

# Why Do We Have Liberals and Conservatives?

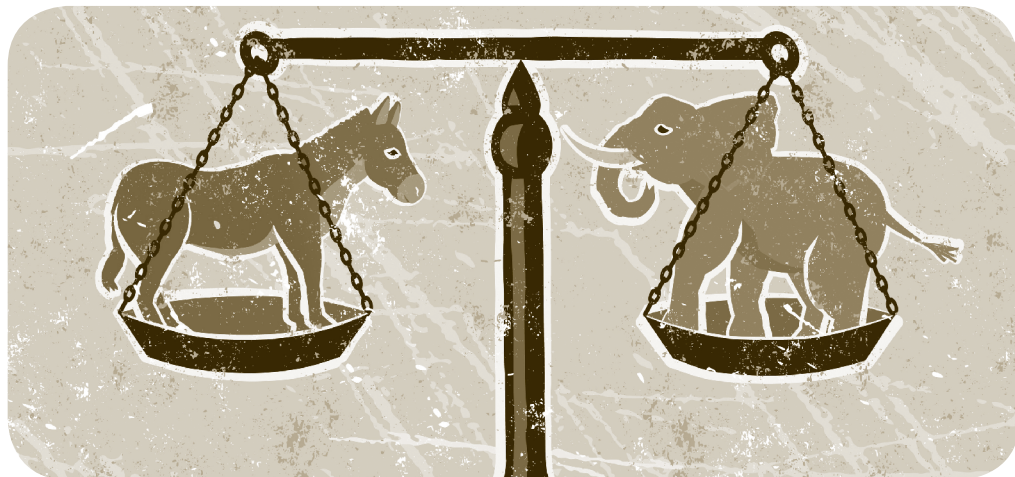
The No Labels movement, founded in 2010, aims to put aside labels such as liberal and conservative once and for all. With a motto of "Stop fighting. Start fixing," the group believes that if we can stop labeling each other, we can knock down the barriers that prevent progress.

The paladins of pragmatism would have us believe that eliminating labels will actually get Washington moving again, and that this is a good thing. But is it really possible to leave party agendas at the door? And even if it were, would it be desirable for us to do so? Is it possible that partisanship and gridlock are not caused by petty self-interest but by opposite and irreconcilable beliefs about how the world works?

Perhaps the best way for us to answer these questions is to move back one step and ask: Why do we have liberals and conservatives in the first place?

In *The Great Debate*, scholar Yuval Levin looks to the revolutionary fervor of the late 18th century to locate the origin of the political left and right. It just so happened that in the French assembly, radicals sat to the left of the speaker while more conservative members sat to the right. Thus, today, we say that conservatives are right of center and liberals are left of center.

But the actual ideologies reflected by the terms "left" and "right" are anything but arbitrary, and they are almost perfectly captured by the positions taken by Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine during the French Revolution, with Burke acting as the conservative statesman, observing events from his parliamentary post in England, and Paine serving as the liberal firebrand, fomenting anti-monarchical zeal with the same polemics that informed his



By Aaron Zubia

pamphlet *Common Sense*.

## Different Political Parties Arise From Different Worldviews

Political differences arise out of differences in worldview. Our worldviews, Thomas Sowell writes, are "the silent shapers of our thoughts," leading us to act in certain ways. Levin's comparison/contrast of Burke and Paine is helpful because the two figures present the two coherent and contradictory visions of reality that form the basis of modern political debates.

Everybody is guided, in the words of Walter Lippman, by "a picture of human nature, a map of the universe, and a vision of history." Like Burke and Paine, today's liberals and conservatives have different ideas about human nature, society, and culture. These different viewpoints cause us to consistently and reliably take opposite positions on practically every political debate.

By considering the perspectives of Paine and Burke, we can pinpoint the root of modern political disagreements, analyze their accordance with biblical truth, and attempt to stake out a position in line with Christian thought.

## Question #1: Are human beings naturally good or evil?

In *The Federalist*, James Madison wrote that the government is "the greatest of all reflections on human nature." If that is true, then a government based on a proper conception of human nature will succeed, while a government based on an improper conception of human nature will fail. So what we think about human beings, whether they are naturally good or bad, for instance, will determine how well our political institutions promote human flourishing. As we will see, Paine and Burke offer two vastly different portrayals of man.

**The Thomas Paine view: Humans are good by nature.** Thomas Paine, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, believed that human beings are born good and are only corrupted by social and political institutions — the family, religion, and government, for instance — that are characterized by superstition and prejudice. These backward institutions are the cause of poverty, oppression, and ignorance, those pernicious social evils that prevent man from perfecting



# from the president's desk

a word from dr. jeff myers



## Which Political Party Is Most Christian?

What makes Christians valuable in the political process is that they are above it. Our allegiance to a truth higher than the state means, or ought to mean, that we can stand for truth even if it displeases those in power. To paraphrase Augustine, the citizens of the kingdom of heaven will always make the best citizens in the kingdom of man.

The Christian vote is very attractive. There are enough Christians in the U.S. to swing every single election. Political parties recognize this and regularly make overtures they hope will be well-received by the faithful.

Here's the rub: All too often, Christians are taken for granted and pressured to change their convictions in the pursuit of power. How can we keep our balance in the midst of the noise and chaos of a thriving republic?

### Three Things to Always Remember:

1. **You are a citizen of the kingdom of God.** That does not mean shying away from earthly affairs. Instead, we ought to seek to bring God's truth to bear in a way that restores shalom to our social and political institutions: "And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace" (Jeremiah 29:7).

2. **Be respectful.** Christians should respect the authorities. "For the Lord's sake, accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors

as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right" (1 Peter 2:13-17).

3. **Watch out for idolatry.** Putting our trust in men rather than God is idolatry. No government can save us. No political leader can save us. If we place our hopes in political parties, we will be disappointed every time (Hosea 2:18-20).

### Three Tough Questions We Must Always Ask:

1. **Does this policy promote human flourishing?** Policies should be analyzed to see if they merely impose solutions on people, or free them to flourish (Galatians 5:1).

**"If we place our hopes in political parties, we will be disappointed every time."**

## Dr. Jeff Myers

2. **Does this policy promote goodness?** Policies should be analyzed to see if they have the effect of encouraging good and punishing evil (1 Peter 3:11).

3. **Does this decision support a healthy balance between the spheres of family, church, and state?** Policies that take away responsibility or authority from the family or church, or that are implemented at a level far removed

from the problem they attempt to solve, will always be hurtful to people and to society itself (2 Corinthians 8:1-15).

## Would It Make a Difference?

Could Christian involvement have stopped the policies of the last 50 years that have plunged our government into debt, created a permanent underclass, and stifled economic progress? We think the answer is yes. Policies are cumulative. Bad ones create a groundswell of misery. Righteousness, on the other hand, exalts a nation (Proverbs 14:34). It happens one decision at a time.

The health care issue is only the most recent example. If all those who claim to be Christians had been holding politicians' feet to the fire, we might have been able to avoid a healthcare policy that is so heavy-handed, bureaucratic, entrenched, hurtful to the people it is supposed to help, and dismissive of religious freedom.

Every single day, political policies are formed at the national, state, and local level. At all times, we must stand, ever hopeful, yet ever vigilant.

## Will the Next Generation Stand Stronger?

The answer to that question is in our hands. Don't miss the opportunity to register young adults you know and love for our summer programs in Colorado, Tennessee, and California. Slots are filling up quickly. Go to [www.summit.org](http://www.summit.org) to register online and secure a monthly payment plan.

# politics

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his nature. Subsequently, Paine sought to cast off these burdensome restraints in order to enable individuals to rediscover, through free-choice and self-expression, their natural innocence.

**The Edmund Burke view: Without accountability, humans tend toward corruption.** Edmund Burke couldn't disagree more with the Enlightenment-era emphasis on man's inherent goodness, for he believed humans to be naturally predisposed to evil. The same social and political institutions that Paine thought caused human evil were, in Burke's opinion, the safeguards of justice and peace. Burke believed man to be naturally brutish and sinful, greedy and violent. Only through the traditions, customs, and manners that prevail in his community has man been able to develop his moral imagination and achieve even a modicum of stability and order. Through the moral sentiments and affections nurtured by family, church, and work relationships, humans have been able to establish a framework within which they can enjoy liberty.

### Question #2: Were humans designed to live in community or as isolated individuals?

**The Thomas Paine view: Humans are radically autonomous.** Paine believed that "a nation is composed of distinct, unconnected individuals." Thus, when Paine envisions man in his natural state, he doesn't picture someone living in a family or in a community, but someone completely unfettered, free to pursue his own interests. For Paine, then, government is a social contract into which people enter in order to be as free as possible, so that their natural individuality and autonomy is respected and they are imposed with as few obligations and limitations as possible. After all, people didn't choose to be part of the family into

which they were born or the community in which they were raised. Subsequently, Paine considered it best for people to rely directly on a rational government — rather than community ties — to protect their rights and maximize their individual freedom of choice.

**The Edmund Burke view: Humans are naturally social beings.** For Burke, however, humans are naturally social beings. Never in history have humans ever been completely isolated, asocial beings who are unencumbered by social bonds and communal responsibilities. Instead, humans are born into families. They live in neighborhoods and dwell in political communities. There is no pre-social man, only social man, fully engaged in community life, raising a family, practicing a particular craft, and working with his neighbors to achieve certain ends.

### Question #3: What is the proper role of government?

**The Thomas Paine view: Government should promote autonomy.** Whereas the end of government in Burke's mind is to preserve, through the prudential efforts of statesmen, the peace and justice resulting from the earnest effort of past generations, the end of government for Paine is to protect the rights of the people, i.e., to free individuals from external constraints and to foster self-actualization. Thus, the social bonds so valued by Burke were castigated by Paine. The familial and communal ties that Burke considered prerequisites of freedom were thought by Paine to be freedom's greatest threats.

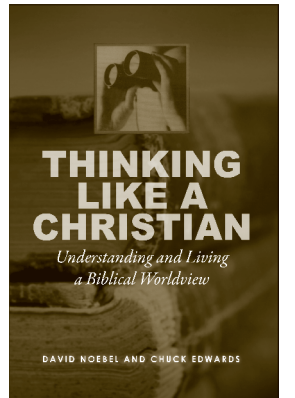
**The Edmund Burke view: Government should strengthen existing communal bonds.** Burke's vision of man begins with the family, not the individual, and includes the complex web of social ties and

affections that enable us to live peacefully with one another. Since most of our needs are met within the family, church, and civil society, Burke supposed that the role of government is to sustain and strengthen these bonds in order to preserve the space in which people can exercise freedom, which, for Burke, was not defined by unleashed individuality but by an ordered liberty characterized by virtue and cultivated by the equal enforcement of laws.

Burke believed that constitutions, traditions, and cultural processes — developed in a community over time — expressed the combined wisdom and knowledge of our ancestors. Paine, on the other hand, had no patience and little respect for any institutions that did not pass the bar of reason. For Paine, the epitome of knowledge is that expressed in the articulated rational thought of the individual. The rational principles stated by the rational individual, then, ought to serve as the basis of government. In Paine's ideal society, enlightened, progressive individuals do not have to depend on mere customs and prejudices of the past, but can implement top-down change to transform society.

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## Suggested Reading



*Thinking Like a Christian*  
by David Noebel and  
Chuck Edwards  
On sale now at  
Summit's bookstore:  
[summit.org/store](http://summit.org/store).



## A Conflict of Visions

In the liberal vision set forth by Paine, humans are individuals, who are burdened and corrupted by customs, manners, and habits foisted upon them by past generations. The best way to help individuals find happiness is to help them cast off constraints and abolish any government policy that does not stem from rational principles endorsed by the brightest minds. Whereas Burke stressed the importance of gradual reform, Paine endorsed radical revolution. The only obligation the individual should have is to the state that protects his right to do as he pleases.

In the conservative vision propounded by Burke, humans are social beings, born and bred in community, who need the customs, manners, and habits nurtured by families and churches to curb wayward desires, to promote peace, and to enact justice. The government is at its best when statesmen work with the material given them, in order to cautiously enact reforms that more effectively enable individuals to flourish within a stable and orderly framework established by the rule of law.

## Where do Christians fit?

The Christian worldview is distinct from all others. The biblical narrative begins with the Designer, the intelligent, creative, powerful, and personal God who created man in his own image. History, tattered by the devastating results of human sinfulness, is characterized by humanity's fall and subsequent chance for redemption made available through Jesus Christ, who perfects our nature.

So the first question for Christians is not whether we are Republican or Democrat, conservative or liberal, but whether we are guided by the Lordship of Christ in every area of life, including politics.

And a close examination of the Bible shows that God is not silent on the issues Burke and Paine were wrestling with. Let's have a look:

**Sin nature.** In Jeremiah 17:9, the prophet says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" Clearly, the prophet expresses the heart's inclination to act deviously, selfishly, and

**“God is not silent on the issues Burke and Paine were wrestling with.”**

destructively. Echoing Jeremiah's remarks and attempting to capture the universality of sin, Paul writes that everyone, Jews and Gentiles alike, are transgressors of God's law. Quoting the Psalmist, Paul bluntly lays out the human dilemma: "All have turned away [from God], they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Romans 3:9-11).

It is not as if innocent man was corrupted by evil institutional forces. Each person bears full responsibility for the fall, since each person, by opting to break God's law, replays the fall on a daily basis. The inner man is corrupt, and God, the just judge, will "search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve" (Jeremiah 17:10). Paul, too, says that God "will judge all people according to what they have done" (Romans 2:6).

If Rousseau is right that "man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains" — meaning that people would be happy and virtuous if only they were liberated from social institutions responsible for bigotry, oppression, poverty, and ignorance — then humans could indeed be saved by politicians who eradicated these social evils through rational policies.

If humans have a sin nature, as the Bible teaches, the perfect society will not be

ushered in by political saviors. We should not turn to government for the salvation that can come only through Christ.

**Community.** Regarding human relationships, God clearly announces in Genesis that it is not good for man to be alone. From the beginning, God declared that man should live in that first community — that intimate society of life and love — the family. Just as God abides not in solitude but in the perfect relationship of the Trinity, so we naturally belong in relationship, in order that we, in our neighborhoods and churches, might express the love, the mercy, and the generosity to which we are called. On this point, the Christian position is much closer to Burke, who affirmed the goodness of community, rather than Paine, who longed to reinstate man's natural freedom from obligations, a position that from the beginning God said was not conducive to man's happiness.

Judging from Christianity's emphasis on original sin, the goodness of family and community, and salvation through Christ rather than government, it seems as if Christians have convincing reasons to support limited government that strengthens local communities, respects traditional values, protects religious freedom, and promotes peace and justice, not through judicial fiat, bureaucratic solutions, or the policy proposals of enlightened technocrats, but through the prudent reforms of conservative statesmen.

## Notes

1. Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2007), p. xiii
2. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1965), p. 80
3. Alexander Hamilton et al., *The Federalist Papers* (New York, NY: New American library, 1961), p. 322
4. Thomas Paine, *Life and Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. Daniel Wheeler (New York, NY: Vincent Parke & Company, 1915), 8: 294-295
5. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 49

**Editor's Note: Our President Emeritus, Dr. David Noel, helps us with research by sending 20-30 pages of clippings of each month's news. To see the complete list of Doc's clippings, go to [www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/](http://www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/), open the PDF, and scroll to page 9, or call us at 866.786.6483.**

## Culture

"The more opulent citizens take great care not to stand aloof from the people," Alexis de Tocqueville wrote of the United States in the 1830s. "On the contrary, they constantly keep on easy terms with the lower classes: They listen to them, they speak to them every day."

It is a passage that evokes a lot of what we used to brag about in American culture. But it's not true anymore. Increasingly, America is coming apart at the seams of class. We face a problem of cultural inequality and cultural separation.

**“The widespread impression that marriage ... has deteriorated equally across the board is mistaken.”**

## Charles Murray

Some before and after snapshots will help illustrate what I mean by cultural inequality. I focus on two large groups at opposite ends of the class divide. To emphasize that I'm not talking about racial or ethnic divides, I am going to limit the numbers to non-Latino whites. My two groups consist of the upper middle class and the working class. I define upper middle class as people

with at least a college education who work in managerial jobs or one of the high-status professions, or people who are married to such a person. They constitute about 20 percent of the white population ages 30-49. I define working class as people with no more than a high school education and working (if they work at all) in blue-collar or low-skill white-collar or service jobs. They constitute about 30 percent of the white population ages 30-49.

Let's start with the most central cultural institution of all, the family. In 1960, 94 percent of white prime-age adults in the upper middle class were married, compared to 84 percent of those in the working class. A difference existed, but the overwhelming norm was the same.

The widespread impression that marriage since then has deteriorated equally across the board is mistaken. After a general decline in marriage in the 1970s, marriage in the white upper middle class had stabilized by the late 1980s. As of 2010, 84 percent were married. In the white working class, the decline that began in the 1970s never stopped. As of 2010, only 48 percent of white working-class prime-age adults were married. Married couples were no longer even a majority, let alone the norm.

Cultural inequality has increased even more dramatically for the socialization of children. No social science finding is at once more firmly established and more completely ignored by politicians and the media alike than the evidence demonstrating the superiority of the intact two-parent biological family and, as important, the inferiority of the unmarried-mother family for the flourishing of children. This finding applies to almost any measure

of a child's development you can think of. It persists after controlling for race and socioeconomic status. It persists after controlling for cohabitation.

The growth in class disparity in this cultural dimension has been phenomenal. When the government's Vital Statistics first gave us the mother's education in 1970, 99 percent of births to white women with at least a college degree were within wedlock, compared to 94 percent of births to white women with no more than a high school education. In absolute terms, it was a minor difference.

By 2008, the 99 percent of women with college educations had dropped, but only to 94 percent. The 94 percent of women with high school educations had dropped to 56 percent. The children of the white upper middle class and white working class are being socialized in different worlds, with profound implications for their success as adults, for reasons that have little to do with money."

— Charles Murray  
*Centennial Review*  
January 2, 2014

## Climate Change

"During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act." — George Orwell

"It's easier to fool people than it is to convince them they have been fooled." — Mark Twain

"Three days ago, Christiana Figueres, Ex. Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), made it clear that she thinks Communism is the best solution to the world's climate woes, exposing the political roots of her global-warming alarmism. ... Her thinking is one more indicator that at the

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# a look at our world

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real root of the climate alarmist message is an anti-Christian worldview, one that, to the extent that it prevails, will undermine liberty around the world.”

— Heather Ginsberg  
Townhall.com  
January 19, 2014

“Via Bloomberg News, last week we got an unsettling glimpse into just how extreme the economic plans of the climate commissars really are: ‘China, the top emitter of greenhouse gases, is also the country that’s “doing it right” when it comes to addressing global warming,’ the United Nations’ chief climate official [Christiana Figueres] said . . . . “They actually want to breathe air that they don’t have to look at,” she said. “They’re not doing this because they want to save the planet. They’re doing it because it’s in their national interest.’ China is also able to implement policies because its political system avoids some of the legislative hurdles seen in countries including the U.S., Figueres said.”

— *The Weekly Standard*  
January 27, 2014, p. 2, 3

“In the winter of 1249, it was so warm in England that people did not need winter clothes. They walked about in summer dress. It was so warm people thought the seasons had changed. There was no frost in England the entire winter. Can you imagine what NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] would say if that happened next year?”

— Art Horn, Icecapus  
January 12, 2011

“Inevitably in climate science, when data conflicts with models, a small coterie of scientists can be counted upon to modify the data. . . . That the data should always need correcting to agree with models is totally implausible and indicative of a certain corruption within the climate science community.”

— Richard Lindzen

## Gay Marriage

“In December, homosexual marriage became legal in Hawaii, generating a flurry of news stories saying homosexual marriage would be an economic boon to the Aloha State. Most of them cited a University of Hawaii study claiming the benefit to Hawaii would be around \$217 million during the next three years.

But that estimate is almost certainly not true.

‘Such studies measure benefits, but not costs,’ said Jay Richards, whose book *Money, Greed, and God* debunks economic myths. Even if the study is accurate to the penny in measuring benefits, according to Richards, ‘that’s just one side of the ledger. The other side of the ledger includes both economic and social costs.’

Those costs are enormous. The annual cost to society of marriage breakdown is \$229 billion, according to a 1999 study by the left-leaning Brookings Institution. Dr. Janice Shaw Crouse, who directs the Beverly LaHaye Institute at Concerned Women for America, said not all of these costs fall at the feet of homosexual activists. But they share the blame because of their efforts to ‘change, devalue, and diminish marriage as a lifetime commitment between a man and a woman committed to their union and their children.’ Whatever the causes, this is indisputable: The rate of marriage in the United States has fallen by nearly 20 percent since 1991, according to the Centers for Disease Control. That’s the year the Hawaii Supreme Court touched off the modern debate over same-sex marriage by ruling the state’s refusal to grant same-sex marriage licenses discriminatory.

It’s likely the economic benefits of gay marriage are dramatically overstated. The Sheraton Waikiki has a relationship with the state of Hawaii to issue marriage licenses. Kelly Sanders, general manager of the hotel, told *WORLD* that on Dec. 2, the day homosexual marriage became legal, the hotel issued

39 marriage licenses. These ceremonies began just after midnight and lasted until 4:30 a.m. However, only eight more weddings were currently scheduled, and he would not speculate about how many gay weddings the hotel would do after the initial flurry ended. Since the hotel started issuing wedding licenses on Jan. 15, 2013, more than 2,000 had been granted to heterosexual couples, a dramatically larger share of the state’s \$14 billion tourist industry.

Even the widely quoted University of Hawaii study, the basis for most of the news stories, has been controversial. The principal author of the study, Dr. Sumner La Croix, openly supports gay marriage. When he released the study in the summer, he encouraged the state to act quickly. ‘If Hawaii waits to adopt same-sex marriage,’ he said then, ‘it will not realize these gains. They will be lost forever, diverted to other states that recognize marriage equality.’ Since the study’s completion, California began allowing same-sex marriage, issuing more than 30,000 same-sex marriage licenses in July alone. The changing environment has made the original estimates obsolete.

Biased or not, outdated or not, the study continues to be quoted. Richards said that’s because most journalists are not trained in economics: ‘Such studies flatter their pre-existing opinions, and most people . . . treat economics differently from other disciplines. If you were writing about chemistry or physics, you would know you needed some training in those fields. But most people think they have an intuitive feel for economics.’

But, Richards added, much of economics is counterintuitive and produces unintended consequences. That means all assertions about the economic impact of gay marriage are at best a guess: ‘Gay marriage is a new phenomenon. We simply don’t have a lot of data.’”

— Warren Cole Smith  
*World*  
January 25, 2014

# summit spotlight

a look into the lives of summit alumni

## Summit Supporter Becomes Super Bowl Chaplain

By Aaron Zubia

“I would live in a tent for a year if that is what it took to get my child to the Summit program. It is that good.” Karl Payne, pastor and chaplain for the Seattle Seahawks, isn’t exaggerating, either. He is speaking from experience. “I have attended and directed more high school, college, leadership, and apologetics conferences than I want to count, and the Summit experience is still the very best I am aware of. . . . It is the gold standard of apologetics training in this country, and probably the world.”

Dr. Payne remembers his first encounter with Summit like he remembers the exact date he was saved (June 17, 1970 at 8:00 p.m., in case you were wondering). It was in Sunday school, and Dr. Payne was teaching a biblical worldview class based on Summit material. Impressed with Summit’s sound biblical teaching and effective engagement of the culture, Dr. Payne thought it might be a good idea to send his son to a Summit conference in Colorado. By the end of the Summit intensive, Dr. Payne’s son, Jonathan, was so thrilled with the experience that he returned each of the next two summers.

Having witnessed firsthand Summit’s impact, Dr. Payne decided to transpose Summit’s focus on the biblical worldview

**“[The Summit program] is the gold standard of apologetics training in this country, and probably the world.”**

**- Dr. Karl Payne**



Dr. Karl Payne

to his own Seattle area by hosting a Worldview Apologetics Conference in 2003. The conference’s first speakers consisted of Summit regulars, including founder Dr. David Noebel. Now, 11 years later, the Worldview Apologetics Conference is thriving. In 2015, Norm Geisler and Ravi Zacharias will be headlining a stellar group of Christian leaders.

In addition to hosting the Worldview conference and working as pastor of discipleship and leadership development at Antioch Bible Church in Washington, Dr. Payne has made himself available to the Seattle Seahawks organization as a pastor. Though, in reality, he does a little bit of everything. He describes himself as teacher, counselor, listener, protector, equipper, and apologist. On the night before each home game, Dr. Payne conducts a weekly chapel for the players and coaches, and he also leads weekly Bible studies.

During his weekly chapel sessions, Dr. Payne makes it his goal to create a safe environment for the players where they can take time away from the throngs of fans

and reporters in order to listen peacefully to Scripture. Every time he shares the gospel, he wants to deliver material that is immediately practicable and that can easily be shared with others. “If I can do it, you can do it,” Dr. Payne routinely says. The gospel is meant to be shared with teammates, family members, and friends — and Dr. Payne’s mission is to equip every Christian with whom he comes in contact to do just that.

Another prominent theme in Dr. Payne’s teaching is honoring God above all else. Success on the football field is like success in any other area of life — when we experience it, we are tempted to revel in our own victories and take our eyes off God. Throughout this past season, in which the Seahawks went 13-3 and eventually crushed the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XLVIII, Dr. Payne cited plenty of biblical examples — from King Saul to Joshua — of pride going before the fall. Ultimately, the Seahawks’ on-field success didn’t detract from the players’ spiritual lives, but bolstered them. Winning, Dr. Payne says, “helped motivate players and coaches to be sure they honor the Savior for His intercession rather than take the honor for themselves.”

For anyone wanting to know more about the faith of NFL players and coaches, Dr. Payne has recommended the DVD *Making of a Champion*, which was made at the beginning of the season. In the DVD, four Seahawks players and coaches state that they are Christians who happen to be NFL players and coaches, not NFL players and coaches who happen to be Christians. Honoring God above all else — this is the message Dr. Payne delivers. And evidently, it is heard.





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# a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel

## Federal Spending

Washington's in no mood for cutting spending. The Senate on Wednesday voted 64-36 to abandon restraint and boost spending by \$65 billion. Supportive senators argued that the federal government has been on a starvation diet over the past year, and it urgently needs to gorge one more time. Thanks to Sen. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, we know that's not the case.

Each year, the Republican lawmaker releases a "Wastebook" that holds the federal government's most ridiculous projects up for a well-deserved round of ridicule. The latest edition catalogs 100 dubious projects that collectively cost taxpayers \$30 billion — nearly half the cost of the new budget deal. "There is more than enough stupidity and incompetence in government to allow us to live well below the budget caps," says Mr. Coburn. "What's lacking is the common sense and courage in Washington to make those choices — and passage of fiscally responsible spending bills — possible."

It's a matter of setting the government's priorities straight. For instance, Mr. Coburn asks why the Army National Guard spends \$10 million on product placement in the Superman movies to encourage new recruits while at the same time cutting 8,000 soldiers from the Guard. That expenditure makes about as much sense as the \$60 million advertising effort sending people to the Healthcare.gov website for Obamacare enrollment only to be met with crashes and error messages because the site did not work.

During October's temporary government shutdown, nonessential employees enjoyed 16 paid work-free days. Mr. Coburn doesn't think the federal bureaucrats earning \$100,000 or more should be classified as "nonessential." Paying them to do crossword puzzles, go shopping, and catch up on chores around the house for two weeks cost the nation \$400 million.

NASA one-upped the rest of the government with a \$360,000 program paying 20 individuals to "spend 70 days lying in bed." The space agency says the program is meant to explore what happens when the body doesn't get enough exercise to prepare for a mission to Mars, which the administration has already canceled. The individuals selected for this highly important program are allowed to watch TV, read books, and surf the Internet, all on the taxpayer dime.

If the National Endowment of the Humanities has any say, these "pillownauts" will curl up and read a bodice ripper. The federally funded institution spent \$1 million on a promotional effort for romance novels. This covered the cost of a documentary titled *Love Between the Covers*, a website, and a traveling exhibit. This particular industry generates \$1.4 billion a year in revenue and can afford its own advertising department.

All around the sprawling federal bureaucracy, such crony deals cost taxpayers billions. There is little doubt that Mr. Coburn could easily add hundreds more examples of government fraud and waste. The lawmakers who claimed earlier this week that there's no more fat left in the budget to cut

just aren't trying hard enough.

—The Washington Times  
December 23, 2013, p. 34

Facebook, the hot technology company that is earning more than \$1 billion in revenue, won't pay any taxes on its income this year and, instead, probably will get a major refund from federal taxpayers, according to Sen. Tom Coburn's annual roundup of wasteful spending.

Among the nearly \$30 billion of unnecessary spending that the Oklahoma Republican identified in this year's "Wastebook" were taxpayer dollars going to buy human urine, to purchase crystal goblets at the State Department, and to pay \$18,000 apiece to "pillownauts" — people whom NASA recruited to lie on a bed for two straight months.

The book was released Tuesday morning, minutes before Mr. Coburn and fellow senators took a key test vote on a budget agreement that will boost spending in 2014, going back on a 2011 deal that was supposed to limit discretionary spending to less than \$1 trillion.

"This report speaks volumes about why the American people have lost confidence in government," Mr. Coburn said. "The truth is, we'd much rather borrow money than cut spending. That's the truth. And the American people have a right to expect much more from us than that."

His 177-page, meticulously footnoted report contains dozens of projects he said showed "stupid" judgment on the part of the bureaucrats who authorized them, and the members of Congress who let the spending



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continue without reining it in.

This year, with both a spending-related government shutdown and a major fight over the automatic budget sequesters, Mr. Coburn said, the wasteful projects should have drawn even more attention from his colleagues.

The waste he identifies ranges from big-ticket items that are perennial problems — such as the \$3.5 billion paid to federal employees who have been identified as tax cheats — to the tiny problems, such as the \$40,810 the government spent on a Denver museum dedicated to miniature toys and dolls.

In his report, Mr. Coburn points out that Facebook paid no taxes in 2012, despite earning more than \$1 billion in pretax profits. Instead, it received a combined \$429 million refund from federal and state tax filings from 2010 and 2011.

The report said Facebook provides stock options as a major form of compensation, which allows it to take big tax deductions, which it used to offset its profits. It still has more than \$2 billion in stock option tax deductions it can carry forward to offset future tax liabilities.

“This rollover, in addition to currently outstanding employee stock options, may once again make this year’s tax bill disappear,” Mr. Coburn said in his report.

“If Facebook has the same U.S. pretax profit in 2013 as last year (\$1.1 billion), the company will be able to zero out their tax bill for the next year.”

Facebook didn’t reply to a message seeking comment Tuesday.

The Defense Department, which

has been pleading with Congress to boost its funding and which is getting a major increase in the budget deal, comes in for particular criticism from Mr. Coburn.

“DOD grounded the Air Force Thunderbirds and Navy Blue Angels, yet still spent \$631.4 million to construct aircraft they never intended to fly,” he said.

The biggest item was \$7 billion in equipment in Afghanistan that the Pentagon says it will destroy rather than bring home or give away, feeling it doesn’t have a use for the materials in the U.S. and doesn’t want to turn them over to allies.

Mr. Coburn also found \$10 million spent by the Army National Guard on Superman movie tie-ins, even as plans were being made to cut the strength of the Guard by 8,000 soldiers.

#### **Other wasteful projects included:**

- \$15,000 to collect thousands of gallons of human urine and test it as a hay field fertilizer.
- \$5 million for hand-blown crystal stemware, paid by the State Department, just days before the government shutdown.
- \$65 million in Superstorm Sandy emergency relief money that New York and New Jersey spent on television ads promoting tourism.
- \$566,000 paid by the U.S. Postal Service to “futurist” Faith Popcorn to envision a viable future for the post office.
- \$1.5 million spent by the FBI each year to educate Hollywood producers and writers on how to portray the agency in movies.
- \$124,955 to build a 3-D printer

to make pizzas for NASA.

— Stephen Dinan  
The Washington Times  
December 23, 2013, p. 10

## Climate Change

The political debate over what to do about global warming rages on, largely because liberals refuse to have an honest discussion about their plans to deal with it. The heart of their every proposed “solution” to climate change is a radical economic program that would threaten the livelihood and well-being of millions, based on computer models of dubious accuracy trying to project weather patterns decades into the future. Via Bloomberg News, last week we got an unsettling glimpse into just how extreme the economic plans of the climate commissars really are:

China, the top emitter of greenhouse gases, is also the country that’s “doing it right” when it comes to addressing global warming, the United Nations’ chief climate official said. ... “They actually want to breathe air that they don’t have to look at,” she said. “They’re not doing this because they want to save the planet. They’re doing it because it’s in their national interest.”

China is also able to implement policies because its political system avoids some of the legislative hurdles seen in countries including the U.S., Figueres said.

In other words, if international bureaucrats could impose economic restrictions and reduce energy production by fiat, we’d be well on our way to healing the planet. Of course, the Communist party in China comprises only a small minority of the Chinese people,

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and the idea that they do anything because it’s in the “national interest” is laughable. China’s ruling party only cares about enriching themselves and holding on to power, which is why their exploitative and repressive economic program has resulted in environmental calamities on a colossal scale.

About half a billion Chinese lack access to safe drinking water and 99 percent of the country’s 560 million city dwellers breathe air that would be considered unsafe by EU pollution standards. But because the Communist party is paying lip service to a renewable energy program, U.N. officials are falling all over themselves to uphold the country as an environmental model.

So long as concern over global warming remains little more than a cudgel to advance a left-wing political program, any cure for the problem will be worse than the disease. Of course, there’s also ample evidence that the dangers of global warming have been overhyped — to the point where credulous people are increasingly willing to sacrifice anything precious on the altar of environmentalism. Rolling Stone recently received widespread and well-deserved mockery for an idiotic article titled “5 Economic Reforms Millennials Should Be Fighting For.” Said reforms were all essentially tenets of communism, including “guaranteed work” and the abolition of private property. When the writer, Jesse A. Myerson, was challenged about his retrograde views, his response on Twitter was curious: “If I have to answer for Soviet gulags, these market/capital twits have to answer for climate collapse, the greatest genocide in history.” Well, so far the global warm-

ing death count is hypothetical, unlike the tens of millions actually killed by Mao and his henchmen and the Soviet terror. And not to forget, China is currently the world’s largest producer of greenhouse gases. Whether you care about global warming or humanity, it’s pretty easy to conclude that communism is certainly not the answer.

— Jesse Meyerson  
The Weekly Standard  
January 27, 2014, p. 2, 3

When you first meet Richard Lindzen, the Alfred P. Sloan professor of meteorology at MIT, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, leading climate “skeptic,” and all-around scourge of James Hansen, Bill McKibben, Al Gore, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and sundry other climate “alarmists,” as Lindzen calls them, you may find yourself a bit surprised. If you know Lindzen only from the way his opponents characterize him — variously, a liar, a lunatic, a charlatan, a denier, a shyster, a crazy person, corrupt — you might expect a spittle-flecked, wild-eyed loon. But in person, Lindzen cuts a rather different figure. With his gray beard, thick glasses, gentle laugh, and disarmingly soft voice, he comes across as nothing short of grandfatherly.

Granted, Lindzen is no shrinking violet. A pioneering climate scientist with decades at Harvard and MIT, Lindzen sees his discipline as being deeply compromised by political pressure, data fudging, out-and-out guesswork, and wholly unwarranted alarmism. In a shot across the bow of what many insist is indisputable scientific truth, Lindzen characterizes global warming as “small

and ... nothing to be alarmed about.” In the climate debate — on which hinge far-reaching questions of public policy — them’s fightin’ words.

In his mid-seventies, married with two sons, and now emeritus at MIT, Lindzen spends between four and six months a year at his second home in Paris. But that doesn’t mean he’s no longer in the thick of the climate controversy; he writes, gives myriad talks, participates in debates, and occasionally testifies before Congress. In an eventful life, Lindzen has made the strange journey from being a pioneer in his field and eventual IPCC coauthor to an outlier in the discipline — if not an outcast.

Richard Lindzen was born in 1940 in Webster, Massachusetts, to Jewish immigrants from Germany. His boot-maker father moved the family to the Bronx shortly after Richard was born. Lindzen attended the Bronx High School of Science before winning a scholarship to the only place he applied that was out of town, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, in Troy, New York. After a couple of years at Rensselaer, he transferred to Harvard, where he completed his bachelor’s degree and, in 1964, a doctorate.

Lindzen wasn’t a climatologist from the start — “climate science” as such didn’t exist when he was beginning his career in academia. Rather, Lindzen studied math. “I liked applied math,” he says, “[and] I was a bit turned off by modern physics, but I really enjoyed classical physics, fluid mechanics, things like that.” A few years after arriving at Harvard, he began his transition to meteorology. “Harvard actually got a grant from the Ford Foundation to

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offer generous fellowships to people in the atmospheric sciences,” he explains. “Harvard had no department in atmospheric sciences, so these fellowships allowed you to take a degree in applied math or applied physics, and that worked out very well because in applied math the atmosphere and oceans were considered a good area for problems. ... I discovered I really liked atmospheric sciences — meteorology. So I stuck with it and picked out a thesis.”

And with that, Lindzen began his meteoric rise through the nascent field. In the 1970s, while a professor at Harvard, Lindzen disproved the then-accepted theory of how heat moves around the Earth’s atmosphere, winning numerous awards in the process. Before his 40th birthday, he was a member of the National Academy of Sciences. In the mid-1980s, he made the short move from Harvard to MIT, and he’s remained there ever since. Over the decades, he’s authored or coauthored some 200 peer-reviewed papers on climate.

Where Lindzen hasn’t remained is in the mainstream of his discipline. By the 1980s, global warming was becoming a major political issue. Already, Lindzen was having doubts about the more catastrophic predictions being made. The public rollout of the “alarmist” case, he notes, “was immediately accompanied by an issue of Newsweek declaring all scientists agreed. And that was the beginning of a ‘consensus’ argument. Already by ’88, the New York Times had literally a global warming beat.” Lindzen wasn’t buying it. Nonetheless, he remained in the good graces of mainstream climate science, and in

the early 1990s, he was invited to join the IPCC, a U.N.-backed multinational consortium of scientists charged with synthesizing and analyzing the current state of the world’s climate science. Lindzen accepted, and he ended up as a contributor to the 1995 report and the lead author of Chapter 7 (“Physical Climate Processes and Feedbacks”) of the 2001 report. Since then, however, he’s grown increasingly distant from prevalent (he would say “hysterical”) climate science, and he is voluminously on record disputing the predictions of catastrophe.

— Ethan Epstein  
The Weekly Standard  
January 13, 2014, p. 22

According to an 1887 newspaper article titled “Variations in Climate,” Scandinavian Vikings were able to sail through the Arctic Ocean and establish colonies in the “highest north latitude” of Greenland and North America centuries before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. These colonies, however, were abandoned by the Vikings due to “the increasing cold.”

“On the contrary, the formation of ice increases annually if the winters are strongly cold, long, and dark,” wrote Alexander Beck in 1887. “The reverse of that state of things is found by calculations for the year 1122 A.D., and it is precisely at that time we find the Danes and other Scandinavian nations going through the Arctic open seas.”

“Colonies are established by them in the highest north latitude of Greenland, and the upper part of North America, a long time before Christopher Columbus had reached a more southern part of the same continent,”

Beck added. “But those colonies were relinquished on account of the increasing cold. In the 14th century, the seas are found again closed, even in the summer. The great north icefield ... increases daily, the Arctic colonists are compelled to come more to the south, and the cold takes possession again of countries which were kept free for a few years just about the 12th century.”

“Remains of those upper Arctic villages are found, I may say, in each Arctic expedition. The climate of Iceland becoming more and more cool also proves that the state of the earth varies in the course of centuries,” Beck continued.

The warm climate that defined the Middle Ages and allowed the Vikings to settle the most northern reaches of the Americas is known as the “Medieval Warming Period,” which lasted from the 9th century A.D. to the 13th century A.D. During this time, temperatures were warmer in the Northern Hemisphere than the so-called “Little Ice Age” that followed, according to the National Climate Data Center.

— The Daily Caller  
December 18, 2013

## Evolution

The travel section of the January issue of Smithsonian Magazine features a fine photo gallery of specimens from Germany’s famous fossil graveyard, the Messel Pit. The photos are accompanied by an ode of gratitude proclaiming the “debt humans owe to animals that died out 48 million years ago.” And what is it exactly that we are supposed to be grateful for, according to the Smithsonian’s writer? For the “evolutionary secrets” preserved in this

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fossil graveyard. The Nov. 9-15 issue of the distinguished British magazine The Economist reported that among children who are eligible for free meals in England’s schools, black children of immigrants from Africa meet the standards of school tests nearly 60 percent of the time — as do immigrant children from Bangladesh and Pakistan. Black children of immigrants from the Caribbean meet the standards less than 50 percent of the time.

By contrast, we rounded out our News to Know year on the 31st with our own photo-essay “Life Lessons Illustrated in the Animal Kingdom,” recalling many of 2013’s favorite animal stories. We reviewed what evolutionary biologists claimed about them and what they could teach us about God’s wonderful designs. Thus, it seems fitting now to take a look into the Messel Pit to see what evolutionary secrets it is supposed to reveal, what some of the marvelous animals there can show us, and what we should see as we peer into the pit through “biblical glasses” — in other words, how God’s Word can help us understand what we see.

The Messel Pit in central Germany is a 200-foot-deep gouge through a forest. Located at an old strip mine from which oil shale (shale impregnated with oil) was once mined, the big ditch almost became a garbage dump, but paleontologists lobbied for its preservation, and since 1995 it has been a protected UNESCO World Heritage site. The Messel Pit is a fossil graveyard in which a wide variety of animals and plants are exquisitely preserved. Classified as Eocene rock, evolutionists believe the fossils there are the remains

of animals buried around 48 million years ago and thus provide insight into the progress of mammalian evolution following dinosaur extinction.

Evolutionists believe that mammalian evolution started at the same time as dinosaur evolution but only took off with great success when dinosaurs became extinct and vacated many ecological niches. This is how they explain the appearance of a wide variety of mammals in the fossil record in the layers above those containing dinosaurs. Such is the case with the Messel Pit. Because they think the animals in the pit — believed to have once been a deep, steep-sided lake — died during this mammalian heyday, they believe the fossils in the Messel Pit reveal the secrets of mammalian evolutionary success.

Why are so many animals — 45 mammalian species as well as reptiles, fish, insects, 43 species of birds, and a few amphibians — preserved in Messel Pit? Many of the animals are preserved intact with fur, colored feathers, or dinner in their stomachs, and nine pairs of turtles are preserved mating. How did their very activities get frozen in time? What caused so many animals to suddenly die? Evolutionary paleontologists propose that toxins or carbon dioxide bubbled up through the lake and ended their lives. The lack-of-oxygen hypothesis is called into question, however, by the presence in the Messel Pit of water-beetle larvae that can only survive in highly oxygenated water. For that matter, even the idea that the Messel Pit was a lake is questionable given the relative scarcity of mosquitoes and other water-dependent insects, the rarity of amphibians among the fossils (only

one salamander and three species of toads or frogs), and the absence of fossil tadpoles.

In any case, according to evolutionists, something killed animals visiting a deep lake quite suddenly, they fell in and sank, and then over centuries each was gradually covered by fine clay — with 250 years required to form each inch of sediment — and eventually fossilized. And why didn’t these dead animals simply decompose or get scavenged on the lake bottom? Evolutionists propose that there wasn’t much oxygen at the deep lake’s bottom and that there was therefore shortage of scavengers and bacteria down there.

— Elizabeth Mitchell  
Answersingenesis.org  
January 4, 2014

## Culture

Pete Seeger, the legendary folk singer, unabashed socialist and political activist, has died at the age of 94.

The left celebrated Seeger’s art and commitment to progressive causes, but those on the right noted his embrace of American enemies during both the Cold War and Vietnam War. He raged against private wealth and marched with the “99 percent” of the Occupy Wall Street movement but died a millionaire.

Seeger’s musical life influenced a generation of protest singers, and his far-left views on issues like war, capital punishment, the environment, and capitalism epitomized his appeal to those in liberal circles. His hits included “Turn, Turn, Turn,” “Where Have All the Flowers Gone,” and “Good-night, Irene,” and those impacted by



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his work include Bruce Springsteen, Dave Matthews, and, most notably, Bob Dylan.

Seeger spoke openly about his faith and leaned on Bible verses in some of his music, but his activism centered on supporting unions, applauding groups like Occupy Wall Street and emboldening liberal singers to protest with their melodies.

He took a page out of Woody Guthrie's biography, inscribing the phrase, "This machine surrounds hate and forces it to surrender" on his guitar. The instrument didn't take kindly to electricity, though, given Seeger's famous feud with Dylan after the latter plugged his guitar in during the 1965 Newport Folk Festival.

"I was furious that the sound was so distorted ... you couldn't understand [the song]," Seeger once said, recalling the musical dustup and defending his actions. Music critics wondered if Seeger feared an electrified Dylan might displace Seeger in the minds of protest singers.

Seeger embraced Communism early in his life, even if his official ties to the party waned in the late 1940s. He still supported Joseph Stalin and traveled to North Vietnam in 1972. Years later, his decision to back Stalin's murderous regime forced him to serve up a mea culpa to the press.

I apologize for once believing Stalin was just a hard driver, not a supremely cruel dictator," he told *The Washington Post* in 1994.

The singer's anti-war bona fides began before America became embroiled in World War II and carried through the rest of his life.

The album *Talking Union* (1941-42) was adopted by American labor activists for generations, and the group, which was soon joined by the folk singer Woody Guthrie, also recorded anti-war ballads, which proved embarrassing when Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and the American left became ferociously patriotic.

Later, his far-left ideology got him swept up in the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. He refused to talk about his views and was sentenced to a year in jail for Contempt of Congress but ended up serving only four days. The stigma hurt his career, but it didn't end it.

His musical life blossomed anew when he joined the '60s anti-war movement.

In 1966, Seeger recorded an anti-war anthem, "Bring 'Em Home," including lyrics in opposition to the Vietnam War: "For defense you need common sense/ Bring them home, bring them home/ They don't have the right armaments/ Bring them home, bring them home."

He long spoke out against private wealth and the capitalist system, but his talents earned him millions all the same. He gave some of his fortune away but "a recent estimate of his net worth pegged it at \$4.2 million," according to *Bloomberg.com*.

President Barack Obama released a statement shortly after learning of Seeger's passing:

"Over the years, Pete used his voice — and his hammer — to strike blows for worker's rights and civil rights; world peace and environmental

conservation. And he always invited us to sing along. For reminding us where we come from and showing us where we need to go, we will always be grateful to Pete Seeger."

— Christian Toto  
Breitbart.com  
January 29, 2014

## Foreign Affairs

Between confiscating land from its owners at gunpoint and collaborating with the world's most ruthless despots in the ongoing conquest of Latin America for socialism, supposedly "moderate" Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff ... found time to rally the troops and re-affirm her alliance with Marxists at the Communist Party of Brazil's 13th Congress. Virtually nobody noticed it — especially in the establishment press — but the dramatic scene featuring the radical Brazilian leader speaking next to giant posters of Karl Marx and mass-murdering Soviet dictator Vladimir Lenin was captured on camera and posted online.

The crowd at the Communist Party (PCdoB) summit, which took place late last week under the banner "to advance in change," certainly loved the spectacle. As President Rousseff, a key figure in the extreme "Workers' Party" (Partido dos Trabalhadores, or PT), approached the podium, the Communist Party zealots stood up, clapped their hands above their heads, chanted, and cheered. "The Communist Party of Brazil, it's good to say, was the only party, aside from the PT, which stood beside [former Brazilian President and fellow PT leader Luiz Inacio 'Lula' da Silva] in all of the elec-

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tions since 1989," Rousseff told the roaring crowd before her remarks were drowned out by hysterical chanting. She also celebrated communist terrorists and the deep bonds between her party and the communists, who she said were fighting "the good battle" on behalf of the people of Brazil.

Outside of a handful of newspapers and obscure communist publications in Latin America, it appears that media coverage of Rousseff's participation at the Communist Party's Congress — not to mention her deeply controversial and revealing comments — has been virtually nonexistent. Still, the Brazilian president took to Twitter to reiterate her support for the PT-Communist Party collaboration. "This alliance has stayed solid for so long because there is identification in our commitments to a Brazil that is just, sovereign, and democratic," she claimed, apparently without a trace of irony.

At the same time, the Obama administration continues to shower billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars on Brasilia and its allies under the guise of everything from "foreign aid" to supporting its state-run oil behemoth Petrobras. If the Marxist network can continue advancing its aims sheltered from media and public scrutiny, experts say, the future of Brazil and Latin America more broadly look bleak at best. However, opposition forces believe that with enough effort, it is still possible to stop the agenda in its tracks and reverse the tide of tyranny.

— Alex Newman  
*The New American*  
December 23, 2013, p. 8

On Oct. 31, 2010, a dozen Islamist gunmen stormed the Catholic cathedral of Our Lady of Salvation, in Baghdad. Striking during a service, they butchered some 60 priests and worshipers, notionally in revenge for insults to Islam. Ghastly as that crime might be in its own right, atrocities of this kind are quite commonplace around the world. Mobs sack churches in Egypt, Nigerian suicide bombers target worshiping congregations, and Eritrea has its hellish concentration camps for Christians. "Christians today," writes John L. Allen Jr., "indisputably are the most persecuted religious body on the planet." So widespread and systematic are the attacks, he explains, that they amount to a global war, which he proclaims "the transcendent human rights concern" in the modern world.

Mr. Allen is by no means the first writer to address this phenomenon, but he may be the best qualified. He has through the years established himself as among the best-informed commentators on the Vatican and the state of the Roman Catholic Church, and hearing so many contacts recount stories of persecution and discrimination has naturally sensitized him to anti-Christian campaigns, and by no means only those directed against Catholics.

The range of stories he tells is staggering and offers a compendium of modern-day heroes equal to anything in the church's long history. We are awed by the story of Catholic Archbishop Christophe Munzihirwa, who died in 1998 trying to safeguard his flock from the mounting carnage in the

wars engulfing Congo and Rwanda. Time and again, he stood face to face with oppressors, dictators, and genocidaires, until finally some soldiers shot him in the streets.

Mr. Allen's main point, though, is less to report the persecutions than to ask in bafflement why the West seems to care so little about them. Yes, the American media report individual attacks, provided they cause some critical minimum number of fatalities — 20, say — but they offer no sense of generalized mayhem, any awareness that the same groups and denominations are being victimized in India and Sudan, in Indonesia and Kenya. Would such silence prevail in the face of a global campaign against any other group, ethnic or religious?

In cruder hands, "The Global War on Christians" could easily have turned into an anti-Islamic rant. Yet while Mr. Allen devotes full attention to the evil deeds of Islamists in Iraq, Nigeria, and elsewhere, he also refutes the myth "that it's all about Islam." Over the past century, some of the very worst anti-Christian persecutors have been fanatically anti-religious, commonly driven by Marxist-Leninist ideology. Islam, evidently, has nothing to do with the atrocities of the North Korean regime, which has made its country perhaps the worst single place in the world to be a Christian: The government has killed thousands of Christians and imprisoned tens of thousands more, in hideous conditions. Nor does Mr. Allen succumb to the common temptation to concentrate so much on Muslim misdeeds that we ignore savage and persistent



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persecutions by Hindu fanatics — the pogroms, the forced conversions, the mob attacks against churches, often committed with the tacit acquiescence of police and local governments.

Mr. Allen's list of other myths surrounding the war is just as thoughtful and has important policy implications. He is properly scornful of the common post-atrocity response that "no one saw it coming," that attacks like the Baghdad cathedral massacre are all random and unpreventable rather than "the predictable result of a mounting pattern of hatred." If law-enforcement agencies aren't expecting such crimes, and aren't seeking to prevent them, they should be roundly condemned. They have blood on their hands.

I can't speak too highly of Mr. Allen's work in general, or of this important book in particular. Having said that, I do differ from him in his basic definitions of persecution and martyrdom. Among the "myths" that he confronts, we find: "It's only persecution if the motives are religious." In some cases, he is clearly right: North Korea's leaders, for instance, hate Christians as they would hate any group, secular or religious, that seeks to maintain its independence of the state and that, moreover, has suspicious foreign connections. Yet the victims suffer as a consequence of their stubborn persistence in belonging to clandestine churches and confessing the cause of Christ. This indubitably qualifies as anti-Christian persecution. Yet other cases of persecution that he discusses are less clearly grounded in anti-religious sentiment or ideology, even when the victims are Christian.

Mr. Allen approvingly cites one study claiming that Christianity suffered 45 million martyrs in the 20th century alone, mostly due to Nazism or communism. That outlandish figure can only be substantiated if we include not just Christian clergy or lay activists but every community slaughtered for whatever reason, which happened to include a substantial Christian population. The number must, for instance, include the several million victims of the Soviet terror-famine in Ukraine in the 1930s, who were surely killed because they were of the wrong social class and ethnicity rather than from any religious motivation. They were persecuted people who happened to be Christians rather than people persecuted for being Christians, and that is a crucial distinction. Similar nuances affect other more contemporary cases that Mr. Allen cites as casualties in his global war. Motives really do matter.

Yet if even Mr. Allen can't offer precise figures as to the scale of the war on Christians, the reality of that global violence is undeniable. His study makes a profound impact on the reader. His narrative is by turns stirring, infuriating, and heartbreaking.

— Philip Jenkins  
The Wall Street Journal  
December 20, 2013, p. A17

December's "Impact: Holy Land" conference in Philadelphia had variety. The roster of speakers included Palestinians sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and Messianic Jews sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. In addition, there were impassioned speakers from places like Rochester, N.Y., on home leave from Christian Peacemaker

Teams or other faith-based groups that support grassroots resistance to Israel.

The online brochure, which claimed to have "sought Jesus followers from across a wide geographical and theological spectrum," urged us to "be kind" because "we may hear difficult things this weekend." But a stroll among the book tables during registration revealed who was in for an earful of "difficult things," and it was not the Palestinian sympathizers. There were advertisements for tours by "Palestinian Summer Encounters"; books with titles like *Letters from Apartheid Street: A Christian Peacemaker in Occupied Palestine*; Washington lobbyists for anti-Israeli legislation; and just for the tykes, *The Boy and the Wall*, about a child living in a refugee camp.

That is to say, the unconscionable oppressiveness of Israel was the starting point of the "conversation," not a proposition for debate. All that remained to "conversate" about was the means to peace in the Holy Land, through fostering one-on-one friendships between Palestinians, Israelis, and Americans — and notably through dismantling checkpoints; boycotting, divesting, and sanctioning Israeli companies; tearing down the West Bank wall; and returning occupied lands.

The problem for me through three days of Gaza kumbaya was that age-old bugbear of proper evidence-weighting: "The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him" (Proverbs 18:17). I do poorly in arriving at truth where there is no one on hand to point out factual or theological error in a presentation, or to offer a different scenario.

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No thanks to the 20 speakers at "Impact," I happened to know that "Palestinian" is not an ethnicity at all but a cobbled invention describing inhabitants of Jordanian, Druze, Syrian, Lebanese, Persian, Jewish, Armenian, and other extractions. Nor was there an attempt to reckon with the reality that tiny Israel (1/19th the size of California) is surrounded on all sides by enemies like Hamas who have vowed her annihilation.

Nor did I hear a peep, in the three days of paean to "friendship," "brotherhood," and "solidarity," about the lack of those qualities displayed by the Arab world during the 1948 war: 539,000 fellow Arabs evacuated Israel at the urging of Arab nations so as to get out of their way while they annihilated the Jews, with the promise of being able to return. The annihilation never happened. To add insult to injury, the Arab nations to which these displaced Palestinians fled refused to receive them.

I was uncomfortable at the incantatory use of words like peace invoked as the supreme good, and words like warfare presumed to be wrong under all circumstances. I see nowhere in Scripture the view that peace (defined as the stripping of all military national defenses) is to be praised. War is a great evil, but it is not the greatest. The highest good is the kingdom of God, and there is plenty in the Old and New Testaments about waging warfare for it, both militarily and spiritually.

What also made me nervous was how Jesus tends to get lost in social justice causes. I am not saying He was lost at "Impact" (self-conscious care was

taken to enlist His name now and then in connection with peace-promoting campaigns), but the temptation is always the bear at the edge of the woods. There are people who get so interested in moral social causes that they come to care little for God.

Crafty Screwtape knew this and trained his junior tempters in it: "Quietly and gradually nurse him on to the stage at which the religion becomes merely part of the 'Cause,' in which Christianity is valued chiefly because of the excellent arguments it can produce. ... Provided that meetings, pamphlets, policies, movements, causes, and crusades matter more to him than prayers and sacraments and charity, he is ours — and the more 'religious' (on those terms), the more securely ours. I could show you a pretty cageful down here" (*The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis).

One returns from the "Impact" conference needing to break free of pretty philosophical cages.

— Andrée Seu Peterson  
World  
January 25, 2014, p. 71

## Science

"What is it like," asks Tim Birkhead, "for an emperor penguin diving in the inky blackness of the Antarctic seas at depths of up to 400 m[eters]?" And what is it like "to feel a sudden urge to eat incessantly, and over a week or so become hugely obese, then fly relentlessly — pulled by some invisible force — in one direction for thousands of miles, as many tiny songbirds do twice each year"?

He acknowledges that these ques-

tions can't really be answered — so this book can't really make good on its subtitle. A sighted person cannot explain to one blind from birth what sight is like, and a blind person cannot explain to a sighted one what it's like to navigate without it. And these are easy cases, beginning as they do from a mutual understanding of what purposes our abilities serve: the wants and needs and lives of humans.

What *Bird Sense* does provide is fascinating: a survey of current knowledge about birds' abilities to sense and respond to their environment. Until relatively recently, Birkhead says, the subject was a backwater, one he himself avoided as a graduate student. He tells of meeting a scientist who had spent his career studying the sensory biology of birds, but, having stirred little interest in his work, burnt his papers on retirement. When Birkhead asked to discuss them, the man was both "dismayed and delighted."

This book is, necessarily, a bit of a miscellany — anecdote, experiment, history — but two general themes emerge: that the sensory world of birds has persistently proven richer than was previously supposed, and that vast amounts remain to be discovered. Separate chapters cover their vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, as well as "the magnetic sense" and emotions. Each begins with a story from the field. The chapter on sight quotes a 19th-century account of falconers capturing their birds — using a pigeon as bait and a shrike as falcon detector. At the approach of a raptor far too distant for a human eye to see, the shrike would become agitated, and in its behavior an



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experienced falconer was said to be able to read not only that a bird of prey was approaching, but also what species, how fast, and how low.

Like most people, I take a sub-scientific interest in the gaudy and the amazing, including a fondness for animals possessing Clark Kent-like powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men. The basic evidence comes from anatomy and behavior. The shrike's behavior shows it has detected a great deal about the approaching bird, but doesn't tell us how that trick was done. Comparing the bird's eye to a human eye gives one answer, without ruling out the possibility that other mechanisms are also involved. A fovea is a structure in the retina capable of especially sharp image processing — identifiable by a high density of cones (photoreceptors responsible for both color vision and acuity) and the absence of blood vessels and non-photosensitive neurons. A human eye has one fovea; the eye of a shrike (and falcon and eagle) has two.

Anatomical explanation often invokes the plausible principle that the relative size of an organ (and of the part of the brain that processes its signals) indicates its importance. The ratio of eye size to body size in birds is typically twice that found in humans. This principle is well and astonishingly displayed in the large seasonal variations that can occur in the size of a bird's internal organs: e.g., the part of a male songbird's brain associated with singing grows in preparation for the mating season and shrinks thereafter.

We all can see birds respond to song, and an anatomist can find in birds analogues to the structures of a

human ear (inner-ear bones, cochlea, hair cells), so we easily credit birds with hearing, sometimes in a superhuman way. Birkhead reports that in the large, densely packed colonies of guillemots he has studied, parents and chicks can identify one another's calls even against a background cacophony of others. Well-known experiments have shown that owls can hunt in complete darkness, tracking their prey by sound — to which Birkhead adds a poignant detail: Owls are not keen to fly in complete darkness, except in surroundings that they know; and even then, an owl that has seized its prey will fly straight back to its perch, retracing a path known to avoid obstacles.

It was much harder for ornithologists to discover the structures responsible for touch, taste, and smell. Whether birds have such senses was, for a long time, in dispute, despite an abundance of anecdotal and behavioral evidence. Not until the 1970s were the first avian taste buds discovered — in the tip of a duck's bill. And Birkhead notes a brilliant speculation about taste from Alfred Russel Wallace, co-discoverer with Charles Darwin of natural selection. Some caterpillars are brightly colored, as if to flaunt their presence; they seem to be asking for trouble. And the colors cannot be useful in mating displays, since caterpillars are sexually immature. Wallace suggested that bad-tasting caterpillars would have an adaptive benefit from looking conspicuously different from those that tasted good. Subsequent experiments found birds acting as if they found the brightly colored caterpillars distasteful.

Audubon himself, Birkhead says,

performed a highly influential but flawed experiment purporting to show that turkey vultures lacked the sense of smell and had to locate food by sight alone. His error was to test his theory with putrefying carrion; turkey vultures like it fresh. My favorite of the amazing smell stories is evidence that superimposed on the ocean is a “landscape” of smells related to underwater topography, and that far-ranging petrels and albatrosses, whose brains have huge olfactory bulbs, use not only local plumes of smell to locate food, but also the olfactory landscape to find their way back to the tiny island specks on which they nest. They can't do it if their olfactory nerves are cut.

Birds' feats of navigation have been a subject of wonder and speculation for centuries, and ingenious tracking technology has made it clear just how spectacular they can be. Geolocators, for example, are electrical devices that make it possible to track a bird's movements by periodically recording the level of ambient light. From these data, one can determine the length of day, which correlates with latitude, and the time of solar noon, which correlates with longitude.

Important early studies of migration were based on caged birds, which can become restless at migration time, hopping up and down. Placed in “orientation cages,” allowing them to see the night sky, they hop in the direction of their migratory destination. These experiments provided evidence that some birds could use the stars for navigation; but more is involved, since some could orient themselves in total darkness.

That realization revived a possibility,

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first suggested in the 19th century, that birds have a compass able to detect the earth's magnetic field. The suggestion had been dismissed because there seemed to be no physiological mechanism to account for it. But experimenters in the 1950s showed that changing the magnetic field inside the cage with externally applied magnetic coils caused birds to reorient their hopping to the direction of this new field.

Birkhead sketches the two leading explanations for how this happens. The more charming goes like this: Magnetic fields can affect the rate at which certain chemical reactions take place; thus, the rate of reaction can serve as a detector. Further, those reactions are also induced by light; so a magnetic field may alter a bird's response to light, which suggests that the presence of a magnetic field may be, literally, visible. This possibility gets support from astonishing experiments showing that a robin's magnetic compass works only if the bird can see clearly out of its right eye. (An obvious question not discussed: Why, then, don't humans also see magnetic fields?)

Birkhead begins his chapter on emotions with the story of a goose whose mate had been shot, and who spent the next week doing what might be described as standing vigil beside the body. Although we can explain this, he says, without reference to emotions — as a programmed response — we don't have to. Fair enough. Birkhead is inclined to believe that birds do experience emotions, and hopes that behavioral observations and physiological measurements (birds secreting certain hormones, as humans do, in presump-

tively “emotional” situations) will be illuminating. It's hard to see, however, how such measurements can ever count as evidence against the view that birds are simply automata. The point of Thomas Nagel's famous essay “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” is not (merely) the difficulty of knowing what it is like to belong to some other species, but that “no presently available conception gives us a clue” how an essentially subjective experience could be accounted for by a purely physical explanation.

Bird Sense cites a claim that we are currently in the golden age of sensory research on humans and expresses the hope that a golden age in the study of sensation in birds is to come. Perhaps Tim Birkhead will be able to write its chronicle in the not-too-distant future.

— David Guaspari  
The Weekly Standard  
October 21, 28, 2013, p. 40, 41

## Marriage

Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) has announced it will suspend a policy against same-sex relationships for faculty, as the school enters a “listening period” to review its stance on homosexuality. If the policy change becomes permanent, EMU would become the first member institution of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU) to allow practicing gays and lesbians to serve as professors. The school's board of trustees unanimously approved the review.

EMU President, Loren Swartzen-druber, said that the period of reflection would allow the school “to engage in community discussion and discernment over issues that Mennonite

congregations — indeed almost all denominations in the United States today — are wrestling with.” The board also reaffirmed EMU's relationship with the Mennonite Church USA — but that denomination's “Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective” states that “God intends marriage to be a covenant between one man and one woman for life.” Now, faculty candidates at EMU must explain any objections they have to the Confession, and professors must also sign the school's “Community Lifestyle Commitment,” which prohibits “sexual relationships outside of marriage.” The state of Virginia, where EMU is located, does not recognize same-sex marriages.

The CCCU, which has not commented on EMU's deliberations, is an association of 119 North American institutions. The CCCU says its mission is “to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth.”

The Mennonite Church USA has had its own struggles regarding same-sex marriage. In 2012, the denomination rebuffed attempts to discipline pastor Joanna Harader for performing a same-sex “covenant ceremony.” Instead of suspending her, as some conservative churches had requested, delegates to the Mennonite Church's Western District Conference simply noted that her action was “at variance” with Mennonite Church guidelines.

A REPORT COMMISSIONED by the Church of England is recommending that Anglicans allow ministers to perform “appropriate services to



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mark a faithful same-sex relationship,” but not offer formal gay marriage ceremonies. Although the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, noted that the Pilling Report did not represent a “new policy statement,” conservatives worried that it would lead to official church blessings of homosexual unions.

The committee, chaired by former government official Sir Joseph Pilling, said that the “foundation” of their report was the desire to “warmly welcome and affirm the presence and ministry within the Church of England of gay and lesbian people,” including homosexual clergy. They further asserted that the Church needed to repent of homophobia in its ranks.

The report cautioned, however, that conservatives were not by definition homophobes just because they articulated “traditional Christian teaching on same sex relationships.” The Church, the committee said, should also consider continuing scientific advances in understanding homosexual attraction, as well as the dramatic shift of opinion, especially among young people, on gay relationships — but the public’s view should not “of itself determine the Church’s teaching.”

Lee Gatiss, director of the traditionalist Church Society, welcomed an open discussion of the report, arguing that some liberal Anglicans were trying to change “the gospel into an affirmation of immoral behavior.” Committee member Keith Sinclair, the Bishop of Birkenhead, refused to sign the report, saying he feared the Church was heading toward “cultural captivity” instead of biblical faithfulness. “The Christian Church has consistently taught from

biblical times that the sexual holiness ... involves the restriction of sexual activity to the context of marriage between one man and one woman,” Birkenhead insisted.

Recent years have seen growing divisions in the worldwide Anglican Communion, with conservative Anglicans in Africa and elsewhere not embracing homosexual activity.

— Thomas Kidd  
World

December 28, 2013, p. 64

## Mormonism

We hear it over and over again. “We never put down other churches. That’s not Christian.” Or, a variant on this theme is, “You have strengthened my testimony, because you are persecuting the Church!” Often LDS people interpret any disagreement with their beliefs as “persecution” or “bashing,” and claim that their Church would never do that!

Yet, in reality, disagreement and refutation is not persecution. If it is, then Paul was “persecuting” the Judaizers in Galatia when he wrote such a strong letter denouncing their beliefs (the book of Galatians). Christians are to stand for the truth, and “refute those who contradict” (Titus 1:9). In fact, it is an act of love to speak the truth (see our onsite e-tract, *Why Do You Do This?*).

But there is another reason LDS people should not cry “Foul!” when encountering strong disagreement with LDS beliefs. It’s a matter of simple consistency. As the following quotations show, Mormon leaders, and even Mormon scripture, denounce the Christian faith! Why is it fair for Joseph Smith

to say all other churches are “corrupt,” yet Christians cannot reply by saying Joseph Smith was in error?

“Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the Church of the Lamb of God and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore whoso belongeth not to the church of the lamb of God belongeth to that great church; which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth.” (The Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 14:10)

“Nothing less than a complete apostasy from the Christian religion would warrant the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” (Documentary History of the Church, Introduction, xl)

“I was answered that I must join none of them (Christian Churches), for they were all wrong ... that all their creeds were an abomination in His sight.” (Joseph Smith History 1:19)

“Orthodox Christian views of God are Pagan rather than Christian.” (Mormon Doctrine of Deity by B.H. Roberts, p.116)

“The God whom the ‘Christians’ worship is a being of their own creation ...” (Apostle Charles W. Penrose, JD 23:243)

“The Christian world, so called, are heathens as to their knowledge of the salvation of God.” (Brigham Young, JD 8:171)

“We may very properly say that the sectarian world do not know anything correctly, so far as pertains to salvation. Ask them where heaven is, where they are going to when they die, where Paradise is, and there is not a priest in the world that can answer your questions. Ask them what kind of a being our

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Heavenly Father is, and they cannot tell you so much as Balaam’s ass told him. They are more ignorant than children.” (Brigham Young, JD 5:229)

“The Christian world, I discovered, was like the captain and crew of a vessel on the ocean without a compass, and tossed to and fro whithersoever the wind listed to blow them. When the light came to me, I saw that all the so-called Christian world was groveling in darkness.” (Brigham Young, JD 5:73)

“What! Are Christians ignorant? Yes, as ignorant of the things of God as the brute best.” (John Taylor, JD 13:225)

“What does the Christian world know about God? Nothing. ... Why so far as the things of God are concerned, they are the veriest fools; they know neither God nor the things of God.” (John Taylor, JD 13:225)

“Believers in the doctrines of modern Christendom will reap damnation to their souls.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p.177)

“I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true.” (Joseph Smith, DHC 1:6)

“I spoke of the impropriety of turning away from the truth, and going after a people so destitute of righteousness as the Methodists.” (Joseph Smith, DHC 2:319)

“Brother Joseph B. Nobles once told a Methodist priest, after hearing him describe his god, that the god they worshiped was the “Mormon’s” Devil — a being without a body, whereas our God has a body, parts, and passions.” (Brigham Young, JD 5:331)

“Brother Heber C. Kimball was beset by a number of Baptist priests who

had been attending a conference. He read them all down out of the New Testament. ... With regard to true theology, a more ignorant people never lived than the present so-called Christian world.” (Brigham Young, JD 8:199)

“The Roman Catholic, Greek, and Protestant church, is the great corrupt, ecclesiastical power, represented by great Babylon ...” (Orson Pratt, *Orson Pratt, Writings of an Apostle*, Divine Authenticity,” no.6, p.84)

“All the priests who adhere to the sectarian religions of the day with all their followers, without one exception, receive their portion with the devil and his angels.” (The Elders Journal, Joseph Smith Jr., editor, vol.1, no.4, p.60)

“And any person who shall be so wicked as to receive a holy ordinance of the gospel from the ministers of any of these apostate churches will be sent down to hell with them, unless they repent of the unholy and impious act.” (Orson Pratt, OP-WA, “The Kingdom of God,” no.2, p.6)

“All other churches are entirely destitute of all authority from God; and any person who receives baptism or the Lord’s supper from their hands will highly offend God, for he looks upon them as the most corrupt people.” (Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, p.255)

“The great apostate church as the antichrist ... this great antichrist ... is the church of the devil.” (Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p.40)

“Both Catholics and Protestants are nothing less than the “whore of Babylon” whom the lord denounces by the mouth of John the Revelator as having corrupted all the earth by their fornications and wickedness.” (Pratt, *The Seer*,

p.255)

“Brother Taylor has just said that the religions of the day were hatched in hell. The eggs were laid in hell, hatched on its borders, and then kicked on to the earth.” (Brigham Young, JD 6:176)

“Evil spirits control much of the so-called religious worship in the world; for instance, the great creeds of Christendom were formulated so as to conform to their whispered promptings.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p.246)

“After the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, there were only two churches upon the earth. They were known respectively as the Church of the Lamb of God and Babylon. The various organizations which are called churches throughout Christendom, though differing in their creeds and organizations, have one common origin. They belong to Babylon.” (George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truth*, p.324)

Finally, note the views of Mormon Prophet Brigham Young regarding the Christian view of Jesus Christ:

“You may hear the divines of the day extol the character of the Saviour, undertake to exhibit his true character before the people, and give an account of his origin. ... I have frequently thought of mules, which you know are half horse and half ass, when reflecting upon the representations made by those divines. I have heard sectarian priests undertake to tell the character of the Son of God, and they make him half of one species and half of another, and I could not avoid thinking at once of the mule, which is the most hateful creature that ever was made, I believe. You



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will excuse me, but I have thus thought many a time.” (Journal of Discourses 4:217)

—James White

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) has issued a major statement explaining racial policies that once banned black men from the Mormon priesthood, and that excluded all African-Americans from Mormon temples. Although LDS officials rescinded these prohibitions in 1978, the church had never fully addressed their historical roots.

“Race and the Priesthood” acknowledges that the bans came about under Brigham Young and other leaders, emerging in the context of pervasive 19th-century racism that “influenced all aspects of people’s lives, including their religion.” The biblical justifications often cited for the ethnic restrictions reflected “widespread ideas about racial inferiority,” the statement says.

“Race and the Priesthood” represents a major transition for the church, especially because of Mormons’ belief in the prophetic authority of leaders such as Young. The statement implies that the racial exclusions were rooted in early Mormon leaders’ prejudices, not divine revelation.

Patrick Mason, the Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies at Claremont Graduate University, told me the announcement raises important questions for committed Mormons: What does it mean “that their prophets, whom they believe receive revelation from God, could allow the ban to happen (and supported it either explicitly or implicitly for 125 years)? If God is leading the church through His prophets, why

didn’t He step in and stop it?” Mason notes that Mormons have never technically considered their prophets infallible, but that this statement identifies a troubling case in which the prophets were certainly wrong.

Mason also commends the new pronouncement for acknowledging that the Mormon racial prohibition was not just about the priesthood, but about banning all blacks from temples, where “Mormonism’s highest rites (including marriage for eternity) take place.”

— Thomas Kidd  
World Magazine  
January 25, 2014

## Marijuana Legalization

To the delight of dorm rooms everywhere, President Obama has all but endorsed marijuana legalization. “We should not be locking up kids or individual users for long stretches of jail time when some of the folks who are writing those laws have probably done the same thing,” he told the New Yorker magazine. Let’s try to see through this political haze.

Mr. Obama also muses to an admiring David Remnick that while pot is “a bad habit and a vice” and not something he would encourage his daughters to try, “I don’t think it is more dangerous than alcohol.” He called the Colorado and Washington legalization experiments “important for society,” while offering no comment on the federal Controlled Substances Act that he has an obligation to enforce equally across the country.

Marijuana remains a Schedule I substance under that 1970 law, meaning that it has a high risk of abuse. “No

more dangerous than alcohol” is still dangerous, given the destructiveness of alcohol-related disease and social ills like drunk driving. There’s an industry related to mitigating alcohol problems, after all.

We tolerate drinking because most adults use alcohol responsibly, and by all means let’s have a debate about cannabis given how much of the country has already legalized it under the false flag of “medical” marijuana. But an honest debate would not whitewash pot’s risks.

A growing body of medical research shows that the psychoactive substance in marijuana may cause permanent cognitive damage when used by adolescents, such as impaired memory and learning. The drug can trigger psychotic episodes, especially among vulnerable late adolescents, and the price decreases and social normalization of recreational use will increase the number of underage potheads.

“Middle-class kids don’t get locked up for smoking pot, and poor kids do,” Mr. Obama added. Actually, almost nobody gets locked up for pot. Americans collectively smoke for three billion days a year and use has increased 38 percent since 2007, according to a Rand Corp. analysis of federal health survey data, yet there were merely about 750,000 marijuana-related “arrests” in the U.S. in 2012. In the official FBI statistics, that can mean anything from a ticket or summons to a full booking.

Very few people are incarcerated for simple possession, which makes up about 88 percent of arrests. There are currently about 40,000 state and federal prisoners serving time for marijuana-re-

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lated convictions, and most have violent criminal histories. Most judges must be persuaded that someone is a true danger to society to sentence prison for mere drug use.

Mr. Obama is also kidding himself if he thinks drug legalization will be a boon to the poor. His own history of drug use is well known, but most users aren’t the privileged students of the Punahou School. Like all human vices, the misery of addiction is always worse for those who lack the resources and family support of the affluent.

Mr. Obama is now the President, not a stoned teenager riffing with his Choom Gang, and he might have set a better example. Parents trying to teach their kids to make better choices than getting high are at a disadvantage when the person in charge of upholding the law says breaking the law is no big deal.

If the President believes that marijuana prohibition is an injustice, he has an obligation to propose his own legislative reforms, instead of unilaterally suspending the enforcement of federal drug laws that don’t fit his political agenda. Why not start with the State of the Union address? Whatever Mr. Obama’s personal views on marijuana, his picking and choosing from the U.S. code is far more corrosive to the rule of law and trust in government.

— Wall Street Journal  
January 22, 2014, p. A18

Former Rep. Patrick Kennedy says President Barack Obama is wrong about the dangers of marijuana, saying that the drug today is not like what the president smoked in his youth.

The former eight-term Rhode Island Democrat said Obama’s statement

in an interview this weekend that pot is not worse than alcohol was based on anecdotal evidence, not science.

“I think the president needs to speak to his NIH director in charge of drug abuse,” Kennedy said on MSNBC’s Hardball on Monday night. “[She] would tell the president that, in fact, today’s modern, genetically modified marijuana, so it’s much higher THC levels, far surpass the marijuana that the president acknowledges smoking when he was a young person.”

Kennedy said government research shows that marijuana is harmful.

“He is wrong when he says that it isn’t very harmful, because the new marijuana is not the old marijuana,” Kennedy said. “We need to have presidential decisions made based upon public health and the sound science that the federal government’s invested in.”

The former congressman said if the president believes alcohol is more dangerous, he should be concerned about legalizing and commercializing marijuana, because, Kennedy argues, America doesn’t want another Big Tobacco or Big Alcohol.

“I mean, if the president feels alcohol is worse than tobacco, what’s he prepared to do? And I’ll tell you, the president won’t be able to do a thing,” Kennedy said. “Why? Because alcohol is too powerful an industry to change. And right now, we have a chance to stop another for-profit industry from targeting our public health.”

The son of the late Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and nephew of President John F. Kennedy is the chairman of the advocacy group Smart Approaches to Marijuana.

Marijuana advocates took issue with Kennedy’s remarks, saying he missed the point.

“There is a certain irony in Kennedy — who admits he doesn’t have much experience with marijuana — lecturing President Obama about this, especially when the president was focusing his comments on the need to end the injustices of disparate enforcement,” said Aaron Houston, a lobbyist and co-founder of the Marijuana Majority.

Houston also rejected comparisons to the alcohol and tobacco industry, saying such analogies were designed to scare voters.

— Tal Kopan  
Politico  
January 21, 2014

## Socialism

Marxist leftists have prepared a nightmarish blueprint for American socialism in a new revolutionary “book of imagination.”

The new book, *Imagine Living in a Socialist USA*, was edited by Frances Goldin, who praises “life-enhancing socialism” in the preface. The 281-page manifesto showcases 31 utopian essays written by dangerous criminals, prominent liberals, and self-described communists — all for just \$10.11.

It imagines a “free” and “enlightened” socialist United States, promoting radical notions such as eliminating prisons and creating mandatory worker-owned businesses. More dangerously, it details “how to get from where we are to where we want to be,” and the authors seem determined to destroy “rapacious” and “cancerous” capitalism, by revolution if necessary.



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The new book is stocked with pieces featuring Bill Ayers, Michael Moore, and even Mumia Abu Jamal. It's a perfect fit for Karl Marx's library, and brought together calls for establishment of grade and competition-free schools and the greatest hits of terrible Occupy Wall Street demands into a strident call for "the Third American Revolution."

Here, are some of the most extreme and famous among this group of radicals and liberal journalists:

Joel Kovel's piece makes no pretense about its radical aims, complete with a Marxist slogan in the first paragraph: "Working men of all countries unite!"

The author and anti-Israel firebrand invoke environmental hysteria over issues such as climate change, asserting that "our obligation is to remake society from the ground up in the service of life. If this be read as a demand for revolution, so be it." Socialism, he claims, would foster a society where humans will organize their economy in accordance with environmental demands. Kovel certainly rejected capitalism, calling it "a kind of metastasizing cancer, a disease that demands radical treatment — revolutionary change."

Mumia Abu-Jamal, the convicted murderer of a Philadelphia police officer, and Angela Davis, former leader of the Communist Party U.S.A., worked together to pen a bizarre essay on crime. It begins by asserting, "The concept of 'crime,' like much that we today take for granted, is a sociopolitical construct."

The authors' objections to prisons fit well into their colorful biographies. Abu-Jamal was convicted in 1982 of shooting Philadelphia Police Officer

Daniel Faulkner in the back. His case became a hot-button political issue for radical liberals, including this book's editor who described a life goal as "to free Mumia Abu-Jamal from the bars that constrain him." Free Mumia T-shirts have long been fixtures of the protest landscape.

Davis, for her part, was implicated in a 1970 courtroom shootout, though she was found not-guilty after spending three months on the run. Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev awarded her the Lenin Peace Price in 1979.

These two radicals advocate nothing less than the complete dismantling of the prison system. They argued that a socialist United States would "end mass incarceration by prison abolition." While you may be wondering what they think would suffice to stop crime, they advocate a system which "brings the offender and the victim together to talk to each other."

Yes, let's force victims to engage in dialogue with their attackers.

No socialist treatise would be complete without the violent terrorist and self-described "communist" Bill Ayers. In his essay, Ayers advocates a radical change to the education system which would eliminate "the laborious programs of sorting the crowd into winners and losers through testing and punishing, grading, assessing, and judging."

For Ayers, education has become a capitalist organization which has less to offer "an inquiring mind" than the "city dump" or "a street corner." The problem, he says, is that capitalism encourages us to "think of education as a product like a car or a refrigerator." He

supported completely dismantling the education system, in favor of a poorly defined system without grades that instead focuses on "full human development, enlightenment, and freedom."

He never addresses the fact that public education in the United States is run by the government, though he blamed "a merry band of billionaires" for pushing public schooling reforms.

Bill Ayers was a founding member of the openly communist and revolutionary Weather Underground in 1969. Ayers has admitted to facilitating a series of anti-war bombings while a member of this organization.

Le Blanc, a historian at La Roche College, examines how a contemporary socialist revolution would fit into the revolutionary history of the United States. He views both the American Revolution and the "Second American Revolution" (Civil War) as times when progressive forces destroyed unjust power structures in America.

He promotes another revolution, saying, "Many U.S. socialists have argued that we must undertake a third American revolution that would end the economic dictatorship of capitalism and establish rule by the people over our economy."

He proceeds to explain how the American working class has become dissatisfied with the status quo and how socialist activists can begin to prepare for a revolutionary movement. According to Le Blanc, now is a particularly fruitful time for revolution, as the inequality of wealth provides "fantastic potential for socialist transformation today."

Michael Moore, the prominent

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lefty filmmaker, did not write an original article for this book. Instead, Goldin selected a 2011 article, which Moore wrote to promote the then newly formed Occupy Wall Street movement. Moore promotes the typical OWS slogans, alternating between platitudes about "a truly free, democratic, and just society" and hard-line leftist legislation, like carbon reduction, confiscatory taxes, and a massive welfare state.

Almost sadly, he ends this proposal with an optimistic call to arms, stating, "Occupy Wall Street enjoys the support of millions. It is a movement that cannot be stopped."

How did that work out for him?

— Sean Long

CNS News

January 22, 2014

## Common Sense

### "The Gods of the Copybook Headings"

As I pass through my incarnations in every age and race,  
I make my proper prostrations to the Gods of the Market Place.  
Peering through reverent fingers I watch them flourish and fall,  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings, I notice, outlast them all.  
We were living in trees when they met us. They showed us each in turn  
That Water would certainly wet us, as Fire would certainly burn:  
But we found them lacking in Uplift, Vision, and Breadth of Mind,  
So we left them to teach the Gorillas while we followed the March of Man-kind.

We moved as the Spirit listed. They never altered their pace,

Being neither cloud nor wind-borne like the Gods of the Market Place;  
But they always caught up with our progress, and presently word would come

That a tribe had been wiped off its icefield, or the lights had gone out in Rome.

With the Hopes that our World is built on they were utterly out of touch,  
They denied that the Moon was Stilton; they denied she was even Dutch;  
They denied that Wishes were Horses; they denied that a Pig had Wings;  
So we worshipped the Gods of the Market Who promised these beautiful things.

When the Cambrian measures were forming, they promised perpetual peace.

They swore, if we gave them our weapons, that the wars of the tribes would cease.

But when we disarmed they sold us and delivered us bound to our foe,  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings said: "Stick to the Devil you know."  
On the first Feminian Sandstones we were promised the Fuller Life  
(Which started by loving our neighbour and ended by loving his wife)

Till our women had no more children and the men lost reason and faith,  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings said: "The Wages of Sin is Death."  
In the Carboniferous Epoch we were promised abundance for all,  
By robbing selected Peter to pay for collective Paul;

But, though we had plenty of money, there was nothing our money could buy,

And the Gods of the Copybook Head-

ings said: "If you don't work you die." Then the Gods of the Market tumbled, and their smooth-tongued wizards withdrew

And the hearts of the meanest were humbled and began to believe it was true

That All is not Gold that Glitters, and Two and Two make Four —  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings limped up to explain it once more.  
As it will be in the future, it was at the birth of Man —

There are only four things certain since Social Progress began:

That the Dog returns to his Vomit and the Sow returns to her Mire,  
And the burnt Fool's bandaged finger goes wabbling back to the Fire;  
And that after this is accomplished, and the brave new world begins

When all men are paid for existing and no man must pay for his sins,

As surely as Water will wet us, as surely as Fire will burn,

The Gods of the Copybook Headings with terror and slaughter return!

— Rudyard Kipling