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Fighting Poverty: Why Redistributing Wealth Doesn't Work ... and Four Things That Do

The rich are getting richer. *The Economist* reports that the share of the national income going to the top 1 percent of Americans has doubled since 1980 (from 10 percent to 20 percent). The top 1 percent own around 40 percent of the nation's wealth.

To many, this growing gap is a threat to our nation's well-being. In December 2013, for example, President Obama called rising income inequality "the defining challenge of our time" and suggested that the growing wealth of those at the top is what is preventing those at the bottom from improving their standard of living: "Greater inequality is associated with less mobility between generations," he said. As a result, the president continued, "[a] dangerous and growing inequality and lack of upward mobility ... has jeopardized middle-class America's basic bargain — that if you work hard, you have a chance to get ahead."

To reduce the income gap, President Obama supports hiking the federal minimum wage, increasing tax rates on the highest earners, and instituting various federal programs. But while these methods of government intervention will redistribute wealth, will they actually alleviate poverty or get the lower and middle classes moving again?

These questions are certain to be at the center of this fall's election cycle, and Christians ought to be informed about them. At Summit, we teach students to apply a biblical worldview to difficult issues by moving beyond political-party slogans to ask hard questions about the proper role of the government, the church, and the family, and how to help people truly flourish.

Some assume that because the Bible condemns greed and commands that we help the poor, we ought to support government programs such as those



By Aaron Zubia

President Obama suggests. But good public policy demands that we move beyond good intentions and face the facts about what does — and does not — help lower-income families succeed.

Facing the Facts

Income Inequality Is Not the Problem

- **The income gap is not what is stopping poor people from getting ahead:** A recent study by a group of Harvard economists led by Raj Chetty directly contradicts the President's claim that greater income inequality hampers economic mobility. "[T]he top 1 percent share [of wealth] is uncorrelated with relative mobility," Chetty writes. Reviewing the work of his colleagues, economist Lawrence F. Katz admits that, despite the growth in inequality, "it is not true that mobility itself is getting lower." Ultimately, children today have the same likelihood of moving to a higher-income bracket as they did 50 years ago.

- **The rich getting richer does not make the poor poorer:** The evidence shows that recent economic growth has made everyone better off. A Congressional Budget Office report from 2011 showed that income grew by 275 percent for the top 1 percent of house-

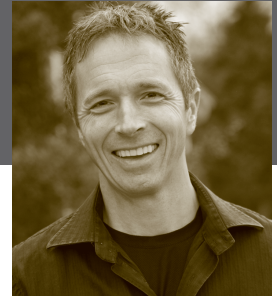
holds, 65 percent for the next 19 percent, just under 40 percent for the next 60 percent, and 18 percent for the bottom 20 percent. In other words, Peter does not have to rob Paul in order to get rich. When wealth is created, both Peter and Paul tend to benefit, even though those benefits do not accrue equally.

- **The poor are getting richer too:** A study published in the *National Tax Journal* showed that "more than half of the households in the top 1 percent in 2005 were not there in 1996." In other words, lots of people are rising to the top. It's true in lower income brackets as well. Thomas Sowell writes, "[B]etween 1996 and 2005, the income of individuals who had been in the bottom 20 percent of income-tax filers in 1996 had increased by 91 percent by 2005, and the income of those individuals who were in the top 1 percent in 1996 had fallen by 26 percent. ... Whatever the relationship between one income bracket and another, that is not necessarily the relationship between people, because people are moving from one bracket to another as time goes on." According to a Pew report on economic

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from the president's desk

a word from dr. jeff myers



President Obama is wrong. The goal of good public policy is not to reduce income inequality but to remove the barriers to upward mobility. Redistribution doesn't solve the problem. True concern for the poor requires that we help people achieve financial independence. By encouraging economic growth and promoting the stabilizing institutions of the family, the church, and local schools, we create an environment in which people flourish, poverty rates plummet, and prosperity abounds.

But isn't the Bible against trying to increase financial resources? If I had a dollar for every one of my college professors who told me that "the Bible says money is the root of all evil," I could have taken my friends out for a very nice meal. When I finally got smart enough to study it myself, I discovered that the Bible doesn't say any such thing. The love of money — not money itself — is the root of evil.

The Bible is not anti-money. It is anti-idolatry. God is generous in providing the resources needed to advance His kingdom, but he opposes those who divert those resources to self-worship. The problem with the rich young ruler confronted by Jesus was not that he had money, but that he exalted his money above God. In the words of Bernard of Clairvaux, "he did not own his possessions; they owned him."

Scripture's primary weapon against idolizing money is generosity. "God will generously provide all you need," Paul writes. "Then you will

have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others" (2 Corinthians 9:8). Scripture especially emphasizes being generous with those who have been downtrodden (Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 1 John 3:17).

And guess what? Generous people are happy people.¹ I've observed this personally just in the last couple of weeks of visiting with individuals who have provided scholarships to send students to our summer conferences.

“The Bible is not anti-money. It is anti-idolatry. God is generous in providing the resources needed to advance His kingdom, but he opposes those who divert those resources to self-worship.”

Dr. Jeff Myers

Every one of these donors told me they experience joy when they give because they know they are investing in future leaders who can make this country a better place.

And it is working. Last week, a dad wrote to me about his son who had received a scholarship last year to attend Summit: "When he

came home, he was energized and pumped up in a way he hadn't been before. He had a better understanding of his place in the world, his ability to have an effect, and how subtly culture permeated thoughts and decisions. His priorities changed, and his desire was to see what God had for him." And thanks to the generosity of our donors, this young man's younger brother will have an opportunity to attend a Summit conference this year. Who wouldn't feel joy in knowing they helped these brothers become "double trouble" for Satan's kingdom?

If you know of young people who ought to attend this summer, please get them in touch with us right away. We are on pace for record enrollment but still have seats available in Colorado (late summer), in Tennessee (July), and in California (June).

On behalf of our Summit team, I want to express how grateful we are to these generous givers. It fills us with a sense of humility and resolve, and a desire to do everything within our power to prepare godly, courageous leaders for these desperate times.

Notes

1. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/30/opinion/sunday/why-fund-raising-is-fun.html?_r=2

fighting poverty

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mobility, “the vast majority of Americans have higher family incomes than their parents did.” Additionally, as the Heritage Foundation indicates, a majority of poor households have refrigerators, televisions, air conditioning, microwaves, televisions, cars, and cellular phones, which signals an amazing rise in the standard of living in this country over the last several decades. Gary Burtless, an economist from the Brookings Institution, writes that both the poor and the middle class got richer between 1979 and 2010.

Government Intervention Is Not the Solution

- **Federal anti-poverty programs are not the solution:** The track record of federal programs to help the poor is not good. A recent House Budget Committee report states: “Today, the poverty rate is stuck at 15 percent — the highest in a generation. ... Federal programs are not only failing to address the problem. They are also in some significant respects making it worse.” Fifty years ago, President Lyndon Johnson began the War on Poverty, which was initially designed to help people achieve financial independence. Whereas the poverty rate was 17.3 percent in 1965, it was 15 percent in 2012. Trillions of dollars in government spending and efforts at redistribution have hardly improved the situation of the most destitute. Today, an estimated 21.8 percent of children live below the poverty line.

- **A higher minimum wage is not the solution:** The Congressional Budget Office predicts that a \$10.10 minimum wage would result in the reduction of about 500,000 jobs. The income for each of those 500,000 people would fall from \$7.25 per hour to the true minimum wage: zero. An increase in the federal minimum wage will not reduce poverty because

over half of all employees earning minimum wage are teenagers or young adults who are not heads of a household. In actuality, 66 percent of minimum-wage workers live in families with incomes above the poverty line. Studies indicate that over 50 percent of Americans start their careers making close to minimum wage, but quickly begin earning more as they gain additional experience.

- **Higher taxes are not the solution:** In *National Review*, Michael Barone notes, “If the government had simply confiscated every dollar from those reporting more than \$1 million taxable income in 2008, it would not have gotten the \$1.3 trillion needed to close the current federal budget deficit.” Rev. Robert Sirico, President of the Acton Institute, reveals the chimera of taxing the rich in order to equalize wealth: “If we confiscated all of the wealth of the world’s richest 1 percent — every last penny — we could distribute about \$13,000 to every person on the planet — one time. ... [H]ow much good would [that] do for the average poor person in the long term?”

What Really Works in Alleviating Poverty

Christians are concerned about the well-being of the poor, which is exactly why we must turn our attention away from income inequality (a false problem) and the redistribution of wealth (a false solution), toward the real causes of poverty and the best means by which to ease the plight of the poor. These approaches feed envy and resentment, which keeps us from rejoicing in our neighbor’s good and prevents us from appreciating the goods we do have.

Poverty is a real issue, and, although upward mobility hasn’t declined in the last 50 years, it is still too difficult for people to advance to a higher income bracket during their

lifetimes. Pew reports that “43 percent of Americans raised in the bottom quintile remain stuck in the bottom as adults. ... [And] only 4 percent of those raised in the bottom quintile make it all the way to the top as adults.” According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, 32.3 million kids (45 percent) live in low-income families.

So what should be done? In their widely discussed report on economic opportunity, Raj Chetty and his fellow economists point out that the best way to alleviate poverty is not to reduce income inequality but to remove barriers to upward mobility. These barriers include: family breakdown, low religiosity, low civic engagement, lack of education, and unemployment.

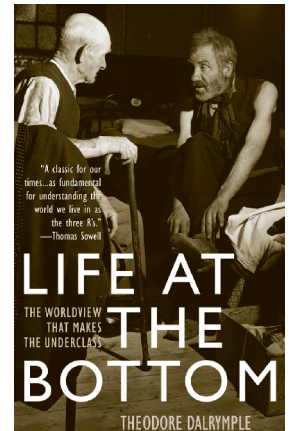
Christians can help increase upward mobility in four ways:

Promoting Strong Families

Growing up in a two-parent home is the surest way to avoid poverty. Unfortunately, the number of homes in which kids are raised by a single mother has doubled since the 1980s. Raj Chetty writes, “[T]he strongest predictors of upward mobility are measures of family structure such as the fraction of single parents in the area.” Simply growing up in a community with more single-parent families

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Suggested Reading



Life at the Bottom: The Worldview That Makes the Underclass

by Theodore Dalrymple

On sale now at

summit.org/store.

fighting poverty

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has a detrimental impact on children raised in two-parent homes.

Promoting Faith

Again, Raj Chetty finds that “high upward-mobility areas tend to have higher fractions of religious individuals and greater participation in local civic organizations.” A robust faith and active church involvement thrusts people into community life, helping them to build solidarity and inculcate the virtues necessary for human flourishing. The discipline and values that tend to guide religious believers have a positive impact on their personal, social, and economic well-being. Additionally, charitable endeavors promoted by churches are designed to alleviate both spiritual and material poverty.

Promoting Education

The American Enterprise Institute published a study linking high-school dropout rates with low upward mobility. Raj Chetty writes that the highest mobility occurs when children are educated at schools with high test scores, low dropout rates, and small class sizes. Increased school choice will allow children from low-income neighborhoods to attend better schools and associate with better peer groups, which also contributes to upward mobility.

According to the Pew Economic Mobility Project, “47 percent of those born in the bottom quintile will remain there if they are unable to complete college. Contrast that with their peers who do manage to complete college — only 10 percent will remain in the bottom quintile. ... Without a job, it is difficult to get out of poverty. And without education, it is difficult to find a job. The lack of affordable education — and of effective training programs — hinders skill formation, which is critical to social mobility.”

Promoting Work

In his book *Defending the Free Market*, Rev. Robert Sirico writes

that jobs are the best anti-poverty program. “[T]he past 200 years have seen the astounding rise of billions of the world’s population out of abject poverty. ... What rescued hundreds of millions of people from the direst poverty? Simple, humdrum business.” Continuing, Sirico notes, “[B]etween 1800 and 1950, the proportion of the world’s population living in dire poverty halved, and from 1950 to 1980 it halved again. ... Economic freedom and business enterprise lift people out of poverty; the absence of freedom and enterprise traps people in poverty.”

Economists at the Brookings Institution put it rather simply: If you work full-time, have a high school education, and wait until you are married to have children, you have a

“The best way to alleviate poverty is not to reduce income inequality but to remove barriers to upward mobility.”

2 percent chance of being poor. Each of these elements — family, faith, education, and work — combine to give people the tools, the incentives, and the support to rise out of poverty, to improve their standard of living, and, finally being freed from financial hardship, to pursue spiritual goods. By actively promoting and pursuing these goods — these foundational elements of human flourishing that respect human dignity and offer purpose and direction — we can help prevent poverty before it begins. In so doing, we will fulfill one of our most primary Christian duties: to care for the least among us.

Notes

1. http://budget.house.gov/uploadedfiles/war_on_poverty.pdf
2. http://obs.rc.fas.harvard.edu/chetty/mobility_geo.pdf
3. <http://reason.com/archives/2014/03/17/obama-wrong-about-income-inequ>
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a look at our world

news and commentary



Editor's Note: Our President Emeritus, Dr. David Noebel, 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/, open the PDF, and scroll to page 9, or call us at 866.786.6483.

Science

An Israeli physicist says the breakthrough scientific discovery of further evidence of the Big Bang theory, which some are calling "cosmology's missing link," confirms the universe was created.

"One thing the announcement does do is make it clear that the universe had a definite starting point — a creation — as described in the book of Genesis," Bar Ilan University physics professor Nathan Aviezer told the *Times of Israel*.

"To deny this now is to deny scientific fact."

A team of scientists headed by astronomer John M. Kovac of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics announced Monday it had found the evidence it was seeking to support the theory that the universe had a beginning.

The *New York Times* headlined its story "Space ripples reveal Big Bang's smoking gun."

The report said radio astronomers had confirmed they had detected the beginning of the Big Bang, and a theory by physicist Alan Guth, now at MIT, regarding "inflation" appeared to be correct.

Guth's hypothesis was that the universe was "wrenched violently apart when it was roughly a trillionth of a trillionth of a trillionth of a second old."

Kovac's study detected ripples in the fabric of space-time, what some are calling gravitational waves, as a signature of the creation event.

'Proof' of God's existence?

Aviezer told the *Times of Israel* that the scientific evidence won't make anyone

believe in God.

"Without addressing who or what caused it, the mechanics of the creation process in the Big Bang match the Genesis story perfectly," he said. "If I had to make up a theory to match the first passages in Genesis, the Big Bang theory would be it."

He explained that the sequence of creation in the Genesis narrative begins with nothingness, moves to a ball of energy and light, and then to the universe.

Aviezer noted that even Cambridge University Cosmologist Prof. Steven Hawking found "the actual point of creation lies outside the scope of presently known laws of physics."

Now about that creator.

"As a scientist, I tell people that faith in God is just that. We will never empirically 'prove' the existence of God," Aviezer said. "The Torah quotes God as saying 'let there be light,' and science tells us that this light came into existence, exploding to create the universe as we know it. ... At this point, I think we can say that creation is a scientific fact."

'As big as it gets'

The *New York Times* said that if corroborated, Kovac's work "will stand as a landmark in science comparable to the recent discovery of dark energy pushing the universe apart, or of the Big Bang itself."

"The mechanics of the creation process in the Big Bang match the Genesis story perfectly."

Nathan Aviezer

"It would open vast realms of time and space and energy to science and speculation," the paper said.

Johns Hopkins University professor

Marc Kamionkowski, an expert on early universe issues, said in the report: "This is huge, as big as it gets. This is a signal from the very earliest universe, sending a telegram encoded in gravitational waves."

Kovac and his team were working what is known as the "Background Imaging of Cosmic Extragalactic Polarization."

Gravity waves, described by Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson at Bell Labs in the middle of the last century in their Nobel-Prize-winning study, long have been a little-understood factor in the universe.

Kovac and his team made observations through a series of radio telescopes at the South Pole. A breakthrough came in 2002 when it was noticed that microwave radiation is polarized.

The *New York Times* called it "a step toward the ultimate goal of detecting the gravitational waves from inflation."

"Such waves, squeezing space in one direction and stretching it in another as they go by, would twist the direction of polarization of the microwaves, theorists said. As a result, maps of the polarization in the sky should have little arrows going in spirals."

The data suggests that "what would become our observable universe mushroomed in size at least a trillion trillionfold — from the submicroscopic speck of primordial energy to the size of a grapefruit — in less than a cosmic eye-blink."

It's apparently been growing ever since.

'Missing link'

The existence of the waves had been predicted by Albert Einstein.

Reported the *New York Times*: "Confirming inflation would mean that the universe we see, extending 14 billion light-years in space with its hundreds of billions of galaxies, is only an infinitesimal patch in a larger cosmos whose extent, architect-

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a look at our world

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ture, and fate are unknowable. Moreover, beyond our own universe there might be an endless number of other universes bubbling into frothy eternity, like a pot of pasta water boiling over.”

At the Johns Hopkins website, Kamionkowski said, “It’s not every day that you wake up and learn something new about what happened one trillionth of a trillionth of a trillionth of a second after the Big Bang.”

He called the initial reports “cosmology’s missing link.”

Lawrence Krauss, a theoretical physicist at Arizona State University, told the Associated Press the announcement, if documented, “gives us a window on the universe at the very beginning.”

A Stanford University posting said the waves being detected are “a faint glow left over from the Big Bang.”

“Tiny fluctuations in this afterglow provide clues to conditions in the early universe. For example, small differences in temperature across the sky show where parts of the universe were denser, eventually condensing into galaxies and galactic clusters.”

— *WorldNetDaily*
March 19, 2014

Climate Change

As a former Greenpeace insider, Patrick Moore wasn’t surprised by the heated reaction from the left on his explosive testimony about climate change last week before a Senate committee.

Mr. Moore drew headlines for disputing the environmental movement’s doomsday scenario, depicting climate change over the past century as “minor warming” and arguing that “there is no scientific proof that human emissions of carbon dioxide are the dominant cause.”

As a result, Mr. Moore came under fire for “climate denial” from the liberal group Media Matters for America. He has been persona non grata at Greenpeace for years.

Mr. Moore dismisses such criticism as an “ad hominem personal attack that

doesn’t have anything to do with the subject at hand.” At the same time, he doesn’t mind taking a swipe at those who advocate drastic emissions reductions in the name of stopping climate change.

“I describe the climate-change movement as a combination of an extreme political ideology and a religious cult all rolled into one,” said Mr. Moore. “It’s a very, very dangerous social phenomenon. It causes them to think they have the right to dictate what we do.”

The Canadian ecologist has long been a thorn in the side of Greenpeace, which carries two statements on its website disputing his credentials as an environmentalist.

“While it is true that Patrick Moore was a member of Greenpeace in the 1970s, in 1986 he abruptly turned his back on the very issues he once passionately defended,” says a Greenpeace statement. “He claims he ‘saw the light,’ but what Moore really saw was an opportunity for financial gain.”

Mr. Moore often is described as a Greenpeace co-founder, which Greenpeace officials dispute, but it’s safe to say that he was there almost from the start. The group that became Greenpeace was founded in 1970; Mr. Moore joined a year later and quickly assumed a leadership role.

“I don’t claim that has necessarily any overwhelming importance, whether I was a founder or not, but the fact is I was there at the beginning, even before it was called Greenpeace,” said Mr. Moore. “I was on the first voyage, and I played a very central role in the organization for 15 years.”

He said he left because he was alarmed by the shift in the organization’s goals. Greenpeace was originally about saving the environment and ending the threat of nuclear war. Over time, he said, the “green” overtook the “peace.”

“By the time I left in ‘86, Greenpeace had drifted into a position of characterizing humans as the enemies of the Earth, a cancer on the planet,” said Mr. Moore. “One of my main contentions is that to see humans as separate from nature and the ecology

and the environment is defying the most important first law of ecology, which is that we are all part of nature.”

Teaching children that “the human species is a separate, evil thing from nature is extremely damaging to their orientation of life,” he said.

He said environmentalists have attempted to discredit him because his remarks are devastating to the climate-change movement. The path to significantly lowered emissions in the name of combating climate change leads to some alarming places, he said, namely a world with greater poverty and less democracy.

The climate-change argument “gives them an overarching policy framework to dictate human civilization,” said Mr. Moore. “It basically allows them to say what the energy policy should be, which is the key policy underlying the whole of modern civilization.”

He cited the environmental group 350.org, which is named for the goal of reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide by more than 20 percent to 350 parts per million.

“That would result in at least a billion deaths in a short time period and not a tree left on the Earth within a year because everyone would be scrambling to keep warm and cook their food with something that wasn’t a fossil fuel, which would be wood,” said Mr. Moore. “So the consequences of listening to these people are totally catastrophic, worse than anything that could possibly happen from the temperature going up a couple degrees, which would actually be beneficial, as I point out.”

After leaving Greenpeace, Mr. Moore returned to British Columbia, started the B.C. Carbon Project, became involved in forestry issues, and assumed a role as an active proponent of nuclear energy as co-chairman of the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition.

— Valerie Richardson
The Washington Times
March 10, 2014, p. 13

Gillson Works to Empower and Inspire Culture-Shapers

By Aaron Zubia

Two words come to mind when Kirsten Gillson thinks of her Summit experience: “informative” and “inspiring.” While she was attending her first summer conference, Kirsten realized that she could not remain idle — a passive recipient of the truths being expressed hour after hour by the nation’s top Christian thinkers.

So for the next four consecutive summers — which she considers some of the best of her life — Kirsten served as a staff member in Manitou Springs, where she helped incoming students internalize the Summit mentality, which Kirsten describes as “an unwavering commitment to speak truth, regardless of popular opinion and against any attempt to dilute it.”

“Summit increased my hunger for truth and my desire to take a stand,” Kirsten remarks. And at Summit, Kirsten learned that she does not have to take that stand alone. Under the shelter of the historic Summit hotel, a broad array of Christian traditions is represented. Her exposure to the wider Christian community motivated her to seek out previously estranged brothers and sisters with whom to associate in her defense of the biblical worldview.

While not minimizing denominational differences, Kirsten believes it is imperative that Christ-followers join together in order to bring light and life to culture. Kirsten says, “Working and learning alongside Christians from a variety of denominations and backgrounds showed me the image of Christ and a deep commitment to the obedience of His Word stamped on each individual.”

Through Summit, Kirsten was first



Kirsten Gillson

introduced to Alliance Defending Freedom, a ministry whose goal is to spread the Gospel through the transformation of the legal system. Having listened to several presentations by ADF spokespeople, she felt an irresistible pull toward the organization, which is well-respected for its unwavering commitment to religious liberty, the sanctity of life, and the defense of marriage.

Once her days as a Summit staffer had concluded, Kirsten knew exactly where she wanted to work. She moved to Phoenix, contacted ADF, and landed a job there a few months later. As an internship administrator for the Blackstone Legal Fellowship (ADF’s training and internship program for law students), Kirsten coordinates with attorneys around the world, so that Blackstone Fellows can gain practical experience abroad.

“What really motivates me from day to day,” Kirsten says, “is being involved in assisting future leaders: providing training, resources, and encouragement, facilitating

connections and opportunities that they would not find on their own, and building up the Body of Christ to do mighty things.”

In Kirsten’s opinion, her position at ADF is an extension of the work she began at Summit, where she invested in students and gave them the tools with which to advance God’s truth. Commenting on the similarities between Summit and ADF, Kirsten indicates that both are focused on encouraging students and enabling them to confront a culture that is so often hostile to Christianity.

Kirsten believes that, with a balance of intellectual rigor and Christ-like love, this generation of Christ-followers can go on the offensive, creating a thriving culture they can be proud of. One prominent

“Culture is shaped by those who show up and speak up.”

Kirsten Gillson

theme that has pervaded her work at Summit and ADF concerns Christian engagement with culture: There is no reason for Christians to cower before culture when they have the power to create a culture that is pleasing to God.

“Culture,” Gillson remarks, “is shaped by those who show up and speak up.” Organizations like Summit and ADF inspire students to show up and empower them to speak up. And alumni like Kirsten Gillson are continuing this mission.



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a look at our world

from the desk of dr. david noebel

Gender

Facebook now gives its users 51 genders to choose from, but who's counting? Sex, in modern argot, refers to biology, but gender is what we pick for ourselves. Man has always been able to cultivate and violate his nature: It is his glory, and his temptation. The revolutions and upheavals of the last century applied that freedom to love and eros. But in the third act came the academy: haven from ordinary life, preserve of niche-making careerists, and pool of willful and impressionable kids. From these materials, gender theory has constructed a new scholasticism, replete with terms such as "agender," "neutrois," and "two-spirit." Us, we'll sing along with Alberta Hunter: I want a two-fisted, double-jointed, rough and ready agender. I want a hard-working, no-shirking, good and steady agender.

...

— *National Review*
March 10, 2014, p. 13

Abortion

Planned Parenthood is setting aside a reported \$18 million to help in the campaigns of pro-abortion Democratic candidates. The campaign funding for this year's mid-term legislative and gubernatorial elections will represent the largest-ever foray for the abortion giant, which received a record \$542 million in government funding in 2012. According to its own latest annual report, Planned Parenthood's assets now exceed \$1.5 billion.

Much of the pro-abortion campaign money will flow through the Planned Parenthood Action Fund and Planned Parenthood Votes. Planned

Parenthood officials, who announced the strategy in late February, said they would spend millions in over a dozen states with an emphasis on a half-dozen races such as Senate contests in Texas, where Democratic, pro-abortion state Senator Wendy Davis has been waging a high-profile campaign for the office for nearly a year.

Politico.com, which first highlighted Planned Parenthood's upcoming strategy, reported in late February that in addition to high-profile gubernatorial and federal legislative races, the group's funding would also target "several state legislative races, including campaigns in Arkansas, Iowa, and Pennsylvania where control of one or both legislative chambers is at stake."

Republican pollster Kellyanne Conway told Politico it is time for her party to take a more aggressive stance in battling Planned Parenthood's attack, saying that past GOP strategy toward the abortion giant's "anti-woman" charge against it has been to "ignore it like you're a pregnant teenager, hoping it'll go away, and nine months later it's a really big issue."

Lila Rose, president and founder of the pro-life group Live Action, said in a March 1 email to Breitbart.com that Planned Parenthood's announced pro-abortion campaign spending spree should prompt new calls to defund the billion-dollar abortion business. "There are no winners," she said, "except those making money by selling abortions, when Big-Abortion leader Planned Parenthood pours millions into America's elections."

— *The New American*
March 24, 2014, p. 7

Another 10 hospitals incinerated remains as part of standard garbage disposal protocol. Treat the unborn as "medical waste" and don't be surprised when some facilities take that idea to its logical conclusion.

The Telegraph's headline implies that incineration was reserved for aborted babies, as some sort of final ghoulsh indignity for the unwanted, but the story says the policy was broader than that. Miscarried fetuses ended up being burned too.

Last night, the Department of Health issued an instant ban on the practice, which health minister Dr. Dan Poulter branded 'totally unacceptable.'

...

One of the country's leading hospitals, Addenbrooke's in Cambridge, incinerated 797 babies below 13 weeks gestation at their own 'waste to energy' plant. The mothers were told the remains had been 'cremated.'

Another 'waste to energy' facility at Ipswich Hospital, operated by a private contractor, incinerated 1,101 fetal remains between 2011 and 2013.

They were brought in from another hospital before being burned, generating energy for the hospital site. Ipswich Hospital itself disposes of remains by cremation.

How do you process this story if you're a pro-choicer? I can imagine three camps. One is the "so what?" group. If "life" doesn't begin until viability (or birth, for the hardcore abortion warrior), then yeah, this is medical waste. You don't cremate tumors, do you? Toss it in the incinerator. Next is the group that wants to distinguish between miscarried babies and the

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aborted. The parents of the former saw a life in the making even if pro-choicers didn't; the remains should thus be treated with due decorum, as a consolation to the bereaved. The remains of the aborted needn't be similarly respected. Finally, there's the group that's uncomfortable with treating fetal remains as waste (or fuel) under any circumstances. I don't know how to square that with the idea that life begins at viability, though. To do it, you need to move from the standard pro-choice position that what's growing in the womb isn't really "life," to the position that yes, OK, it's human life, but abortion is a form of justifiable homicide. Then you can treat the remains with the dignity due, say, an executed prisoner. But most pro-choicers are obviously reluctant to make that move; once you concede that a life is at stake, you're on dangerous ground politically.

Anyway, question for our three lefty readers: Which group are you in?

—*Hotair.com*
March 24, 2014

We agree with President Obama that "the killing of innocents is never fulfilling God's will," as he declared at the National Prayer Breakfast in February. We wish he agreed with himself. Only a decade ago, in the Illinois state legislature, he fought legislation to protect the lives of some infants born after attempted abortions. "Freedom of religion matters to national security," he said, again at the prayer breakfast, seven weeks before the Supreme Court was scheduled to hear cases involving the HHS mandate requiring even citizens with religious objections to subsidize abortifacients for their employees. Here

too the president's actions clash with his words, and we agree with his words, as far as they go — freedom of religion is more than a means to an end. It may matter to national security, but it also matters, period.

—*National Review*
March 10, 2014, p. 8

In New York City, the number of black children being aborted now exceeds the number being born; in Mississippi, a predominantly white state, three out of four abortions are of black children. Life can be dangerous and difficult for black Americans, especially for young black men, but statistically speaking the most dangerous place for a black American in 2014 is the womb. New York City and Mississippi may be poles apart culturally, but the landscape between them does not look much better: Blacks make up about 12 percent of the population, but the number of black children aborted comes to nearly the same total as in the much larger white population. Economics explains only a little of that: According to the Guttmacher Institute, the majority of women seeking abortions are not living in poverty. But black, white, or other, the mortality rate associated with abortion is always the same: one per person.

—*National Review*
March 24, 2014, p. 6, 8

Euthanasia

Belgium's parliament approved a law making it legal for doctors to kill children. The measure, which extends Belgium's 2002 euthanasia law to minors, requires that children be experiencing "constant and unbearable suffering" and show a "capacity

of discernment" in order to request death at the hands of their physicians. Parents must give written consent, and a psychologist must determine that the child is capable of understanding the consequences of his choice. The Socialist-party senator who sponsored the legislation, and who is a doctor, dismissed the idea that children were not capable of making such a choice by saying that suffering tends to make them more mature than many adults. "This is an act of humanity," he told the *New York Times*. No, it is an act of barbarism.

—*National Review*
March 10, 2014, p. 13

International Affairs

On February 19, lawmakers in Scotland approved a deeply controversial new law assigning an individual government overseer to each and every child in the country, charged with monitoring their development. However, the draconian measure, which has sparked criticism and outrage around the world as a brazen assault on parental rights and privacy, is already in the process of being challenged in court.

Under the new Scottish law, the National Health Service will appoint a "named person" for every Scottish child up to five years old by 2016. The government guardian overseeing each child will have massive powers — some critics are already referring to it as "Big Brother" — to share information on the child with other bureaucracies and even to intervene in family decisions without the consent of parents. After age five, responsibility over the child would go to local authorities,

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and analysts say teachers would likely become the “overseers” of children’s development until the age of 18.

Public opposition to the plot was fierce, with homeschooling groups, religious organizations, legal experts, sociologists, experts, and more blasting the highly controversial legislation. Incredibly, however, the measure, known as the “Children and Young People Bill,” was approved overwhelmingly in the Scottish Parliament with 103 in favor, none against, and 15 abstentions.

While outrage and concerns are still growing in Scotland, U.S. advocates of parental rights are warning that the danger is hardly unique to the United Kingdom or even European parents. ParentalRights.org communications chief Michael Ramey, in a February 21 email to supporters, pointed out that the legislation was specifically aimed at compliance with the radical U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which has been signed by myriad governments around the world.

“Giving a state actor, in place of or alongside parents, responsibility for children is a drastic measure usually reserved for cases of child abuse or neglect — but Scotland has deemed it necessary to guarantee the ‘best interests’ of every child as called for in the CRC,” Ramey explained. “There is no doubt Scotland’s provision will be praised by the CRC Committee, and held up to the rest of the world as an exemplary implementation of the treaty. Nor will it take long for other nations, hungry for the approval of these U.N. ‘experts,’ to follow in Scot-

land’s shoes.”

— *The New American*
March 24, 2014, p. 7

At the end of February, a senator, Jeff Flake (R., Ariz.), and a House member, Jim McGovern (D., Mass.), hosted six “religious leaders” from Cuba. They are official types, approved and sent by the dictatorship, “religious leaders” who denounce and bedevil the independently religious. They are also the kind to sign petitions denouncing human-rights activists and political prisoners. Every totalitarian dictatorship has had stooges of this sort. The Russian Jews who staffed the old Soviet Anti-Zionist Committee come to mind. The recent mission of the Cuban officials is to spread the lie that Cuba is a place of religious freedom, not religious (and other) persecution. The same week Flake and McGovern were hosting the Castroite stooges, Oscar Biscet, the Afro-Cuban physician and democracy leader, who draws his inspiration from the Bible, was being rearrested and savagely beaten. No hearing for him.

Editor’s Note: Senator Jeff Flake and Representative Jim McGovern need to read Humberto Fontova’s book *The Longest Romance: The Mainstream Media and Fidel Castro*.

— *National Review*
March 24, 2014, p. 10

Religious Liberty

The United States is one of the most religiously diverse nations on earth. People of a vast array of traditions of faith live here in a harmony that would have been unthinkable in most of the world for most of human history.

One of the ways America has fostered and protected this diversity is by nurturing a robust understanding of religious liberty that includes granting certain exemptions to people who need them in order to be true to their religious faith. Religious exemptions protect people in situations where legislative or executive acts might otherwise unnecessarily force them to violate their consciences.

Over the centuries, such exemptions have protected a wide variety of believers, including Quakers who cannot fight in wars, Muslims who cannot transport alcohol, and, during prohibition, Catholics and Jews who use wine in their religious rituals. More recently, the system of exemptions has been expanded to protect conscientiously objecting people — whether believers or unbelievers — from being forced to participate in wars, assisted suicide, abortion, or prisoner executions.

The robust conception of religious freedom that has served our nation so well is now being challenged in the case of *Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, which will be argued before the Supreme Court on March 25. Hobby Lobby (a chain of arts and crafts stores) and its owners, the Green family, are seeking a religious exemption from parts of ObamaCare’s contraception and abortion-drug mandate. Their Christian faith forbids them from paying for insurance coverage for the provision of four drugs and devices that may act to terminate newly conceived human lives. Although the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals held that an exemption is required under federal civil-rights law, the government has

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asked the Supreme Court to compel the Greens to violate their consciences — which they will not do — or suffer crippling fines.

Some of the government's supporters — like the Freedom From Religion Foundation — have offered the high court in an amicus brief an even more extreme argument. They claim that the whole practice of religious exemptions constitutes an unconstitutional "establishment of religion," at least when protecting religious minorities deprives others of the chance to benefit from these minorities' forced service. The brief stated, "The intense passions about religious freedom and women's reproductive health in this case have obscured the issue that should be decided before this Court reaches the merits: RFRA [the Religious Freedom Restoration Act] is unconstitutional."

This argument misunderstands both the nature and purpose of exemptions as protections for religious beliefs from majority coercion.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly — and unanimously — rejected the claim that policies enacted to vindicate free-exercise rights by accommodating religious beliefs and practices violate the Establishment Clause. For example, in *Corporation of Presiding Bishop v. Amos* (1987), opponents of a Title VII exemption allowing religious organizations to consider religions in hiring argued that the law violated the Establishment Clause. And in *Cutter v. Wilkinson* (2005), opponents of a federal law protecting religious exercise for prisoners also argued that the law violated the Establishment Clause.

These Supreme Court rejections make sense, because the same First Amendment that prohibits the establishment of religion also expressly protects the free exercise of religion. It would be illogical to treat protections for religious exercise as establishing someone's religion. This is presumably why the court has upheld religious exemptions many times — sometimes even holding that exemptions are required by the First Amendment or federal civil-rights law — and why thousands of state and federal statutes allow for religious exemptions.

The argument against exemptions would be plausible if such laws only protected religious believers of one faith, or if the laws stipulated that religious interests should prevail in every case in which they competed with other interests and values. But the federal civil-rights law at issue in the *Hobby Lobby* case — the Religious Freedom Restoration Act — protects people of all faiths. Exemptions are not automatic, because the government is always permitted to show that it has compelling reasons to deny the exemption. Historically, the government has often met this burden and won the case.

The reason that government is likely to lose in the *Hobby Lobby* case, however, is that there are so many ways for the government to distribute these drugs — on its own exchanges, through the Title X family-planning program, and by cooperating with willing distributors — that do not require the forced participation of conscientious objectors. That presumably is why an effort is now being made to

cut back on the robust conception of religious freedom that once united Americans of all faiths and even unbelievers.

The Establishment Clause argument should also fail. That provision exists to prevent the establishment of a national religion or the granting of superior standing to a religion that happens to have the support of most citizens. It would be perverse for a court to use it to punish the laudable practice — dating all the way back to George Washington's decision to excuse Quakers from his army — of accommodating the free exercise of religion by protecting people whose religious beliefs or practices are not shared by the majority from being compelled even in the absence of a compelling reason to violate their consciences.

— Robert P. George and
Hamza Yusuf
Wall Street Journal
May 24, 2014, p. A15

Archeology

The patriarch Abraham possessed camels, the Bible tells us — along with sheep, oxen, donkeys, and male and female servants. His chief servant took 10 camels on a wife-hunting expedition. His grandson Jacob had his own herds.

Not so, say two archaeologists from Tel Aviv University in Israel. In their study published in the journal *Tel Aviv* last October (and garnering Western media attention in February), Lidar Sapir-Hen and Erez Ben-Yosef claim domesticated camels didn't exist in Israel during the time of the patriarchs. American Friends of Tel Aviv Univer-

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sity stated in a press release, “In addition to challenging the Bible’s historicity, this anachronism is direct proof that the [Bible’s] text was compiled well after the events it describes.” As is often the case with such claims, however, the “proof” isn’t as strong as it sounds.

The researchers based their conclusions on pack-camel bones found in Jordan and in Israel at an ancient copper mine. The bones, including leg bones showing signs of stress, were found in layers they dated no earlier than the last third of the 10th century B.C. — suggesting domesticated camels were introduced to the region at that time. While they admitted some camel bones appeared in older layers, they attributed them to wild animals.

Many other biblical scholars are unconvinced. Semitic scholar K. Martin Heide of Philipps University in Marburg, Germany, who published a treatise on camel domestication in 2011, said the researchers were arguing from a lack of evidence: “Absence of evidence (of camel bones) is not evidence of absence (of the camel) in Israel in the second millennium,” he told Tyndale House in Cambridge, England. The references to camels in Genesis, he said, don’t necessarily mean their use was widespread, even if Abraham (who was a wealthy native of Mesopotamia) owned them.

Other archaeological discoveries depicting domesticated camels — carvings and figurines of camels carrying riders or other burdens — have been found in Egypt and elsewhere, and date to the second or third millennium B.C. A Syrian cylinder seal, dated as early as 1800 B.C., shows a couple riding a

two-humped camel. Yet the Tel Aviv researchers dismissed such evidence of early domestication as “debatable.”

Which suggests Sapir-Hen and Ben-Yosef are primarily interested in promoting evidence that backs their own theory. Todd Bolen, a biblical studies professor at The Master’s College in California, told *Christianity Today* correspondent Gordon Govier the study is meant to support the disputed “low chronology” interpretation of the reigns of David and Solomon: “The conclusions are overstated.”

— Daniel Devine
World Magazine

March 22, 2014, p. 64

Science

“Dark energy” is the mysterious culprit, but the name is more of a sign of ignorance than a physical description of something that makes up approximately 73 percent of the mass-energy of the universe. If that wasn’t surprising enough, an analysis of the motion of galaxies reveals that approximately 23 percent of the universe is made up of something dubbed “dark matter.” This means we know nothing about roughly 96 percent of our universe.

— Chris Impey, Professor of
Astronomy at the
University of Arizona
Wall Street Journal
March 28, 2012, p. A11

An Israeli physicist says the breakthrough scientific discovery of further evidence of the Big Bang theory, which some are calling “cosmology’s missing link,” confirms the universe was created.

“One thing the announcement does do is make it clear that the uni-

verse had a definite starting point — a creation — as described in the book of Genesis,” Bar-Ilan University Physics Professor Nathan Aviezer told the *Times of Israel*. To deny this now is to deny scientific fact.”

— *WorldNetDaily*
March 19, 2014

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

— *Genesis 1:1*

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation; because by Him [Jesus Christ] everything was created, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and by Him all things hold together.”

— *Colossians 1:15-17*

MUNCIE, Ind. — Four state lawmakers are investigating Ball State University’s decision to prohibit the teaching of intelligent design in a science course.

University President Jo Ann Gora concluded last summer that intelligent design is overwhelmingly regarded by the scientific community as a religious belief and not a scientific theory.

A Boundaries of Science class taught by Eric Hedin, an assistant professor of physics, allegedly promoted the idea that nature displays evidence of intelligent design, as opposed to an undirected process like evolution.

The four legislators said in a letter to Gora this week that “serious questions have been raised about ... academic freedom, free speech, and religious liberty.”

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The letter also expresses concerns about whether a faculty review panel appointed to investigate complaints against Hedin “was filled with persons ... who were predisposed to be hostile to his viewpoint.”

Because the university has declined to release the review panel’s report, “We feel unable to judge whether the investigation was fair and impartial,” the lawmakers wrote.

The letter gives Gora until March 24 to answer the following question: “Does the policy forbid science professors from explaining either their support or rejection of intelligent design in answer to student questions about intelligent design in class?”

Republican state Sen. Dennis Kruse, chairman of the Education Committee, Sen. Travis Holdman, Sen. Greg Walker, and Rep. Jeffrey Thompson, all Republicans, also say they are “disturbed by reports that while you restrict faculty speech on intelligent design, BSU authorized a seminar that teaches ‘Science Must Destroy Religion.’”

In the past few years, Kruse has unsuccessfully tried to pass legislation mandating the teaching of creationism and allowing prayer in public schools.

Ball State spokesman Tony Proudfoot said the legislators apparently were referring to an honors seminar called *Dangerous Ideas*, which uses a book titled *What is Your Dangerous Idea?*

One essay in the book is titled “Science Must Destroy Religion.” Proudfoot says other essays in the book include these titles: “Science May Be Running Out of Control,” “Science Will Never Silence God,” and “Religion Is the Hope that Is Missing in Science.”

“It is important to note that this is an honors colloquium with honors credit,” Proudfoot said. “It is neither a science class bearing science credit nor a religion class bearing religion credit.”

Kruse was unavailable for comment, his press secretary said.

The legislators are acting on behalf of The Discovery Institute, an intelligent-design think tank, whose vice president, John West, told *The Star Press* he is hopeful the legislative investigation will force Ball State to release the report of the review panel, which West called “an ad hoc kangaroo committee.”

Discovery Institute officials have been meeting with the legislators.

“If Ball State isn’t more transparent ... it is risking legislative intervention,” West said.

— Seth Slabaugh
USAToday.com
March 14, 2014

A February 4 debate on the origins of life between Bill Nye “The Science Guy,” defending the theory of evolution, and biblical-creationist leader Ken Ham, who supports the literal Genesis account in the Bible, drew a massive online audience estimated between 800,000 to as high as three million. All of the 800 or so tickets for the live event were gone within minutes of going on sale. The huge viewership highlighted the deep and ongoing interest in the subject among Americans, who according to polls still remain sharply divided on the origins of life.

Throughout the debate, Nye consistently tried to portray the issue as a supposed battle between “science” and the Bible. He also repeatedly referred to himself as “reasonable” — implying that

those who disagree with the evolution theory are unreasonable. However, as Ham pointed out multiple times during the debate, the alleged conflict between science and religion is largely manufactured by secular forces trying to claim the mantle of science.

The debate in Petersburg, Kentucky, was sparked after a 2012 video in which Nye said parents should teach their children the evolution theory instead of the creationist worldview. Ham responded with an online video segment of his own rebutting Nye’s claims, eventually culminating in the February 4 debate. Moderated by CNN correspondent Tom Foreman, the only element that viewers seemed to agree on was that the event was respectful.

After decades of failing to eradicate biblical-creation theories by exclusively teaching the evolution theory in taxpayer-funded government schools, even the staunchest evolutionists knew the latest debate would be unlikely to change any hearts or minds. According to a 2012 Gallup survey, about 46 percent of Americans believed that God created man in the present form within the last 10,000 years — more than the 44 percent who answered that way two decades ago. About one-third of Americans believed God guided evolution, and just 15 percent thought man evolved from other life forms without divine intervention.

— *The New American*
March 3, 2014, p. 6

It’s an evolutionary icon, a supposed transitional form between two different kinds of animals. But the certainty about *Archaeopteryx* is now clouded by debate. Was it a bird or a

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feathered dinosaur? Was it the first bird to evolve or a much later development?

A meeting last year of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology presented another conundrum: Was *Archaeopteryx* a flightless descendant of earlier creatures that had already evolved the ability to fly? This new question arises from analyses of *Archaeopteryx*'s skeleton that appear to show its wings could not flap adequately and the creature was actually a glider. Furthermore, *Archaeopteryx* had features seen in flightless birds today.

Some evolutionists no longer believe *Archaeopteryx* is the oldest bird, so they are searching for a way to explain how it lost its flying ability. But why assume that flight had to precede flightlessness or that gliding is a required intermediate step? Must penguins or kiwis have had ancestors that could fly? The problem is that evolution assumes feathered creatures are all somehow related, not separate kinds created by God.

The Lord created many bird kinds on Day Five of Creation Week with various anatomical features suited for different functions and stunning beauty. Flightlessness is not necessarily a sign of degeneration; some birds were apparently designed to glide from the beginning.

— *Answers Magazine*
April-June 2014, p. 15

Several years ago, scientists made a startling discovery that seemed to undermine the claim that dinosaurs lived over 65 million years ago — soft tissue and pliable blood vessels in a *T. rex* femur (leg bone). The news put secularists in scramble mode. Prior to

that discovery, scientists had believed the proteins making up soft tissue could not last even one million years. Because of their prior commitment to the belief that the dinosaur fossils must be millions of years old, they turned their attention to alternative explanations for the persistence of these biomolecules.

Researchers are banking on iron's unique properties to save their belief in deep time. They propose that iron, which is plentiful in blood's hemoglobin, served as a preservative in the *T. rex*'s soft tissue. The iron may have helped bind the molecular structures and kept them from degrading. A similar process happens when fresh tissues are preserved in a version of formaldehyde known as formalin. Yet this type of preservation is only temporary. A recent experiment with ostrich tissues showed that the iron in hemoglobin can keep tissue fresh for two years in the laboratory, but it remains a stretch to believe that iron could preserve such tissues for millions of years.

Meanwhile, researchers have found a fossil mosquito engorged with blood and dated it to 46 million years old. As with the *T. rex* soft tissue, rather than questioning the assigned ancient ages requiring the miraculous preservation of blood, researchers claim that this mosquito fossil provides more evidence that organic molecules can survive for millions of years.

Instead of scrambling to demonstrate how blood and tissue might have been preserved for millions of years, creationists embrace the obvious conclusion, consistent with biblical truth and many empirical studies on the lifespan of biomolecules, that these fossils

are just a few thousand years old.

— *Answers Magazine*
April-June 2014, p. 15

National Security

Hold on, I've got a good one. What do you get when Joycelyn Elders, Barack Obama, and a cross-dressing billionaire walk into a bar to discuss the U.S. Marines?

The few. The proud. Dudes in skirts.

That's right, we're moving into the next treasonous phase of the left's San Francisco-style sabotage of the world's once-greatest military. In a few short years, "don't ask, don't tell" has become "do tell, do flaunt."

TPNN's Greg Campbell reported on a recent example: "While Russia invades Ukraine, as Islamic terrorist factions plot the West's destruction, our service members at Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa, Japan, are being treated to a 'gay' and lesbian drag show."

Watch the video. It speaks for itself. Under this Obama-nation, these guys, er, gals, er, whatever, represent, at least in part, what our enemies will face on the front lines.

Scary.

And by scary, I mean for us, not for them.

Still, as the perversity-pushers like to say, "It gets better." The implosion continues. WND reports, "A controversial ex-surgeon general, fired by President Bill Clinton after recommending children be taught how to masturbate (Joycelyn Elders), now has released a report advocating the incorporation of transgendered people into the U.S. military, and contending that a 40 percent

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attempted suicide rate and 43 percent burden of 'additional psychiatric diagnoses' constitute no reason to exclude them from America's armed forces."

Lovely. Yet another outcome-pre-terminated "study" — like those Obama used to homosexualize the military a few years back — designed to grease the skids for more radical social engineering in the ranks of the armed forces.

How'd that turn out? Since that time, the military has seen a rapid 33 percent spike in military sexual assault, with a majority being male-on-male homosexual assaults.

As FRC's Tony Perkins noted last year, "President Obama is finally admitting that sexual assault is a serious problem in the military — but what he hasn't conceded is that his policy on homosexuality helped create it. According to a new Pentagon survey, most of the victims were not female (12,000 incidents), but male (14,000) — highlighting a growing trend of same-sex assault in our ranks."

Hate to say we told you so.

No wonder Putin and other tyrants abroad no longer fear America. We've got Blustering Barry and a bunch of pansy-bummed "progressives" in charge of our national defense. These social Marxists are hell-bent on gutting the military from within.

Coming "out"? That's for sure. Out with integrity, honor, and strength — in with perversion, shame, and weakness.

I served 12 years in the armed forces and can't decide where my heartbreak begins and my disgust ends. I know the vast majority of military personnel — active and retired alike — are both grieving and hurling right along with me.

Between Obama's suicidal defense cuts, the purging of the most qualified high-ranking military officials, the targeting of Christian service members for harassment and systemic intimidation, and the godless LGBT-ifying of every facet of American life — it's little wonder that America is swirling clockwise down the toilet bowl of international esteem.

WND continues:

"The report comes from the Palm Center at San Francisco State University, a sex-issues-oriented think tank, and concludes that as people understand more now today about sexual deviation, there 'is no compelling medical reason' for the U.S. military to bar transgenders.

"The study also suggests Barack Obama could bypass Congress and order the change himself. ...

"The report said the think tank is funded in part by a \$1.3 million grant from Jennifer Pritzker, a billionaire former Army lieutenant colonel who came out as transgender. ..."

The report further suggests that "taxpayers should provide 'cross-sex hormone treatment,' 'medically necessary gender-confirming surgery,' and 'continuity of care.'"

Where to begin.

So, under this objectively insane proposal, you and I — the American taxpayer — will be forced to underwrite, to the tune of tens-of-millions, the immoral, unethical, and unconscionable cosmetic genital mutilation surgery of every sexually confused Tom, Dick, and Harry who decides to enlist.

"Forward."

But wait — being "transgender" doesn't mean that a so-called "gender

reassignment surgery" has to occur at all. In fact, most of the time it doesn't. It's all subjective. A male trooper need only — to borrow from Shania Twain — "feel like a woman" to be treated like a woman.

Or, to use the left's pseudo-scientific newspeak, a person's "gender identity or expression" need only conflict with his, her, or whatchahoozie's biological sex to be considered the opposite sex.

Relativism: Detaching liberals from reality since the Garden of Eden.

So, dads, if these nutburgers push this thing through, are you ready to send your daughter to boot camp? Are you ready for her to shower along some guy in in the open latrine, fully armed with his standard, non-military-issue equipment? Are you ready to have some sexually disturbed private expose his privates to your 18-year-old baby girl?

Well, when Elders, Obama, and the rest of these clowns, none of whom know which end of the gun goes "Bang!" make their move (and they will), that's exactly what you'll have.

This will strengthen national security how?

God help us.

— Matt Barker
WorldNetDaily
March 16, 2014

Economics

As a teenager, I began a new, lifelong routine of starting and ending each day reading from the book of Proverbs, which, of course, was written by Solomon, a very wise man. Interestingly, my parents were led to give me the middle name of Solomon — not that I claim even a modicum of his wisdom.

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After Solomon became the king of Israel, he gained great renown when two women came before him claiming to be the mother of the same infant. Solomon decreed that the baby should be divided and half given to each woman, at which time the real mother immediately relinquished her claim.

This made the judgment quite simple. I believe God has a sense of humor, not only because of my middle name and my affinity for Solomonic Proverbs, but because I, too, gained great renown by dividing babies. In my case, it was complexly joined craniopagus twins.

One of the verses that seems very pertinent to America today is Proverbs 22:7, which says, "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender." Most of us grew up hearing that debt is a very bad thing. The advent and wide dissemination of credit cards diminished such teachings, and those in charge of our nation's finances over the past few decades seem to revel in debt.

As a nation, we currently are carrying a national debt of \$17.5 trillion. If we repaid it at a rate of \$10 million per day, seven days a week, 365 days per year, it would take 4,700 years to repay. The only reason that we can sustain such a level of debt is our status as the international reserve currency for the world.

This is a position usually reserved for the most reliable and strongest economic nation, and this status allows us to print money. If Greece could print money, it would not be bankrupt, although it would probably continue to drive up its debt.

Additionally, we have unfunded liabilities of at least \$100 trillion.

Why am I concerned about this? I have been talking about this issue since long before Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent threat to abandon the U.S. dollar as Russia's reserve currency. Unless he could attract many other nations to do the same, he would likely inflict more short-term damage on his own country than on the United States.

Nevertheless, the very mention of such an action should send shivers down our spine. He recognizes our vulnerable position, which is exacerbated by our insistence on incurring unsustainable levels of debt. I have no doubt that at a strategic moment, he will exploit our weakness.

A United Nations committee in 2010 recommended a change in world reserve currency policies, and others such as China have made similar suggestions. They are beginning to doubt the stability of America's financial infrastructure.

Our continued fiscal irresponsibility not only threatens the financial well-being of the next generation of Americans, it also increasingly jeopardizes U.S. security. Our international influence is weakened as our borrower status makes us vulnerable to threats from Mr. Putin and others. Perhaps worst of all, if our status as the world's reserve currency issuer changes, there could be a dramatic decline in our standard of living.

If this occurs, the Occupy Wall Street movement will seem like a walk in the park compared with the civil unrest that will result. It does not require a great imagination to envision some of the freedom-limiting responses that might then occur. Many may say this is simply paranoia and fear-mongering,

which is what the so-called elites traditionally say before a catastrophic collapse.

The good news is we can do better. However, we the people must first do our homework and make sure that we know who our congressional representatives are and how they vote, not how they say they vote. If they are in favor of continued fiscal lunacy, as evidenced by their votes that keep raising our national debt, they need to be replaced by responsible candidates from any party who understand the implications of their actions.

We need people who understand that in order for businesses to grow and prosper, the government must remove the heavy boot of regulation and interference from their necks. We need those who realize that taxation is supposed to provide the necessary revenues to operate a government that provides for the safety, infrastructure, and freedom of the people.

It is not for the purpose of controlling behavior and certainly not to justify a government takeover of health care, thereby initiating the most massive shift of power from the people to the government in our history. By declaring pertinent parts of the Affordable Care Act a tax, the Supreme Court facilitated the demise of freedom in America.

These should not be partisan issues, but rather should be the concerns of every freedom-loving American citizen who wishes to see prosperity return to our shores.

Fiscal responsibility, fair taxation, intelligent environmental and energy policies, strong international leadership, evidence-based educational policies,

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cost-effective health care that is readily available to everyone, and honesty can prevail, but some feathers of those who are currently comfortable may need to be ruffled.

We need to discuss all of these things openly, rather than giving ear to the constant demagoguery that now exists. We must then vote responsibly with full knowledge of records and remain vigilant to preserve freedom and justice for all. We still have the power to craft a better future, but urgency grows.

— Ben S. Carson
The Washington Times
March 17, 2014, p. 31

Boston University Economics Professor, Laurence Kotlikoff, says, “The country is in worse fiscal shape by many miles than Detroit. So, the country is essentially bankrupt.” Dr. Kotlikoff estimates the long-term debt and liabilities of America are more than \$200 trillion! He is spearheading a bill in Congress called The Inform Act. It is an attempt to wake up the nation to our dire financial situation so something can be done to fix this enormous problem. Dr. Kotlikoff explains, “The bill has been endorsed by over 1,000 economists, including 15 Nobel Prize winners in economics. ... Never in the history of this country have this many top economists from all political persuasions endorsed a piece of legislation like this.” Dr. Kotlikoff and his fellow economists all contend, “The country needs to do honest accounting.” The professor charges the government with “disguising the true problem.” Dr. Kotlikoff says, “The government is printing mountains of

money to pay its bills. The Fed is printing 29 cents of every dollar that Uncle Sam is spending.” What happens if this continues? Dr. Kotlikoff says, “Eventually somebody recognizes this and starts dumping the bonds, and interest rates go up, and inflation takes off, and we’re off to the races.” In closing, Dr. Kotlikoff warns, “This is going to crash, but there are different ways for cancer to kill you. It can be very gradual ... or it can attack some organ and you can die overnight. Either of those outcomes can happen.”

— Greg Hunter
USA Watch Dog
December 4, 2013

Poverty

When I was a student I lived in poverty, though I didn’t know it. The conditions in which I lived would now be regarded as abject and intolerable, good enough reason for emergency public assistance. The house in which I lived was unheated and so cold that in winter it seemed colder inside than out. I had to jump into bed quickly if I did not want to freeze, and, once I was in, I used to observe the cloud of vapor emerging from my mouth. Ice formed on the inside of the windows by morning.

I lived in bohemian squalor. Housework was not a priority of mine (it was beneath me), and when I had money I bought champagne and smoked salmon. The rest of the time I lived on bread or the like. Why did I not think of myself as poor?

There were three reasons. The first is that all my friends lived the same way. If this was hardship, it was hardship shared. The second is that I had a rich

social and intellectual life, and it was fashionable to disdain material comfort. The third is that I knew I should not be living this way for the rest of my life. I had confidence, justified as it turned out, that a more prosperous future awaited me even if I did not actively seek wealth. Moreover, my parents would at all times have prevented me from actually starving.

Was I poor or not? Certainly I had little money, and, if I had been 50 rather than 20, I think the answer would undoubtedly have been “Yes.” But, both from my standpoint when I was 20 and from my present standpoint in my 60s, I have difficulty in believing that I was ever really poor. I have always regarded poverty as a healthy man regards illness: something that happens to other people.

Reflecting on my own experience, therefore, I am skeptical when I read a headline such as this one, from CBS in July 2013: “80 Percent of U.S. Adults Face Near-Poverty, Unemployment, Survey Finds.”

What can the word “poverty” possibly mean if used in this way, as it often is, defying common sense? If four out of five American adults “face near-poverty,” how are we to describe the situation of the adults of the Central African Republic? One hundred percent of them “face poverty” — is the United States “near” four-fifths of the way to the situation of the Central African Republic?

Poverty is one of the many subjects about which it is easier to convey emotion, or perhaps I should say to arouse sentimentality, than to speak the truth. Often, for example, we read that the inhabitants of such-and-such

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an impoverished country are living on an income equivalent to less than a dollar (or, with the erosion of the value of the dollar, \$1.50 or \$2) a day. That this must be meaningless nonsense is apparent only to people who have not been grossly overeducated. If you gave a person in New York City a dollar a day to live on and prevented him from obtaining anything of economic or survival value from any other source than his dollar, how long would he survive? Yet the problem of countries where the inhabitants allegedly live on less than a dollar a day, we are frequently told, is not that they fail to survive, but that they reproduce too fast — all on their miserable 80 cents a day. This is about as silly as saying that the United States must be six or eight times as powerful as China because its defense budget is six or eight times larger, when in fact a dollar spent in China on the military buys more firepower than it would buy in the U.S.

In thinking about poverty, we ought to avoid the Scylla of sentimentality and the Charybdis of callousness. Dr. Johnson, who had known the humiliations of poverty, was severe on the comfortable and well-fed who underestimated or discounted the sufferings of the poor. Among these was Soame Jenyns, an amiable, clubbable man who never had a day's economic anxiety in his life and fancied himself a *littérateur*. In his *Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil*, Jenyns wrote: "Poverty, or the want of riches, is generally compensated by having more hopes, and fewer fears, by a greater share of health, and a more exquisite relish of the smallest enjoyments, than those who possess them are

usually blessed with." To this rather unctuous passage, Doctor Johnson wrote in his famously ferocious review (from the effects of which Jenyns never really recovered):

"Poverty is very gently paraphrased by want of riches. In that sense, almost every man may, in his own opinion, be poor. But there is another poverty, which is want of competence of all that can soften the miseries of life, of all that can diversify attention, or delight imagination. There is yet another poverty, which is want of necessities, a species of poverty which no care of the publick, no charity of particulars, can preserve many from feeling openly, and many secretly. ... The milder degrees of poverty are, sometimes, supported by hope; but the more severe often sink down in motionless despondence. Life must be seen, before it can be known. This author ... perhaps, never saw the miseries which he imagines thus easy to be borne. The poor, indeed, are insensible of many little vexations, which sometimes imbitter the possessions, and pollute the enjoyments, of the rich. They are not pained by casual incivility, or mortified by the mutilation of a compliment; but this happiness is like that of a malefactor, who ceases to feel the cords that bind him, when the pincers are tearing his flesh."

Doctor Johnson does not take Jenyns to task for the empirically false proposition that the rich suffer more illness than the poor (precisely the opposite is the case, of course, but at that time — 1757 — epidemiology was an undeveloped science); and I think Johnson was wrong to say that the poor are not pained by casual incivility, indeed

it is their proneness to such that makes their condition especially hard to bear; but otherwise, this passage contains all the difficulties we have in thinking about the nature and origins of poverty.

Is poverty relative or absolute?

Does it, or should it, matter to the Baltimore slumdweller that he is unimaginably rich by the standards of a Malian peasant, or indeed by those of his own grandparents? Is it not expecting too much of the contemporary impoverished to thank their lucky stars that their infant-mortality rate has declined by 95 percent since a century ago and their life expectancy has nearly doubled?

What precisely is a necessity and what a superfluity, at least when subsistence itself is guaranteed? The American way of measuring poverty is to count the number of people living below a basic income, independent of any government payments, that will secure them the socially accepted minimum of goods and services (if, that is, those in receipt of that income spend it right). It is therefore both an absolute and a relative measure; the sum is fixed in dollars, but the socially accepted minimum is a moving target, dependent on the supposed exigencies of modern life: for modern necessities create modern demands on income. I remember, for example, those ancient times when the portable telephone was the accessory of the rich and powerful rather than the *sin qua non* of social existence — to which, of course, everyone has an inalienable right.

In Europe, by contrast, poverty tends to be measured by a purely relative measure: that of members of households in receipt of an income less than

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60 percent of the median household income. This means that inequality and poverty amount to the same thing, for, in a society of billionaires, a millionaire would be poor, irrespective of his actual standard of living. The ratio of Bill Gates' wealth to mine is greater than that of mine to the wealth of a person in the poorest 1 percent of the British population; but it would be ludicrous to describe me as poor.

What are the things spoken of by Doctor Johnson that "soften the miseries of life, diversify the attention, or delight the imagination," the absence of the economic opportunity to enjoy which is, according to him, one kind of poverty, probably now the most prevalent kind in the Western world?

The answer leads to an endless and insoluble dispute between psychology and sociology. What will delight the imagination depends entirely on the imagination to be delighted. The sociologist will say that the imagination is formed and determined by social conditions, the psychologist by personal characteristics, for example, self-discipline. For myself, I am grateful that, for the most part, what delights my imagination is within my economic reach; and I consciously discipline my imagination. I wouldn't mind a Vermeer, but I won't make my lack of one a cause for unhappiness. In the end, I think that great economic thinker, Mr. Micawber, got it right: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen pounds nineteen and six, results happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds nought and six, results misery."

As for this principle, I am like

Mrs. Micawber: I never will desert Mr. Micawber.

— Theodore Dalrymple
National Review
February 10, 2014, p. 17-18

"A specter is haunting the Western world: the underclass."

— Theodore Dalrymple
Life at the Bottom: The Worldview That Makes the Underclass
p. vii

"Nevertheless, patterns of behavior emerge — in the case of the underclass, almost entirely self-destructive ones. Day after day I hear of the same violence, the same neglect and abuse of children, the same broken relationships, the same victimization by crime, the same nihilism, the same dumb despair."

— Ibid., p. viii

"In fact most of the social pathology exhibited by the underclass has its origin in ideas that have filtered down from the intelligentsia. Of nothing is this more true than the system of sexual relations that now prevails in the underclass, with the result that 70 percent of the births in my hospital are now illegitimate."

— Ibid., p. x

"If I paint a picture of a way of life that is wholly without charm or merit, and describe many people who are deeply unattractive, it is important to remember that, if blame is to be apportioned, it is the intellectuals who deserve most of it. They should have known better but always preferred to avert their gaze. They considered the purity of their ideas to be more important than the actual consequences of

their ideas. I know of no egotism more profound."

— Ibid., p. xv

Editor's Note: I consider *Life at the Bottom* to be one of the most important books on the subject of poverty of the past 15 years. Dalrymple's follow-up work *Our Culture, What's Left of It* is also a must read.

Education

With the death of the traditional liberal-arts education and the subsequent expansion of acceptable subjects of study to include whatever one can put the word "studies" after, it seems that nowadays just about anything is considered worth learning about. Perhaps it is under this guise of an "expansive" and "well-rounded" education that the University of Michigan, a public institution, hosted a Bondage, Dominance, Sadism, and Masochism class titled "Kink for Beginners" as part of a three-day-long sex-a-palooza on campus, Sexpertise 2014. The kink class promised to teach students about "safety, communication, and other tips" as well as about the basic "concepts" of BDSM. Lesson one: The taxpayers are the masochists.

— *National Review*
March 10, 2014, p. 14

Politics

Liberal media bias is such a fact of life The Scrapbook can't get excited about it every day. But there are two subjects in the news a lot in which the fourth estate's inability to play fair is never less than appalling: Senator Ted Cruz and abortion. Last week, the As-

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sociated Press tried to cover both at the same time, and the results were spectacular. Here is the opening paragraph of Philip Elliott's dispatch:

"Calling their opponents Satan worshippers and savages, anti-abortion lawmakers on Wednesday insisted that Republican contenders keep an intense focus on social issues in upcoming mid-term elections and the 2016 presidential race."

Satan worshippers? Zounds! Where did that come from? The AP attempts to explain:

"Sen. Ted Cruz, a Texas Republican who is a favorite of the tea party, said supporters of abortion rights chant 'Hail, Satan' to silence their enemies. ... 'Arm-in-arm, chanting "Hail, Satan," embracing the right to take the life of a late-term child,' Cruz said of supporters of abortion rights."

If you're one of those cynical types who doesn't believe everything you read, you might suspect that there's more to this story than the AP is letting on. And you would be correct. Senator Cruz was referencing protests in Austin last year where pro-lifers were in fact shouted down by protesters yelling, "Hail, Satan!" This happened multiple times. It's on YouTube. It's not Cruz's fault that those actions happened to make abortion supporters look cartoonishly repugnant. We can only assume that reporter Philip Elliott was so invested in the caricature of the Harvard-educated, former Supreme Court clerk as daft and unhinged that he didn't bother verifying whether Cruz was telling the truth.

The AP further characterized the comments of Cruz and other GOP

leaders as "unflinching rhetoric" and an "attempt to make inroads with the GOP's socially conservative wing," despite the fact that the pro-life cause cuts across political boundaries. Notably, Cruz was defending his home state's ban on late-term abortion — like the majority of Americans, Texas legislators find it morally objectionable.

The AP later corrected the story. Instead of, "Calling their opponents Satan worshippers and savages," it now begins, "Invoking fiery references to Satan, 'savagery,' and a 'culture of death.'" It notes that abortion supporters in fact chanted "Hail, Satan." The story was once risible, and it's now slightly less so. How do such stories manage to get written, let alone past editors? Andrew Stiles of the Washington Free Beacon walks us through the professional standards at work here:

1. Pro-choice activists chant "Hail, Satan" at a protest.
2. GOP Senator says pro-choice activists chanted "Hail, Satan" at a protest.
3. AP reports: Republicans call opponents "Satan worshippers."

Just another day at the office for the mainstream media.

— *The Weekly Standard*
March 24, 2014, p. 3, 4

In 1986, in a concurrence to a majority opinion, the Chief Justice of the United States declared that "there is no such thing as a fundamental right to commit homosexual sodomy." A blink of an eye, and his successors are discovering fundamental rights to commit homosexual marriage. What happened in between? Jurisprudentially, nothing: Everything Chief Justice Burger said back in the Eighties — about Com-

mon Law, Blackstone's "crime against nature," "the legislative authority of the State" — still applies. Except it doesn't. Because the culture — from school guidance counselors to sitcom characters to Oscar hosts — moved on, and so even America's Regency of Jurists was obliged to get with the beat. Because to say today what the Chief Justice of the United States said 28 years ago would be to render oneself unfit for public office.

What will we be playing catch-up to in another 28 years? Not so long ago, I might have suggested transsexual rights. But, barely pausing to celebrate their victory on gay marriage, the identity-group enforcers have gone full steam ahead on transgender issues. Once upon a time, there were but two sexes. Now Facebook offers its 1.2 billion patrons the opportunity to select their preference from dozens of "genders": "male" and "female" are still on the drop-down menu, just about, but lost amid 50 shades of gay — "androgynous," "bi-gender," "intersex," "cis-female," "trans*man," "gender fluid." ... Oh, you can laugh. But none of the people who matter in American culture are laughing. They take it all perfectly seriously. Supreme Intergalactic Arbiter Anthony Kennedy wields more power over Americans than George III did, but in a year or three he'll be playing catch-up and striking down laws because of their "improper animus" and wish to "demean" and "humiliate" persons of gender fluidity. Having done an impressive job of demolishing the basic societal building block of the family, the ambitious liberal is now moving on to demolishing the basic biological

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building block of the sexes. Indeed, taken in tandem with the ever greater dominance of women at America's least worst colleges and, at the other end of the social scale, the bleak, dispiriting permanence of the "he-cession," in 28 years' time we may be fairly well advanced toward the de facto abolition of man, at least in the manly sense. That seems to me at least as interesting a question as whether the Republicans can take the Senate with a pick-up in this or that swing state. Culture is the long view; politics is the here and now. Yet in America, vast cultural changes occur in nothing flat, while, under our sclerotic political institutions, men elected to two-year terms of office announce ambitious plans to balance the budget a decade after their terms end. Here, again, liberals show a greater understanding of where the action is. So, if the most hawkish of GOP deficit hawks has no plans to trim spending until well in the 2020s, why not look at what kind of country you'll be budgeting for by then? What will American obesity and heart-disease and childhood diabetes rates be by then? What about rural heroin and meth addiction? How much of the country will, with or without "comprehensive immigration reform," be socio-economically Latin-American? And what is the likelihood of such a nation voting for small-government conservatism?

So, no, I'm not particularly focused on a Tuesday in November in 2016. Liberals understand that it's in the 729 days between elections that you win all the prizes that matter, on all the ground conservatives have largely abandoned.

— Mark Steyn

National Review
March 10, 2014, p. 48

Climate Change

Global warming is seemingly responsible for everything from the Cubs' failure to win the World Series to the lousy second season of *House of Cards*. Now a study says it will increase crime, too — an extra "22,000 murders, 180,000 cases of rape, 1.2 million aggravated assaults, 2.3 million simple assaults, 260,000 robberies, 1.3 million burglaries, 2.2 million cases of larceny, and 580,000 cases of vehicle theft" in what's left of the 21st century. The idea seems to be that, as one scholar explains, "to the extent that climate change causes people to be out and interacting more, there will be more crime." Ah, that pesky human interaction — find a way to get rid of that and we'll all be better off. To be sure, colder weather causes problems of its own (accidents, reduced agricultural yields, tongues stuck to lampposts), Alaska ranks third in per capita violent crime, and the national crime rate has dropped with the population shift to the Sunbelt. No matter; this is science, and every bit as rigorous as the climate-change projections on which the study was based.

— *National Review*
March 24, 2014, p. 11

The latest temperature data from two U.S. government bureaucracies show that the "pause" or "hiatus" in global warming that began some 17 years ago is still ongoing. The findings for last year, unveiled to reporters by NASA and NOAA on January 21 also showed that the extent of Antarctic sea ice in September of 2013 was the

highest ever documented since records began.

The establishment media and the taxpayer-funded climate alarmists, as usual, tried to avoid the troublesome issues — or they at least tried to confuse the public by citing dubious theories purporting to explain the conflict between reality and the climate predictions. However, experts said the latest temperature data offered further evidence that United Nations' theories and forecasts surrounding alleged catastrophic man-made global warming are simply wrong.

Perhaps the most broadly overlooked element in the latest data presented by NOAA and NASA is the fact that, as *The New American* has been reporting for months, Antarctic sea ice extent was at never-before-seen highs throughout much of 2013. In March of last year, meanwhile, ice coverage was the second greatest on record. The previous record highs were set in 2012, only to be overtaken in 2013.

Arctic sea ice coverage, while still below the four-decade average, also grew significantly in 2013 over the previous three years, the latest data from NASA and NOAA showed. Despite predictions of an "ice-free" Arctic in the summer of 2013 made by NASA-linked "climate scientists" and Al Gore, polar sea ice in the Northern Hemisphere grew by more than 50 percent over 2012 levels.

As NASA, NOAA, and the U.N. were busy defending their theories in the face of an increasingly skeptical public and vast amounts of evidence suggesting that their claims are wrong, a growing number of independent

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experts were starting to publicly predict global cooling. Citing declining solar activity, more and more scientists now say that the Earth is entering what may prove to be a long period of declining temperatures — with potentially devastating consequences for humanity.

— *The New American*
February 17, 2014, p. 6

Christianity

Son of God, the new feature film about Jesus' life that grew out of last year's hit History Channel miniseries *The Bible*, has so far been a box-office success. Produced by actress Roma Downey, herself a believing Christian, and her reality-TV-producer husband Mark Burnett, the movie brings high production values to what is a mostly faithful retelling of the Gospels. There are a few cringeworthy embellishments — Jesus tells Peter at the outset that together they are going to “change the world” — and Diogo Morgado, the Portuguese model turned telenovela star who plays Jesus, and who inspired the Twitter hashtag #hot-jesus, looks more like a bearded Adonis than a Jewish carpenter. But while the first half of the film, which glides over the main events of Jesus' public ministry, can feel schmaltzy, the depiction of the Passion does not. In any attempt to dramatize the biblical accounts of Jesus' life, there is the challenge not just of presenting the historical narrative of his incarnation, ministry, and death but of pointing toward their significance. The film falls short of the latter, admittedly difficult, aim, but that's what the book's for.

— *National Review*
March 24, 2014, p. 11

TV pundit Bill O'Reilly may now be as well-known for his books on the murders of famous people as for his top-rated show. His hugely successful tomes on the assassinations of Lincoln and Kennedy have been followed by *Killing Jesus*, which remains on bestseller lists after its release last year. Unfortunately, millions of readers may accept as fact some bits that read more like historical fiction than a true record of Christ's last days on earth.

Putting aside the graphic descriptions of Roman torture and the sex lives of ancient rulers, more troubling is the way *Killing Jesus* discusses and then de-emphasizes the historical accuracy of Gospel accounts of Christ's miracles (although curiously O'Reilly and his co-author do not deny that His miracles may have occurred). The book also undermines His full deity, portraying Christ as helpless and undiscerning. (For example, Jesus did not make the “smart move” to avoid the religious and political leaders' wrath.)

O'Reilly's interviews about his book have added controversy because he denies the Bible's inerrancy. (For instance, he told CBS TV's *60 Minutes* that Jesus could not have said, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do,” because crucifixion victims could not breathe well enough to speak long sentences loudly enough to be heard.)

Discerning readers would do better to read the firsthand accounts of Jesus' life and death, found in the New Testament. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John give the facts about His last earthly days and His message of salvation, when the God-man conquered

death to provide eternal life to those who believe in Him.

— *Answers Magazine*
April-June 2014, p. 16