parents and students who will take offense. I can only say that I would not be true to myself or to those who I have responsibility to not deal with the issue for too many are polluting their minds and souls with thoughts, pictures and words that are not wholesome; young and old... So, yes, as a teacher I will attack the improper usage of TV. I do feel that it is my business because I know that it also affects learning. Some people wonder why their child or children are not readers. My strong belief is that parents that read have a way of bringing up children that enjoy reading. Those who enjoy hours of TV a week inspire their children to also be regular viewers... Please be honest with yourselves. Is it good for your 10-year-olds to be spending time with this kind of content? Your children are precious but that can change if we don’t challenge and direct them in decent directions. Sincerely, Bill Johnson

I was 34 years old when I wrote that and sent it home with the students. When I came into school the next day, I was told that two parents had pulled their kids from my classroom. That had never happened before and never did again. It set a stage for the entire school year. You might say – “My, Bill. You were really naïve!” I foolishly thought that I could just pick up where I left off. Thankfully, in the new embattled classroom year, providentially, Lisa VanHouten, who would have been a senior in high school, was interning in my classroom for an hour or two a day and she was one of the few positives from that year so long. That was the first of many lessons Lisa and I would learn together as we work together in this ministry now.

I do this bit of reminiscing as a way of recalling how God leads us along through a changing world, a shifting moral landscape. In many ways, the conviction I had to write that letter to parents then is the same one that carries this ministry today. God was certainly with me then, and we see His hand every day in our work today, too.

To the Victor Goes the Children

By Lisa Van Houten



To whom do children belong? Your worldview will determine how you answer that question. Christians understand that children are given to parents by God. Scripture makes clear that parents have authority over their children and the responsibility of directing and raising them in the nurture of the Lord. But for those who reject God and His Word, the State is the highest authority. In a Godless worldview, parents may produce the children, but the State assumes ownership of them.

Separating children from their parents is a central component of Marxism. During the Bolshevik Revolution, it was understood that to change society, the bedrock foundations of the Church and family had to be undermined. Lenin reportedly stated: *“Give me five years to teach the children and the seed sown shall not be uprooted.”*

Now the Neo-Marxist revolution, which has been quietly infiltrating our cultural and government institutions for decades, has gained widespread influence. It’s also increasingly clear that children are a primary target for today’s radical leftists. The next generation is needed for their revolution to be complete and so the institution of the family must be eroded. Strong, stable families do not typically produce radicals. Therefore, the prevailing philosophy seeks to subvert parental authority. As Sarah Jones of New York Magazine writes: *“The parental rights movement actively threatens the safety and wellbeing of children and by extension, democracy itself.”* Parental rights groups are being labeled as “fascists,” while the indoctrination of children in LGBT ideology is used to separate children from the values of their parents, specifically Christian values.

The famous atheist, Dr. Richard Dawkins, writing in his book *The God Delusion*, makes clear the goal of the Left: *“How*

much do we regard children as being the property of their parents? ... should they be free to impose their beliefs on their children? Is there something to be said for society stepping in?” Dawkins goes on to claim that bringing up children to believe in God – which he describes as a “manifest falsehood” – is a form of child abuse.

Let me give you a few examples of how that ideology to undermine parental rights is successfully being implemented. In Montgomery County, Maryland, a group of Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish parents sought an injunction against the public school policy that denied parents the right to opt-out their children from required LGBT reading. While these parents do not share the same faith, they do share the same belief that they have a sacred duty and constitutional right to instill in their children the sexual ethics of their faith – of which the state has no right to interfere. Not only is this school policy undermining the free exercise of religion protected by the first amendment, it also goes against the fundamental right of parents to direct the upbringing of their children, which the U.S. Supreme Court has long-upheld. In addition, in 1972 the Supreme Court ruled that it is parents' responsibility to inculcate “moral standards, religious beliefs, and elements of good citizenship.”

Yet, a Biden-appointed federal U.S. District Court judge ruled against these parents, claiming they do not have a right to opt-out their children from this mandatory LGBT indoctrination. Montgomery County Board of Education is forcing pre-K and elementary children to read controversial books that promote transgender ideology and encourage gender transitioning. As just one example, pre-K students will be read a gay pride storybook and then forced to search for pictures that coincide with an alphabet word list, including “underwear,” leather” and [drag] “queen.”

In California, a bill was recently passed that could strip parents of custody of their children for failing to affirm a child’s chosen gender identity. Under this legislation, parents who refuse to pretend that their child is a different gender could be found guilty of abuse or neglect for fail-

ing to provide for the “health, safety, and welfare” of their child - losing custody to another parent **or the state**. Would you ever have imagined that parents who refuse to use their child’s preferred pronoun or prevent their child from taking harmful, sterilizing hormones could be declared unfit?

In addition, this legislation undermines the religious values parents seek to instill in their children. Which parents are most likely to refuse to bend the knee to this state-mandated ideology? Christians – those who know that it is God who ordains each individual’s gender.

It’s no wonder that California state senator Scott Wilk [R] warned parents: *“If you love your children, you need to flee California.”* Yet what happens in California doesn’t stay in in California. Numerous parents, in California as well as in other states, have already lost custody of their children for refusing to go along with a child’s delusion. One California mother, recently reported: *“It happened to me when I refused to call my daughter by a male name and use male pronouns. CPS [Child Protective Services] showed up at my doorstep. The police followed.”* In April, Washington state approved a bill that offers “shelter” to minors who seek abortions or transgender procedures against their parent’s wishes. The state is basically offering minors emancipation from their parents. As Matt Margolis writes at PJ Media: *“These efforts by radical left-wing states constitute a direct assault on parental rights that fractures families and indoctrinates children into believing the state has their best interests at heart — not their own parents.”*

Will we allow the hearts and minds of this generation to be captured by a Godless ideology? In 2 Timothy, Paul encourages Timothy to *“continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”* To raise a generation of Timothys, we need parents and grandparents like Lois and Eunice. (2 Timothy 1:5)

Michigan's Attack on Election Integrity



Hidden agendas...new burdensome state mandates...what's an already overtaxed local township clerk to do? With much of the election system on the brink of breaking to the Left's control, it's disheartening to those who stand for **election integrity**. Prop 22-2 passed, allowing 9-day early voting in MI which gives opportunities for further election manipulations. For example:

1. Internet connection to voting results:

In the past, election units weren't allowed to be connected to the internet. Now, townships are required to be connected to the internet every day during the 9-day early vote. Connection to the internet only allows interception of transmitted data, and opens the door extra early for manipulation of the election counts provided.

2. Tabulator updates/maintenance (u/m):

Tabulators are required to be maintained by a certain company on a regular basis. This company used to visit each local township and complete their maintenance with the local clerk present the entire time. This year the local townships are required to remove the section of the tabulator that needs to be u/m, and deliver it to the county clerk office where the company will come in and do their u/m of each township's tabulator section. Why aren't the local clerks allowed/required to stay with their tabulator section during this process? What is the reason for this change?

How do we know what's included in this upgrade and what might be added/done in the process, especially when the clerk isn't present or knowledgeable about the maintenance process? Both of these changes deepen the question of voter manipulation and election integrity. Township clerks are responsible for overseeing local elections, the equipment, and are accountable to their constituents for voter integrity. Shouldn't they be allowed to hold others in the elec-

tion arena accountable as well?

3. State grant funding for county clerks for 9-day early voting, but not for local township clerks:

The state of MI is providing grant money to county clerk offices who host joint 9-day early voting for the local townships through a joint agreement with the townships. This is to encourage the county clerk to seduce the local township clerks to submit to the hierarchy of authority, when it is not proper to do so. This is another way of manipulating the system and it strong-arms the local townships so the state can take full control from the locals.

The state is not allowing any state grant money to go to townships who stand on their own for 9-day early voting, or even if they have joint agreements with townships who are contiguous to them. Those local units are forced to bear the extra financial burden themselves, which most cannot do. The state forces the hand of the local townships by withholding equal funds to ALL units, and only funding the county for the 9-day early voting process. This is just another drop-down in the notch to those who try to stand for truth and justice of election integrity.

4. Joint Agreement for 9-day early voting timeline:

The short timeline given by both the state and the county clerk office to review, consider, and vote on the early voting agreement also appears to be another manipulating factor in the election process. Why? Because these are in-depth, technical, binding agreements with governmental units and less than 30 days is not sufficient to receive, review, investigate, and vote on them. It intimidates and puts fear into the hearts of the local township clerks. The township clerk's responsibilities are tremendous already, and the weight of this decision being forced in so short a time period only shows the lack of concern for accuracy, accountability, integrity, and thoroughness for the whole election process.

5. Township clerks resigning: With the increased and unrealistic requirements the state is putting on township clerks, we are seeing clerks drop like flies all over the

state, including rural areas. Township clerks are being required to do more than is reasonably possible for one person to do, especially in rural areas where the township clerk position has only been a part-time position that is commonly filled by someone who works a full-time job as well. Local townships don't have the funds to operate with full-time staff and the means of doing so is not likely available, along with the continual election training needed for the ever-changing rules and regulations the state keeps implementing. The state is making it impossible to obtain and maintain reliable township clerks. Isn't this likely just another step in their plan to take control from the townships?

While we may feel our rural elections are currently not being violated or interfered with, how long will that last? Will the current officials and electors stand with due diligence in support of that? Or will it be like a snowball effect because of the added pressures from the state, causing township officials to drop and fall away from their stance for election integrity? How long before our local election results are subject to invasion and manipulation? **This opens the door (like the Covid vaccine) to test the waters of who will easily submit and who won't, and how to manipulate the system to get the others to fall into line. If we submit to this what are we saying to the people in our township and what will we succumb to next? While we pray God would protect our area from this occurring, we also know that we need to have those who stand with vigilance and integrity.** Is there concern for election integrity? Yes, there is. Should there be concern for election integrity? Indeed, there must be.

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When Politics Becomes an Idol

By Lisa Van Houten



"Right is right even if everyone is against it. Wrong is wrong even if everyone is for it." The truth of this quote would most likely be affirmed by most every Christian today. Yet saying we believe something and applying it to our lives are two different things. We can be masters at justification, not only when it comes to the sin in our own lives, but also in our favorite political candidates. We excuse and rationalize sin as long as they "vote the right way."

Let me give you a couple of examples from both sides of the aisle. Recently, it was revealed that a Democrat candidate from Virginia, Susanna Gibson, used an internet platform to stream sex acts with her husband. The 40-year-old mother of two took payment from online viewers for performing requested sex acts. Such perversity is not only sickeningly immoral, but may prove to be illegal under Virginia law. Yet her fellow Democrats have rallied behind her, showing outrage not at Gibson's behavior, but toward those who criticized her.

Then it was the Republican's turn. Conservative firebrand Representative Lauren Boebert [R] of Colorado, a self-proclaimed Christian, was escorted out of a musical theater performance after she and her date were observed vaping and "causing a disturbance." Boebert gave the middle finger as she was escorted out. Yet, video surveillance revealed she was engaged in much more vile behavior - Boebert and her date were sexually groping each other during the performance. Boebert is currently married - her pending divorce is not yet final. The man she was with (not her husband) is a Democrat owner of a "gay-affirming" bar that has hosted at least one drag show. Boebert has portrayed herself as a champion for Christian values, stating: *"take your children to church, not drag bars."*

Yet many Republicans have been quick to rationalize her behavior and engage in the game of "what-aboutism." They justify her behavior because it wasn't as bad as someone else's. But that's not the standard God calls us to use; He doesn't grade on a curve. **It's not just about being better than the worst, it's about living according to His Word.** We like to apply the verse, "Woe to those who call evil good" to those with a D behind their name, but we're not so quick to apply it those within our ranks.

We are living in an age of political idolatry. We look to politics to solve our nation's problems. We place our hope in specific candidates to turn things around. Both those on the left and on the right have made politics a religion - wrongfully putting our hope in rulers instead of the One who rules and overrules, who removes and sets up kings (Dan. 2:21). When we make politicians our idols, God says in Judges 10:14: *"Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!"*

This is where I may be stepping on some toes. There is no greater evidence of political idolatry among conservatives than the blind loyalty many place in Donald Trump. He has become a cult-like personality and many of his supporters act as if the only hope for America is returning Trump to the White House. Don't get me wrong, I am very thankful for all that Donald Trump accomplished as president and his bold stance on key conservative issues. Most importantly, he kept his promises to the pro-life community and his nominations to the Supreme Court led to the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Yet we need to be discerning, and place our hope in God, not man.

For years conservatives have been frustrated with wishy washy Republicans who refused to stand for conservative values. Donald Trump criticized them in 2016; now he is moving to the middle, betraying the voters who elected him. Trump seems to be signaling that the conservative views he espoused in the last election were not his own newfound convictions, but rather expediencies to garner the conservative vote. In a recent interview with Megan Kelly, Donald Trump could not answer the question,

"Can a man become a woman?" It should be a pretty simple answer, but Trump deflected. Then in a Meet the Press interview, Trump gave an awful answer in regards to abortion. When asked if he would sign a ban on abortions after 15 weeks gestation, he wouldn't commit to doing so. He went on to say *"I would sit down with both sides and negotiate something and we'll end up with peace on that issue for the first time in 52 years."* Then finally, in an ultimate betrayal to the pro-life community, Donald Trump criticized heartbeat bills in which abortion is outlawed once a baby's heartbeat can be detected - typically at six weeks. More than a dozen states have passed such bills. Trump said in reference to DeSantis signing Florida's heartbeat law: **"I think what he did is a terrible thing and a terrible mistake."** A similar law restricting abortion in Mississippi is what led to the overturning of Roe v. Wade, which was President Trump's crowning achievement as president. Now he is calling such restrictions on abortion "a terrible thing."

As Chris Queen writes at PJ Media: ***"There's no calculus for a number of babies that are worth sacrificing to 'make everybody happy' ... And for all the talk of electing Trump to save the republic, what's the point if he is going to behave more like a Democrat on such a key issue? I have to agree with my friend and colleague Stephen Kruiser when he said...: 'If I have to be on board with killing babies to save the Republic then the Republic deserves to die.' Never, ever cede ground on life."***

The purpose of government is to uphold righteousness and justice. When our leaders fail to do so, they should be called out on it - no matter which letter is behind their name. Yet the Church has too often remained silent; we refuse to call sin, sin. Our true need is repentance and revival, not merely a Republican in the White House. Only God can change the heart of an individual or a nation. As commentator Steve Deace stated: ***"Will we water down the Word of God for political expediency and power or will we stay faithful to it and call sinners to repentance?"***

Integrity and Repentance

By Steve Huston



Many documentary films have been made and much ink has been spilt regarding the, what many believe to be, stolen election in 2020. Every time something new is shown, we walk away thinking, surely people will come to their senses and realize what's taken place. With each new film or documented proof, our hearts sink as our minds attempt to fathom why there is no apparent forthcoming justice and why nothing is being done. Many throw up their hands with exasperation asking, "What can we do?"

With the Left attempting to secure their future positions by making the tools of election theft the standard operating procedures of future elections, we must not just focus on what has taken place in the past, but take steps to undo what they would like to do in the future. Mike Lindell, Patrick Colbeck, and a host of others have tirelessly put in hour upon hours to come up with an action plan in order to make sure our elections are fair and secure. Below, we'd like to give you their action plan as well as websites one can visit to keep informed, take action, and encourage others to do likewise.

First, let's look at the things we desire in an election that would help to put a halt to the Left's agenda, keeping things, fair, honest, and transparent. FrankSpeech.com has posted a clip recorded during Mike Lindell's *Election Summit* titled **Call To Action To Secure Our Election Platforms Immediately** (<https://frankspeech.com/Video/call-to-action-to-secure-our-election-platforms-immediately>). Near the beginning of this clip Mike explains that it's vital that **our elections use paper ballots that are hand-counted at the precinct level and each election must require both the voter's signature and valid ID**. These are the things we must demand. There were some who told Mike that he'd never get rid of the electronic voting machines, yet he reports that

over 200 counties have gone to paper ballots. It's likely that many of us would agree that these things are necessary, but how do we obtain them? Here are the four steps that he and Patrick Colbeck discuss in obtaining this vital goal.

1. On your smart phone, download the Frank Speech app.
2. On your smart phone, download the Frank Social app.

These first two steps are so one can keep informed of what's happening on the election front and receive further actions that might be important to the saving of our republic. Without fair and transparent elections, we WILL lose these United States of America.

3. This a **very important action step**: Go to <https://electioncrimebureau.com/>
 - a. Click on the "Call to Action" tab then choose your state
 - b. Click "**Sign Your County Petition for the State of _____**" tab; choose the county in which you reside.
 - c. The petition reads (for Newaygo County): "*Be it resolved: The citizens of Newaygo County request that Newaygo County does not renew its contract with the county's electronic voting system vendor, and instead investigates other options for carrying out our county elections including hand counts of ballots.*" This is followed by seven reasons. At the bottom, sign your first and last names, providing your email address.

4. Another important step is found on the same page. Click the **Contact Your County Election Official for the State of _____** tab, choose your county, and then send the prepared (or write your own) email to your county election official. The prepared email states simply: "*I do not want electronic voting machines in my elections. I want paper ballots hand counted and precinct level signature required verification. I want safe, secure and transparent elections I can depend on.*"

All the above are important actions that we should do and then share with others; without fair elections our republic is doomed. **In spite of this truth**, there are other actions which are immensely more important to the

saving and restoration of our nation, things we must do and share with others. If we neglect so great a responsibility, it won't matter if our nation is tipped right-side up or not, **it would be a short-lived reprieve before sinking into oblivion**.

Any reader who believes the Bible to be true will understand my imploring of them to consider their ways, urge their family to salvation and holy living, and to share the gospel message of Jesus Christ with others. **These grassroots efforts will better serve our Lord, our eternity, and our nation**. Scripture is replete with warnings, admonitions, and exhortations to this effect. Perhaps the best-known example is II Chronicles 7:14. "***If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.***" Too often Christians appear to be more concerned with the healing of one's land than the forgiveness of sin. Let me point the reader to one more verse meant to encourage us with urgency and meant to offer hope: Jeremiah 18:7-8, "*At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; **If that nation**, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, **I will** repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*" The Lord then calls Jeremiah to urge the inhabitants of that land to "*return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.*"

It's such recognition that neither makes an idol of our freedom and liberty nor puts our hope in our own works. It recognizes God's sovereignty and our responsibility.

May we be faithful in giving that call to our families and fellow Americans. Let us pray that their answer will be different from Jeremiah's people who said, "*There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.*" **Even if America must perish, let us, with urgency, pray for and call our families to repentance and salvation.**

Once Upon a Time in the Midwest

By Chris Johnson



The classic Western film, “Once Upon a Time in the West,” begins with the brutal murder of a simple homesteader and his family. As the story unfolds, we realize that the man and his murderer were the only ones who realized that there was a fortune to be made on the seemingly worthless desert homestead as a railroad was being built and coming straight through the property. He’d planned to build a waystation in that wilderness – a guaranteed windfall, if he’d survived to see it through.

The physically weak railroad baron in the film, Mr. Morton, who relies on his hired gun to clear the route for his planned railway came to mind as I read this comment from BlackRock CEO, Larry Fink, to the CEOs of companies his firm – the largest – has invested in: *“I believe the decarbonizing of the global economy is going to create the greatest investment opportunity of our lifetime. It will also leave behind the companies that don’t adapt, regardless of what industry they are in. And just as some companies risk being left behind, so do cities and countries that don’t plan for the future.”*

Film critics surmised that the director, the legendary Sergio Leone, was really telling a story about the death of the Old West, that those who were not preparing for the future were doomed to be left behind while those who understood the changes battled it out in cutthroat fashion.

Mr. Fink’s own plans for the future mirror the film’s antagonist’s: not in stealing land to build railroads to prepare for Westward expansion, but in using eminent domain laws to force landowners to sell so that he can build pipelines across the Midwest to prepare for a coming “net zero transition.”

To be fair, BlackRock isn’t the only investment firm to come up with this scheme, they share the role as they partner with

Summit Carbon Solutions and a Canadian company, Wolf.

How do some of the world’s foremost businessmen plan to make money by constructing a massive pipeline across multiple states only to permanently store their product underground? CO₂ can, with relative ease, be converted to methanol and especially in its essentially pure form as when it’s captured from the ethanol production process. Methanol is used in a myriad of helpful chemicals and cleaning solutions, as well as being a means of storing energy, a gasoline and diesel additive and a clean burning fuel source in and of itself.

But the market’s demand for CO₂ doesn’t touch the amount that ethanol plants produce, so why are these preeminent money-makers spending billions of dollars to build 3,300 miles of pipelines for the purpose of moving this unwanted resource across multiple states?

Because they are taking advantage of Biden’s Build Back Better plan.

Amended to the BBB plot was the “Inflation Reduction Act,” which includes a tax credit which, *“incentivizes the use of carbon capture and storage – a climate solution that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and International Energy Agency (IEA) have found is likely to play a vital role in efforts to address climate change,”* according to the Clean Air Task Force.

BlackRock, Summit, and Wolf have all submitted proposals to capitalize on this tax credit, by building pipelines which would transport pressurized CO₂ from Iowa’s ethanol plants to facilities in southern Illinois and North Dakota where some of it would be sold, and some of it would be permanently stored underground.

CO₂ is a byproduct of burning carbon, which means that finding efficient uses for it would only give life to carbon-burning industries, which is to say the oil industry and industrial farming. Ironically, environmental extremists are even against storing the CO₂ in what they would consider to be a beneficial way, because that would make

these industries more efficient and take away from the “green” campaign to smear the industries as environmentally harmful.

Nevertheless, the Biden administration, with its arbitrary goal to be “carbon neutral” – by 2050, came up with this incentive: For each ton of permanently stored CO₂, these companies will receive \$85 through the 45Q credit. That doesn’t sound like much, but Steve King reports that, *“The three projects published on their websites their CO₂ sequestration projections. Their projections total 39.6 million tons x \$85/Ton = \$ 3.366 billion dollars a year. The 45Z credit (alongside the 45Q credit) which is the “clean fuel production credit” is directed toward each qualifying plant and pays up to \$ 1.00 per gallon of ethanol produced. Actual ethanol production will be less but, projected ethanol production is calculated by plant capacity, using a ratio of 360 gal/MtTn CO₂. Ethanol plant capacity is 14.256 billion gallons = dollars/year at \$ 1.00 per gallon with Summit negotiators reportedly claiming 60% of the 45Z credit. The projected annual outlay from the federal government just to the two moguls is \$ 8.127 billion with Wolf picking up the remaining \$ 3.793 billion. The total share for all the ethanol plants, contracting with the three CO₂ pipeline companies, is projected to be \$ 5.702 billion. The total annual projected reckoning for the American Taxpayer for these three projects is \$17.622 billion per year.”*

Returning for a moment to our movie, if Mr. Fink is Mr. Morton, former congressman Steve King is the “man with a harmonica.” Or at least, the carbon capture opponents hope so. Mr. King is heading up a coalition consisting of those from both the left and the right, who are opposed to the scheme for many reasons. Some resist the proposed use of eminent domain laws to force landowners – sometimes multigenerational – to sell the property the pipeline would go through. Some are opposed to the idea of a highly pressurized pipeline running across the country. One such pipeline burst in a tiny village in Mississippi in 2020, causing 45 people to be hospitalized. As mentioned above, some on the left don’t want the plants to become more efficient, lest they lose their talking point that they are harming

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Once Upon a Time in the Midwest

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the environment. But many are opposed to the idea of giving up the tax revenue from the largest monetary funds in the world just for the sake of shooting CO2 into the ground.

In the film, it's the no-named "man with a harmonica" who foils Mr. Morton's plot. In the real world, Mr. King and his allies have a much more tangled mess to unravel. Fink's scheme has the support of well-placed, highly connected advocates throughout state and federal government.

To quote the New York Times, "*Powerful figures from both parties have signed with the pipeline companies, including Terry Branstad, [Governor] Reynolds's predecessor, and Jess Vilsack, the son of another former Iowa governor and the current Democratic secretary of agriculture, Tom Vilsack. Agriculture giants like John Deere and A.D.M. have invested in the efforts.*"

And from Mr. King's view, "*For two back-to-back sessions, the Iowa Legislature willfully and intentionally slow-walked every piece of legislation that might have protected the property rights of those in the path of Rastetter and Fink. Two legislative sessions ended with the adjournment, "sine die", without a single piece of property rights protection legislation receiving serious consideration in the Iowa Senate.*

"The Senate did find the time and interest to confirm two of Governor Reynold's hand-picked appointments to the Utilities Board. These two, unvetted fast tracked appointments, are now vested with the power under Iowa law to confer eminent domain authority. They would insist they will get up to speed, read and listen to both sides, and make an unbiased objective decision. We already know their decision. The rest is a charade orchestrated by the "Puppeteer of the Prairie" and the "Wizard of Davos" who plan to bulldoze their way through farms

and property rights in five states."

In the previously quoted letter to CEOs, Larry Fink asked them these questions: "*How are you preparing for and participating in the net zero transition? As your industry gets transformed by the energy transition, will you go the way of the dodo, or will you be a phoenix?*"

Either way, it's clear he means to see the industries die. Asked in a podcast interview what people could do to help, Steve King says the best hope is in a Supreme Court decision, and he asks for prayers for that effort. To follow the story as it continues to develop, you can also check out freesoilcoalition.com.

A Benediction over the Temple of the Lord

By Chris Johnson



While his father, David, was the "man after God's own heart," King Solomon foreshadowed the coming Christ in many ways. The simplest reason being that he was the "son of David;" also while David was a man of war, Solomon was a "prince of peace" (his name means peace). The "Song of Solomon" is often interpreted as symbolic of the love of Christ for the church. Solomon built a magnificent temple, which Christ did as well through His life, death, and resurrection.

In 1 Cor 3:16-17, Paul tells the church in Corinth, "*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.*"

When Solomon dedicated the first temple to the LORD, he slaughtered 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep as peace offerings on the new altar. Imagine the blood of all those

animals flowing from the altar into the temple courtyard.

Imagine the amount of blood that flowed from that altar over the next 900 years! Yet, Christ's blood did infinitely more than the millions of gallons of animal blood that flowed over the temple stones throughout the centuries, bringing us near to God and giving us permanent, eternal peace with Him.

When Solomon dedicated the temple, he prayed this beautiful benediction over the people of Israel:

"Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant. The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us, that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers. Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other. Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day." 1 Kings 8:56-61

Did God give rest to His people under David and Solomon? How much more under Christ. Did God keep His promises to Israel? How much more, through Christ? We have surety that our prayers are as near to the Lord Our God as His Son, our Intercessor, seated at His right hand.

This prayer then, is all the more appropriate for the temple Christ established – His church: "*May He maintain the cause of His people... that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God.*" The exhortation is also all the more appropriate for those He bought with His own blood: "*Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God, walking in His statutes and keeping his commandments.*"