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The Essence of Economic Freedom

*This month's cover story is an excerpt from a lecture given by Dr. Barry Asmus at the 2014 Summit Adult Conference. Dr. Asmus is a senior economist with the National Center for Policy Analysis and also a favorite speaker for Summit Ministries. He wrote a book with Dr. Wayne Grudem titled *The Poverty of Nations*, which explores in depth the principles of the free market and biblical social ethics as a global solution to poverty.*

"The only other topic besides Jesus, God, and the Spiritual that I'm interested in, that I've given my life to, is economics. I decided to go into economics my freshman year in college, and I stayed for bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees in economics. I've stayed there and I'm glad because it seems like there are a lot of terrible misunderstandings in economics, and it's easy to misunderstand. But it's been a joy to be in economics, especially the piece of economics that talks about freedom, entrepreneurs, etc. I really enjoy that.

"Dr. Wayne Grudem and I got together three years ago, and have been friends for 17 years. Wayne wrote the book *Systematic Theology*, and he and I were elders at Scottsdale Bible Church for a few terms together. Wayne and I have been in our home fellowship, and that's been a joy. We've been mighty close the last 17 years. Wayne and I travelled the world three years ago and saw some of the poorest places in the world: New Guinea, India, China, South America, Africa. We've had the privilege of giving 20 hours of lectures: half-hour Wayne, half-hour me, half-hour of Q&A. We'd do that all day Friday, all day Saturday,



half a day on Sunday. Then on Sunday afternoon, Wayne and the local churches would come in with pastors, and Wayne would answer questions that these pastors would have about the Bible. So he answers questions from about 12 noon to six o'clock Sunday night, and we'd call it a day and climb on an airplane and go home.

...

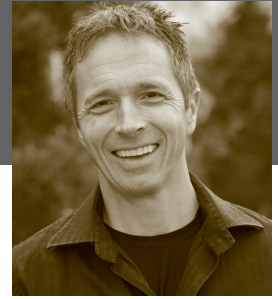
"Here is a picture of the nations [image not available]. The green make \$20,000 annual per capita income, and that is not particularly high. The United States is \$52,000 per year, and that is not great. For those that are blue, that's in the \$8,000 to \$20,000 range, and those are medium, modestly wealthy areas but nothing to be that excited about. Then the reds are from \$3,000 to \$8,000, and then the dark browns are poor at \$3,000

per year. The reason why I want you to see this, and it's about 2012, is the color of these countries. Just imagine if it was just 200 years ago. Two hundred short years ago, if we had a chart like this, I would hold up the world and it would all be brown. It would all be dark red. I mean poverty is and has always been the natural condition. Poverty is not hard; anybody can do it. Every country in the world figured it out. They said, 'Hey, we can do poverty.' So just imagine this: Thousands and thousands and thousands of years and there's the picture of the world in poverty — about \$2 annual per capita per day. In the United States, we are something like \$50 or \$60 per day. The world was very, very poor. And the world tried everything. The world tried hunting and gathering, and the

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from the president's desk

a word from dr. jeff myers



What Makes America Great?

This month, we're featuring a lecture by economist Barry Asmus, a renowned economist and favorite Summit speaker. Barry gets biblical worldview, and he loves people. In many ways, he reminds me of Summit founder David Noebel, winsomely focused on what's right with America, not just what is wrong with it.

Summit speakers and graduates are a large part of what is going right with America. Consider these four glimmers of hope:

Biblical worldview gaining traction: The first glimmer of hope is how Christians operating with a biblical worldview are credibly entering the conversation. In January, Summit hosted its largest one-night event ever, the ARISE Summit in Denver. Altogether, more than 2,000 people viewed the event live and on the Internet. Our host, best-selling author Eric Metaxas, knocked it out of the park. Eric's influence in speaking truth has grown enormously. But he's not alone—Summit people are everywhere, growing in influence as political leaders, authors, activists, and media personalities.

Pro-life advocates finding success: The second glimmer of hope is in the pro-life arena. Since 2010, states have passed 231 pieces of pro-life legislation, and 73 abortion clinics have closed. Much of this can be traced back to young

pro-life leaders such as Lila Rose, a Summit graduate and founder of LiveAction. Lila's bold and creative investigative journalism has brought organizations like Planned Parenthood under uncomfortable scrutiny. Lila spoke at the ARISE Summit on how to create a culture of life. I pray that someday Lila will run out of work because LiveAction will have been so successful at helping end the atrocity of abortion.

Entertainment industry starting to turn: A third glimmer of hope is in Hollywood. Sometimes we become fixated on films with awful messages, such as *Fifty Shades of Gray*. But Summit speaker and head of MovieGuide, Ted Baehr, is quick to point out that 90 percent of the films produced in Hollywood last year had at least some positive Christian content, up from as little as 10 percent in the 1980s. Summit alumnus Allan Spiers recently produced *Confessions of a Prodigal Son*, a modern twist on Jesus' timeless parable featuring Kevin Sorbo of the surprise hit *God's Not Dead*.

Religious freedom is a focus: A fourth glimmer of hope came from a meeting President Obama had in January with a little boy named Jacob Abedini. Jacob's father, Pastor Saeed Abedini, has spent two and a half years in an Iranian prison for charges

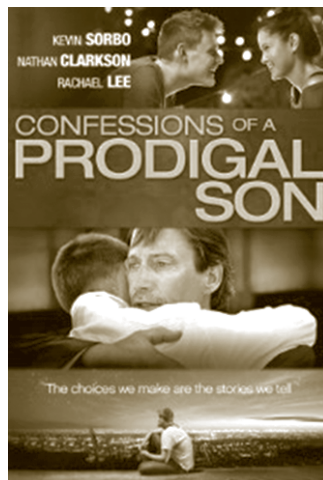
related to being a Christian. Jacob asked: "Mr. President, can you please bring daddy home for my birthday?" The President responded, "When is your birthday?" Jacob told him March 17, when he will turn seven. The President said he will try very hard to bring his father home. Pastor Saeed's wife, Naghmeh, is speaking at our March conference for adults. I look forward to publishing her story in next month's *Summit Journal*.

Freedom is under attack, but we can thank God that we are not subject to vicious assaults such as Christians around the world are facing at the hands of Jihadist terrorist groups such as ISIS. And we can be thankful to live in a country that has offered unprecedented protection for women as well as for racial and religious minorities.

We have no guarantee that America will remain free. We must be vigilant and redouble our efforts to prepare a rising generation of courageous leaders. That's what we do at Summit, and we will never give up. Thank you for standing with us. Send as many young people as you can this summer. They can register online at www.summit.org. And enjoy our exploration of economic freedom in this issue of the *Summit Journal*!



Lila Rose



Naghmeh Abedini

economic freedom

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world tried subsistence farming, and the world tried slavery, and the world tried feudalism, and the world tried mercantilism, and the world tried socialism, and the world tried communism. So you can walk through this, walk through these systems, and all of them for different kinds of reasons just won't get the job done.

"Slavery has been the most common, the most persistent, and even the one today that we can't get out of our blood, but we don't have to go back very far: Egypt was built on the backs of slaves. China has by and large lived under dynasties and pseudo-slavery its entire history. It ends 4,500 years of history with the last hundred years of communism, and now things get even worse. Why? Because communists say our main principal is to abolish private ownership. Here's the problem with that idea: It doesn't work. Without property rights, there are no human rights. In other words, the last thing in the world you could expect from communism is freedom. Freedom will not happen without property rights. I'm not genius to think of that — John Locke thought of that and many other thinkers. Our founding fathers were well-versed in what really does create some prosperity. Our founding fathers said it's not communism, nor is it socialism: It's free-market capitalism. What Wayne and I learned really quickly when we went to Europe and South America is the world is not going to put up with the word capitalism. Wayne and I found out that if we mention the word capitalism, they shut their ears. We learned very quickly to get that out of

our vocabulary and call it the free market. So what we tell audiences around the world, poor audiences especially, is that the free market is the only way out of poverty. The free market is a way out because all the market is a communicative mechanism. The market is a miraculous instrument of communication. Because as we are all living our lives with volunteer exchange (you buy, you sell, they buy, they sell), for trade, economics, prices, interest rates, and so on, the market is just a conduit. It is a beautiful conduit of telling us what's going on in the world, reflected in these prices. The prices, then, can be very, very meaningful. So the market is a miraculous instrument of communication. The market is a stupendous transmitter of wisdom while determining value. The market is like a galactic bathroom scale where supply and demand determine price. Supply and demand determine interest rates and profits and losses. The free market is the best way to go, but it's not the producer of

“Without property rights, there are no human rights.”

wealth, it's just a conduit. It's a conduit of entrepreneurship.

"We have founding fathers here in this country that get together and say we are going to put together a different kind of a country, and it's going to be by-and-large a free market. We're going to put together a country that is going to have verifiable addresses. Well, who cares about verifiable ad-

resses? Let me tell you why verifiable addresses are important. The poor people of this world have some housing (trillions of dollars worth), but individual poor housing (cardboard, tin shacks). Here's the problem: They have some housing, but they don't have title to that housing. The poor people of this world grow some crops, but they don't have deeds to those crops. The poor people of this world have some small little businesses, but no articles of incorporation. Here's the problem with all of that: They don't have property documents. Unless you have property documents, you can't show that you own it. You can't ever borrow a dime. You go to a bank and say you want to borrow \$50. They would say,

'What's your collateral?'

'I don't have any collateral.'

'What!?''

"That's why they need a verifiable address, a place to hang a shingle. Even though it's poverty (cardboard, tin, nothing), they need to let people have verifiable addresses. Believe me, most presidents, prime ministers, and leaders of poor countries don't understand what we're talking about. We say, 'That's your main job.' We try not to overemphasize it. In fact, sometimes we lecture all weekend long and never mention the United States one time. You're an American crowd, so I can say United States here.

"Thomas Jefferson helped sign the Constitution, but in writing the Declaration of Independence of 1776 a few years later, Jefferson had the insight to say: Americans need verifiable ad-

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economic freedom

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dresses. So they laid down a measurement system in northern Ohio: north, south, east, west. All of America comes from that axis system. Six miles by six miles is called a township. They open up the shop and let people start buying land, which was unheard of. No nation has ever let its people own land. No nation has ever let its people own oil rights. No nation has ever let its people own anything. Our founding fathers said we are going to be a country of limited government and maximum ownership. A miraculous thing happens when you have verifiable address and can collateralize wealth, and be able to increase wealth. We share this with countries and it is helping them.

...

“What is it that creates entrepreneurship? What is it about a person who looks at a situation, and every time they see an opportunity? Early on, Eli Whitney, from the late 1700s, developed the cotton gin. It was Eli Whitney’s idea of interchangeable parts. Eli Whitney walks into Thomas Jefferson’s office (the year is 1800, we’re just a brand new country), and he has six gunny sacks. He dumps everything out. Eli Whitney says to Jefferson, ‘Take a piece from each of these sacks, Thomas, and put it together.’ And he did. He made a musket. This was the first time a musket was made out of interchangeable parts. Then he said, ‘You know, this creates an agricultural revolution.’ Cyrus McCormick makes a reaper, and others make combines, rakes, and plows. Although growth went straight for thousands and thousands of years,

you come to the year 1800 and the growth curve begins to slowly bend upward because of the agricultural revolution. Agricultural revolution: Those are just fancy words. Cyrus McCormick’s reaper can do the work of 15 men. No wonder mankind is starting to get a little more productive. Then there’s the industrial revolution, and a huge part of that comes out of the United States. We don’t say that far and wide. We just pretend that England and Western Europe were important because they feel more comfortable with that thought. The fact is, Thomas Edison gives a laboratory with 1,000 inventions. Henry Ford gives the gas engine and the car. Entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs.

...

“But the main point I’m getting back to is that what the market system does is nurture and cherish and encourage entrepreneurs. Just like Eli Whitney, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs — this system

“What the market system does is nurture and cherish and encourage entrepreneurs.”

produces builders, creators, dreamers, doers, inventors, and engineers. There are entrepreneurs by the millions, you just have to get out of their way. China lives under 5,000 years of slavery, oppression, and dynasty. Next, they have a hundred years of lousy,

stinking communism. Who would believe in a million years that Deng Xiaoping, who trained under Mao Zedong, would wake up eight days into becoming premier of China and decide public ownership won’t work. No kidding, Lone Ranger. This is the same Deng Xiaoping who killed those students in Tiananmen Square. This is no flag-waving act for Deng Xiaoping, so don’t start thinking he’s one great guy. I’ll tell you one thing he did was he said that public ownership is not going to work and he began to allow people economic freedom. Religious freedom — no. Freedom of the press — no. Freedom to congregate — no. Freedom to live where you’d like to live — no. But he did allow a few economic freedoms — that is: to move, to own, to operate, to begin entering into a market system — and, all of a sudden, China begins to get some lift off. I wonder why.”

This is just a short excerpt from Dr. Asmus’ entire Summit lecture. To read the transcription in full, please go to www.summit.org/resources/the-journal/, open the PDF, and scroll to the end. The entire 2014 Summit Adult Conference Lecture Set, including 20 lectures from top speakers, is also available at the online Summit bookstore: <http://www.summit.org/store/2014-Summit-Adult-Conference-Lecture-Set/>

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.

Creation

In 1966 *Time* magazine ran a cover story asking: Is God Dead? Many have accepted the cultural narrative that he's obsolete — that as science progresses, there is less need for a “God” to explain the universe. Yet it turns out that the rumors of God's death were premature. More amazing is that the relatively recent case for his existence comes from a surprising place — science itself.

Here's the story: The same year *Time* featured the now-famous headline, the astronomer Carl Sagan announced that there were two important criteria for a planet to support life: the right kind of star, and a planet the right distance from that star. Given the roughly octillion — 1 followed by 27 zeros — planets in the universe, there should have been about septillion — 1 followed by 24 zeros — planets capable of supporting life.

With such spectacular odds, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, a large, expensive collection of private and publicly funded projects launched in the 1960s, was sure to turn up something soon. Scientists listened with a vast radio telescopic network for signals that resembled coded intelligence and were not merely random. But as years passed, the silence from the rest of the universe was deafening. Congress defunded SETI in 1993, but the search continues with private funds. As of 2014, researchers have discovered precisely bubkis — 0 followed by nothing.

What happened? As our knowledge of the universe increased, it became clear that there were far more factors necessary for life than Sagan supposed. His two parameters grew to 10 and then 20 and then 50, and so the number of potentially life-supporting planets decreased accordingly. The number dropped to a few thousand planets and kept on plummeting.

Even SETI proponents acknowledged the problem. Peter Schenkel wrote in a 2006 piece for *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine: “In light of new findings and insights, it seems appropriate to put excessive euphoria to rest. ... We should quietly admit that the early estimates ... may no longer be tenable.”

As factors continued to be discovered, the number of possible planets hit zero, and kept going. In other words, the odds turned against any planet in the universe supporting life, including this one. Probability said that even we shouldn't be here.

Today there are more than 200 known parameters necessary for a planet to support life — every single one of which

“The odds against life in the universe are simply astonishing.”

Eric Metaxas

must be perfectly met, or the whole thing falls apart. Without a massive planet like Jupiter nearby, whose gravity will draw away asteroids, a thousand times as many would hit Earth's surface. The odds against life in the universe are simply astonishing.

Yet here we are, not only existing, but talking about existing. What can account for it? Can every one of those many parameters have been perfect by accident? At what point is it fair to admit that science suggests that we cannot be the result

of random forces? Doesn't assuming that an intelligence created these perfect conditions require far less faith than believing that a life-sustaining Earth just happened to beat the inconceivable odds to come into being?

There's more. The fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all. For example, astrophysicists now know that the values of the four fundamental forces — gravity, the electromagnetic force, and the “strong” and “weak” nuclear forces — were determined less than one millionth of a second after the big bang. Alter any one value and the universe could not exist. For instance, if the ratio between the nuclear strong force and the electromagnetic force had been off by the tiniest fraction of the tiniest fraction — by even one part in 100,000,000,000,000,000 — then no stars could have ever formed at all. Feel free to gulp.

Multiply that single parameter by all the other necessary conditions, and the odds against the universe existing are so heart-stoppingly astronomical that the notion that it all “just happened” defies common sense. It would be like tossing a coin and having it come up heads 10 quintillion times in a row. Really?

Fred Hoyle, the astronomer who coined the term “big bang,” said that his atheism was “greatly shaken” at these developments. He later wrote that “a common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology. ... The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.”

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a look at our world

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Theoretical physicist Paul Davies has said that “the appearance of design is overwhelming,” and Oxford professor Dr. John Lennox has said “the more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator ... gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here.”

The greatest miracle of all time, without any close seconds, is the universe. It is the miracle of all miracles, one that ineluctably points with the combined brightness of every star to something — or Someone — beyond itself.

—Eric Metaxas

The Wall Street Journal

December 26, 2014, p. A 11

Religious Freedom

In 1991, I lit Hanukkah candles with Mikhail Gorbachev, then president of the Soviet Union. After the ceremony he asked, through his interpreter, what we had just done—what was the meaning of the ritual? I asked the interpreter to tell him that more than 2,000 years ago, under a repressive government, the Seleucid Greeks, Jews fought for the right to practice their faith in freedom. “My people won,” I said, “and ever since we have performed this ceremony in memory of that event.”

I then noted that for 70 years after the Russian Revolution, Jews also lived under a repressive government in the Soviet Union and were not allowed to practice their faith. “You gave them back their freedom,” I said, “so you too are part of that story.”

As the interpreter translated my reply, President Gorbachev blushed. He had recently made history with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but I guess he wasn’t accustomed to praise for the significance of his actions resonating quite that far back. It was true, though: He had liberated Soviet Jews from silence, and the Jews

at that Hanukkah celebration felt it. For Jews world-wide, it was one of the high points of recent history.

But of course those were remarkable days for millions of people. As the Berlin Wall fell a quarter-century ago, Soviet communism imploded and the Cold War came to an end, Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History* made thrilling sense. The era of ideological conflict was over. The last great secular ideology, communism, had failed. What had succeeded were liberal democracy and market economics, neither of them ideological, simply systems for liberating the energies of individuals and allowing them to live peaceably and creatively together despite their differences. Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill turned out to be greater prophets of the human spirit than Karl Marx.

Rarely has a dream been so rudely interrupted. Already in 1991 the Bosnian conflict had flared, and it was this event that was to prove the shape of things to come. Bosnians who had lived together for decades found themselves, under the toxic leadership of Slobodan Milosevic and Radovan Karadzic, divided along ethnic and religious lines. Three years later in Rwanda came the massacre of Tutsis by Hutus. Tribalism had returned with a vengeance.

Religious freedom has been the casualty of the new global disorder. There is an onslaught against Christians in the Middle East, who are being butchered, crucified, and beheaded in Syria and Iraq, and persecuted and threatened in sub-Saharan Africa, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, and elsewhere. Muslims are dying at the hands of their fellow Muslims across the Sunni-Shiite divide. Bahai are suffering persecution in Iran and Egypt, Buddhists in Vietnam, Myanmar in China, and Hindus in Pakistan. And within living memory of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism has returned to Europe.

According to the Religious Freedom in the World Report 2014 by the Catholic Church’s Aid to the Church in Need organization, freedom of religion has deteriorated in almost half the countries of the world, and sectarian violence is at a six-year high. Yet freedom of religion is one of the basic human rights, as set out in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. More fundamentally, it was the cause for which the modern world established the concept of human rights in the first place. Revulsion at a century of religious wars in Europe helped spur Enlightenment thinking about the social contract, the moral limits of power, and the centrality of human rights.

The world needs a new, enlightened movement: of people of all faiths working together for the freedom of all faiths. The record of religion in the past, and tragically also in the present, has not been good. Throughout history, people have hated in the name of the God of love, practiced cruelty in the name of the God of compassion, killed in the name of the God of life, and waged war in the name of the God of peace. None of the world’s great religions has been exempt from this at one point or another. The time has come to say—enough.

The challenge is simple and it is posed in the first chapter of the Bible. Can we recognize God’s image in a person who is not in our image; whose color, creed, or culture is not our own? When Hanukkah begins on Tuesday evening, I will light the first candle and pray that the day may come when people of all faiths light a menorah together to celebrate a new festival of religious freedom, when we finally have learned to honor the brotherhood and sisterhood of humankind under the love and forgiveness of God.

—Jonathan Sacks

The Wall Street Journal

December 26, 2014, p. A 13

alumni spotlight

a look at the lives of summit alumni

Summit Grad Now Surgeon General of Arkansas



Dr. Greg Bledsoe attended a Summit Summer Student Conference over 20 years ago as a teenager. Little did he know then that he'd one day be tapped to spearhead important policy in the state of Arkansas.

"Summit was the first step in fleshing out my faith," says Bledsoe. "God has a hand in every person's life, whether it means notoriety or setback. God's ultimate purpose is His glory, and He is ruthless in seeking that and using circumstances to refine us to best glorify Him."

Bledsoe calls himself a "curious kid" who had a lot of questions when he came to Summit under Dr. Noebel's leadership in the 1990s.

"Adults around me sometimes had a few answers to my questions, but sometimes those felt short," he explains. "When I came to Summit, I was pleased to see that there is a deep well of very profound Christian thinking. There are people who had been thinking about these issues that were on my mind."

With Republican Governor Asa Hutchinson winning the November election in Arkansas, the door was open for a replacement that would

help steer health policy toward a more conservative framework.

Arkansas legislators adopted a private option for Medicaid as part of the Affordable Care Act. Hutchinson is working to reform the structure and has appointed a task force with Bledsoe being a non-voting member.

"Whatever recommendations we make, whatever we roll out, will likely serve as a model for other states," Bledsoe says.

Bledsoe will continue to practice medicine as a faculty member at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. He'll also research injury prevention at the University. The research will dovetail well with his background as an emergency medicine specialist.

Bledsoe has traveled to dozens of countries practicing emergency medicine in a variety of environments from jungles to deserts. Perhaps the most dangerous of them all is the political landscape he finds himself in now.

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INSIDE: Exploring the essence of economic freedom

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a look at our world

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Higher Education

On America's college campuses, it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell which are the jejune undergraduates and which their supposedly mature professors. The confusion is not aided by the likes of Charles Angeletti, a professor of American civilization at Metropolitan State University of Denver. At the start of each class, *Campus Reform* reports, Angeletti requires his students to recite an ersatz Pledge of Allegiance of his own devising. Among the claims that are made within the oath are that the United States is reserved for "Republicans," that the nation is repressed "under Jesus," and that its constitution offers "curtailed liberty and justice for all except blacks, homosexuals, women who want abortions, Communists, welfare queens, treehuggers, feminazis, illegal immigrants, children of illegal immigrants, and you, if you don't watch your step." Angeletti claims that he is merely encouraging his students to think for themselves. Is he sure that asking them to read a childish and petulant script is the best way to do it?

—*National Review*
December 31, 2014, p.11

The university is often said to be the first place in our society to look for the truth. Unfortunately, it is now one of the last places to find it.

Events surrounding a recent *Rolling Stone* article that chronicles an account of a gang rape at a University of Virginia fraternity make clear how little the critical spirit operates today on our nation's campuses. The story, which *Rolling Stone* no longer supports, begged to be treated with skepticism. Appearing in a magazine that trades in sensational-

ism—last year it put a glamour photo of the Boston marathon bomber on its cover—the narrative is so pat and faithful to a formula that common sense dictated caution. And most readers, one suspects, did feel at least a tinge of suspicion. Yet opinion leaders and campus activists across the nation quickly embraced the story as gospel truth, with some looking to convert it into a national movement to stem sexual violence.

At the epicenter of this event is the University of Virginia, where I have taught for over three decades. Jefferson's campus became the site of rallies, demonstrations, constant social network exchanges, and endless meetings at all levels. A discourse or rhetoric began to develop that alternated expressions of rage with pleas for compassion. Apologies were issued all the way from the university's Board of Visitors down to informal groups gathered on the campus grounds.

To be in the midst of an occurrence of this kind is to appreciate just how powerful is the force of the crowd. What took place resembled nothing so much as the behavior of a gentle mob, postmodern style. Anyone who expressed reserve about the article or who dared to apply the adjective "alleged" to the acts described faced the charge of being indifferent to sexual violence and rape. The penalty was to be written out of the community. Best, one observer cautioned, not to poke the beast.

Like many such crowds, this one sought its own victims to punish. Strangely, retribution against the seven alleged perpetrators was treated as less important than one might have thought, for this result would have

placed the onus in the affair on these individuals and their criminal acts. From the moment of the first mass rally, speakers from the faculty and student body left no doubt that they were in search of much bigger game. Moving in a reverse pyramid from the specific to the more abstract, they decried the fraternity system, privilege (the "money-fraternity complex"), and the rape culture of the South, including Thomas Jefferson for his relations with Sally Hemings. The charges went higher and higher up the ladder of generality until the sex crime committed at UVA became a confirmation of the basic theory of privileged Western male oppression that is so widely subscribed to in the disciplines of cultural studies. The theoretical or ideological dimension that began to take hold, which relies on class profiling, accorded with the subtext of the *Rolling Stone* article that is directed less against sexual violence per se—of which Charlottesville has tragically suffered more than enough in recent years—than against sexual violence perpetrated by males belonging to society's "upper tier."

The abandonment of a critical spirit on our campuses is as much a failure of moral courage as of intellectual blindness. Every adult, if not every student, knows what happened at Duke eight years ago, where, under pressure from the same kind of academic crowd behavior, members of the men's lacrosse team were tainted and criminally prosecuted for rape, under charges that ultimately proved baseless. Every professor in media studies and public opinion is fully aware of the spectacular hoaxes of modern journalism, from the gripping accounts of urban poverty by

a look at our world

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Janet Cooke in the *Washington Post* to the multiple fabrications of Stephen Glass in the *New Republic*. And scholars of literature and history cannot be ignorant of the psychology of false accusation, from the biblical story of Potiphar's wife down to the rape charges by Tawana Brawley, cynically perpetuated by Al Sharpton. Yet, in the climate of the moment, none of the perspective that these teachers could have offered, even if they had wished to do so, was ever brought to bear. A crowd does not listen, particularly when it is convinced it is on the side of the angels.

University authorities might have helped to keep open a semblance of a discussion. But faced themselves with the prospect of becoming an early casualty of the crowd, which seemed ready to target the administration for alleged indifference, the leadership sought safety by joining with and trying to get out ahead of their critics. The president of the university, Teresa Sullivan, made clear where the initiative lay: "I want you to know that I have heard you, and that your words have enkindled this message." Still, in a final gesture of restraint, she asked that the community evaluate matters in a way that would ensure that "one of our founding principles—the pursuit of truth—remains a pillar on which we can stand." She may have had in mind Jefferson's own promise that "this institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it."

Noble sentiments, but have they been followed? The latest and most disturbing turn in the whole sequence

of events came in the aftermath of the unraveling of the published story. No one, of course, knows exactly what, if anything, happened in that fraternity house, or how many, if any, of the victim's charges can stand up to scrutiny. Despite promises from different parties to get to the bottom of things, one coming from *Rolling Stone* no less, this matter may never be resolved. What stands out, however, is the reaction of the activists. Though disappointed that the veracity of this story of suffering and bestiality has been placed in doubt, they remain undeterred. Now they claim that the facts of this case ultimately do not matter. It is the larger cause that counts. The article, they say, has served to put a spotlight on the epidemic of sexual violence on campus. As one of them put it, "The main message we want to come out of all this is that sexual assault is a problem nationwide that we need to act in preventing. It has never been about one story." The activists, moreover, can claim already to have won a victory. They are certain to be at the center of the next step in the process, now underway at UVA, of adopting new measures to deal with this problem.

But the truth *does* matter. Even on the level of future policy changes, this problem can only be properly addressed if it is presented in an unbiased way, not in terms of a preconceived framework. The moral dimension of disregarding the truth also cannot be forgotten. Members of the university community have been vilified as gang rapists. Does anyone mind? The University of Virginia has been charged with bearing the full burden of national obloquy. Does anyone care? If the faculty and administration prefer to abdicate to a

crowd rather than offer a defense, even in comparative terms, of the university's reputation, then who will stand up for the place?

The answer is: no one at the university. The task has been taken up by the local newspaper, Charlottesville's *Daily Progress*, which has spoken with a clarity and directness unheard on the campus: "The University of Virginia and its reputation were also vandalized by this story." The president of the university, having initially invoked the pillar of truth in her first reaction to the *Rolling Stone* article, struck a very different note in her pronouncement on its retraction: "While all of us who care about the University are upset by the *Rolling Stone* story, I write now with a different message." Surely the truth merits something more than a dependent clause.

Far from being an end in itself, the truth on our college campuses is now treated as a mere instrument of combat. It is wielded with feigned righteousness when it promotes a preferred cause, and then abandoned when it produces the opposite result. In the end, this is the sad message that universities now convey.

—James W. Ceaser

The Weekly Standard

December 22, 2014, p. 9, 10

Critics have argued that China's Confucius Institutes pose a threat to academic freedom in the United States, Canada, Europe, and beyond. Now the Beijing official in charge has confirmed it.

If you're new to this issue, the Chinese government has set up 1,100 of these state-run Confucius Institutes since 2004 to teach language and

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culture within universities and grade schools world-wide. Now the institutes are facing long overdue scrutiny, and some universities and school districts are closing them down.

On Sunday the BBC interviewed Chinese Vice Minister Xu Lin, director-general of Confucius Institute Headquarters. She confirmed in no uncertain terms that her organization exports the values of the Chinese Communist Party to foreign academic institutions, from Columbia and Stanford to neighborhood elementary schools.

Ms. Xu described how the teachers must file official reports and answer questions about whether they discussed politically sensitive subjects in the classroom. She also confirmed that Beijing forces foreign institutions to deny employment to believers in Falun Gong, a spiritual movement banned in China.

We wrote about Ms. Xu this summer, when her staff tore out pages from the program at an academic conference in Portugal. She was offended by the co-sponsorship of a Taiwanese foundation.

Queried about this by the BBC, Ms. Xu was dismissive. “Nobody worried, I was there,” she claimed — even though the European Association for Chinese Studies brought the episode to light as a “totally unacceptable” act of academic bullying.

When the BBC’s John Sudworth pressed on, Ms. Xu became impatient. “I think you shouldn’t ask this question,” she said. “The Taiwan issue is our own issue. It’s a China issue. It’s not a foreign people’s issue.” She demanded that Mr. Sudworth erase their discussion of the “Portugal issue.” Mr. Sudworth refused.

Then Ms. Xu offered perhaps the most revealing statement of all: “Every mainland teacher we send,” she explained, “will say Taiwan belongs to China. We should have one China. No hesitation.”

Earlier this year, U.S. College Board President David Coleman feted Ms. Xu at a conference in Los Angeles. Referring to Ms. Xu’s agency by its Chinese acronym, Hanban, Mr. Coleman gushed: “Hanban is like the sun. It lights the path to develop Chinese teaching in the U.S. The College Board is the moon. I am so honored to reflect the light that we’ve gotten from Hanban.”

Not all scholars and politicians are so credulous. The University of Chicago and Penn State recently closed their Confucius Institutes, while Canada’s largest school district, in Toronto, nixed plans to open one.

Ms. Xu’s comments now challenge the legions of American university and K-12 leaders who have never raised concerns, even as most of them signed secret contracts with Beijing. New Jersey Rep. Chris Smith has pledged to investigate such contracts and examine whether institutions should lose government funds for restricting academic freedom. Such efforts can help, but a broader shift in attitude is needed.

Students deserve opportunities to study Chinese language and culture without wearing ideological blinders provided by Beijing. To the extent that Beijing-backed Confucius Institutes shape instruction in the West, Chinese government interests will increasingly trump academic freedom.

—*The Wall Street Journal*
December 25, 2014, p. A 12

Jesus’ Historical Influence

“Atheist historian W.E.H. Lecky admits that the character of Jesus ‘has been not only the highest pattern of virtue but the strongest incentive to its practice; and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists.’”

—David A. Noebel
Understanding The Times, p. 39

When Saul of Tarsus set out on his journey to Damascus the whole of the known world lay in bondage. There was one state, and it was Rome. There was one master for it all, and he was Tiberius Caesar.

Everywhere there was civil order, for the arm of the Roman law was long. Everywhere there was stability, in government and in society, for the centurions saw that it was so.

But everywhere there was something else, too. There was oppression — for those who were not the friends of Tiberius Caesar. There was the tax gatherer to take the grain from the fields and the flax from the spindle to feed the legions or to fill the hungry treasury from which divine Caesar gave largess to the people. There was the impressor to find recruits for the circuses. There were executioners to quiet those whom the Emperor proscribed. What was a man for but to serve Caesar?

There was the persecution of men who dared think differently, who heard strange voices or read strange manuscripts. There was enslavement of men

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whose tribes came not from Rome, disdain for those who did not have the familiar visage. And most of all, there was everywhere a contempt for human life. What, to the strong, was one man more or less in a crowded world?

Then, of a sudden, there was a light in the world, and a man from Galilee saying, Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.

And the voice from Galilee, which would defy Caesar, offered a new Kingdom in which each man could walk upright and bow to none but his God. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. And he sent this gospel of the Kingdom of Man into the uttermost ends of the earth.

So the light came into the world and the men who lived in darkness were afraid, and they tried to lower a curtain so that man would still believe salvation lay with the leaders.

But it came to pass for a while in diverse places that the truth did set man free, although the men of darkness were offended and they tried to put out the light. The voice said, Haste ye. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you, for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

Along the road to Damascus the light shone brightly. But afterward Paul of Tarsus, too, was sore afraid. He feared that other Caesars, other prophets, might one day persuade men that man was nothing save a servant unto them, that men might yield up their birthright from God for pottage and walk no more in freedom.

Then might it come to pass that darkness would settle again over the lands

and there would be a burning of books and men would think only of what they should eat and what they should wear, and would give heed only to new Caesars and to false prophets. Then might it come to pass that men would not look upward to see even a winter's star in the East, and once more, there would be no light at all in the darkness.

And so Paul, the apostle of the Son of Man, spoke to his brethren, the Galatians, the words he would have us remember afterward in each of the years of his Lord:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

—Vermont Royster
The Wall Street Journal
December 24, 2014, p. A 14

Creation vs. Evolution

"The Big Bang model also says nothing about what banged, why it banged, or what happened before it banged."

—Manjit Kumar

It had long been assumed that gravity would act as a brake on cosmic expansion, but astronomers were horrified to discover in the 1990s that the expansion is speeding up. "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.

—Kuman

The Wall Street Journal
March 28, 2012, p. A 11

In 1966 *Time* magazine ran a cover story asking: Is God Dead? Many have accepted the cultural narrative that he's obsolete — that as science progresses, there is less need for a "God" to explain the universe. Yet it turns out that the rumors of God's death were premature. More amazing is that the relatively recent case for his existence comes from a surprising place — science itself.

Here's the story: The same year *Time* featured the now-famous headline, the astronomer Carl Sagan announced that there were two important criteria for a planet to support life: the right kind of star, and a planet the right distance from that star. Given the roughly octillion — 1 followed by 27 zeros — planets in the universe, there should have been about septillion — 1 followed by 24 zeros — planets capable of supporting life.

With such spectacular odds, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, a large, expensive collection of private and publicly funded projects launched in the 1960s, was sure to turn up something soon. Scientists listened with a vast radio telescopic network for signals that resembled coded intelligence and were not merely random. But as years passed, the silence from the rest of the universe was deafening. Congress defunded SETI in 1993, but the search continues with private funds. As of 2014, researchers have discovered precisely bubkis — 0 followed by nothing.

What happened? As our knowledge of the universe increased, it became clear that there were far more factors necessary for life than Sagan supposed. His two parameters grew to 10 and then 20 and then 50, and so the number of potentially life-supporting planets decreased accordingly. The number dropped to a few thou-

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sand planets and kept on plummeting.

Even SETI proponents acknowledged the problem. Peter Schenkel wrote in a 2006 piece for *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine: “In light of new findings and insights, it seems appropriate to put excessive euphoria to rest. ... We should quietly admit that the early estimates ... may no longer be tenable.”

As factors continued to be discovered, the number of possible planets hit zero, and kept going. In other words, the odds turned against any planet in the universe supporting life, including this one. Probability said that even we shouldn’t be here.

Today there are more than 200 known parameters necessary for a planet to support life — every single one of which must be perfectly met, or the whole thing falls apart. Without a massive planet like Jupiter nearby, whose gravity will draw away asteroids, a thousand times as many would hit Earth’s surface. The odds against life in the universe are simply astonishing.

Yet here we are, not only existing, but talking about existing. What can account for it? Can every one of those many parameters have been perfect by accident? At what point is it fair to admit that science suggests that we cannot be the result of random forces? Doesn’t assuming that an intelligence created these perfect conditions require far less faith than believing that a life-sustaining Earth just happened to beat the inconceivable odds to come into being?

There’s more. The fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all. For example, astrophysicists now know that the values of the four fundamental forces — gravity, the electromagnetic force, and the “strong” and “weak” nuclear forces — were determined less than one millionth of a second after the big bang. Alter any one value and the universe could not ex-

ist. For instance, if the ratio between the nuclear strong force and the electromagnetic force had been off by the tiniest fraction of the tiniest fraction — by even one part in 100,000,000,000,000,000 — then no stars could have ever formed at all. Feel free to gulp.

Multiply that single parameter by all the other necessary conditions, and the odds against the universe existing are so heart-stoppingly astronomical that the notion that it all “just happened” defies common sense. It would be like tossing a coin and having it come up heads 10 quintillion times in a row. Really?

Fred Hoyle, the astronomer who coined the term “big bang,” said that his atheism was “greatly shaken” at these developments. He later wrote that “a common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology. ... The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.”

Theoretical physicist Paul Davies has said that “the appearance of design is overwhelming,” and Oxford professor Dr. John Lennox has said “the more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator ... gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here.”

The greatest miracle of all time, without any close seconds, is the universe. It is the miracle of all miracles, one that ineluctably points with the combined brightness of every star to something — or Someone — beyond itself.

—Eric Metaxas
The Wall Street Journal
December 26, 2014, p. A 11

In an alternative fate, Bill Nye might be an uncelebrated mechanical engineer at Boeing designing incremental

improvements for the 747. Instead, he got a start in television in a local Seattle comedy show and rose to fame with his own PBS show, *Bill Nye the Science Guy*.

Last February, Mr. Nye’s advocacy of science education led him into a public debate with Ken Ham, a creationist who believes that the Earth is only 6,000 years old and that the book of Genesis is a literal account of life’s creation. With the help of an “editor,” or perhaps co-author, Corey S. Powell, Mr. Nye has now written up his side of the confrontation in *Undeniable: Evolution and the Science of Creation*. His book is mostly devoted to laying out the evidence that life on Earth has evolved, with a few chapters tacked on at the end addressing topical but largely irrelevant scientific issues such as human cloning and genetically modified foods.

Mr. Nye writes briskly and accessibly. He favors short, sound-bitey sentences. He is good on the geological and fossil evidence for evolution, reflecting his background in the physical sciences, but devotes less attention to changes in DNA, which furnish the most direct evidence of evolution. A recent paper in the journal *PLOS Genetics*, for instance, describes the seven DNA mutations that occurred over the past 90 million years in the gene that specifies the light-detecting protein of the retina. These mutations shifted the protein’s sensitivity from ultraviolet to blue, the first step in adapting a nocturnal animal to daytime vision and in generating the three-color vision of the human eye. Such insights into nature’s actual programming language are surely the most undeniable part of evolution at work.

Mr. Nye’s analysis also glosses over bristling perplexity. He says that there

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are a billion years between the Earth's formation 4.5 billion years ago and the first fossil evidence of life, plenty of time for the chemical evolution of the first living cells. But this fact is long outdated. A heavy meteorite bombardment some 3.9 billion years ago probably sterilized the planet, yet the first possible chemical evidence of life appears in rocks some 3.8 billion years old. This leaves startlingly little time for the first living cells to have evolved. Reconstruction of the chemical steps by which they did so is a daunting and so far unsolved problem. Mr. Nye might have done better to concede as much.

Overall, Mr. Nye makes an eloquent case for evolution. But factual repudiation of anti-Darwinism seems unlikely to settle the issue. Fundamentalists evidently welcome such confrontations or Mr. Ham wouldn't have challenged Mr. Nye to public debate in the first place. What, then, is likely to be accomplished by this book? Indeed why, in 21st-century America and 155 years after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, is such a debate taking place at all?

When the First Amendment forbade the establishment of an official religion, its framers set up a vigorous marketplace of ideas. Religious leaders can't take their flocks for granted like the parson in an established church; to survive, they must compete ceaselessly for market share. The struggle has energized religion in the United States and helped it resist the tides of secularism that have almost extinguished churchgoing in many European countries. Mr. Ham, for instance, is clearly an energetic entrepreneur: Answers in Genesis, his ministry, raised \$27 million to build the

Creation Museum in Petersburg, Ky., where he and Mr. Nye went toe to toe.

America's free market in religion gave fundamentalist churches like Mr. Ham's room to thrive despite the 19th century's two devastating blows of Darwin and higher criticism, the analysis by scholars of the Bible's text. These critics showed the Pentateuch, traditionally authored by Moses, to be the work of many human hands and indeed to be more mosaic than Mosaic. The revelation fell with particular force on Protestants, given the authority that Luther had assigned to the sacred text. Though most Protestant churches have followed Catholics and Jews in making their peace with Darwin, those now known as fundamentalists doubled down their bet by insisting on the Bible's inerrancy, including even the Genesis account of the creation. Today fundamentalists oppose the teaching of evolution in schools or demand that creationism, a meretricious alternative, be given equal weight.

Mr. Nye's fusillade of facts won't budge them an inch. Isn't there some more effective way of persuading fundamentalists to desist from opposing the teaching of evolution? If the two sides were willing to negotiate, it would be easy enough to devise a treaty that each could interpret as it wished. In the case of teaching evolution in schools, scientists would concede that evolution is a theory, which indeed it is. Fundamentalists might then be willing to let their children be taught evolution, telling them it is "just a theory." Evolution, of course, is no casual surmise but a theory in the solemn scientific sense, a grand explanatory system that accounts for a vast range of phenomena and is in turn

supported by them. Like all scientific theories, however, it is not an absolute, final truth because theories are always subject to change and emendation.

In their battle with fundamentalists, scientists hate to admit to even a smidgen of uncertainty. But a useful distinction can be made between evolution as a historical process, which is undeniable, and evolution as a scientific theory. The theory is not inscribed unalterably on stone tablets but is still very much a work in progress. At present, for instance, there is an intense debate — started by Darwin to explain the emergence of altruism — over whether natural selection works on groups as well as on individuals. So which version of the theory is "undeniable," the one with group-level selection or the one without it? If popularizers like Mr. Nye could allow that the theory of evolution is a theory, not an absolute truth or dogma, they might stand a better chance of getting the fundamentalists out of the science classroom.

—Nicholas Wade

The Wall Street Journal

December 23, 2014, p. A 11

Regarding Nicholas Wade's review of Bill Nye's work *Undeniable* ("Bill Nye The Darwin Guy," Dec. 23), an observation: Because most of us believe that ideas have consequences (Lord Acton, Weaver, Sowell certainly thought so), why don't the Nyes and Hams of the world speak to the consequences of their respective views. For example, most of the world is presently sensing that Marxism is indeed a philosophy of death with a consequence of millions of mass killings. What are the historical consequences of Darwinian evolution?

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Of biblical creationism?

Stephen Jay Gould said that “biological arguments for racism ... increased by orders of magnitude following the acceptance of evolutionary theory by scientists in most nations.” For those willing to measure the tragic consequences of Darwinism and its “struggle for survival” motto, I would suggest either Max Weinreich’s *Hitler’s Professors* or Jerry Bergman’s *Hitler and the Nazi Darwinian Worldview*. To put it mildly, Hitler took Darwin’s *The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871) literally. Offhand I can’t think of any mass murdering related to biblical creationism.

—David A. Noebel, Prescott, AZ
Letter to the Editor

Creation contains an astonishing abundance and variety of beauty that constantly surprises and delights us. Every individual tree is a work of art, yet trees come in an immense variety of sizes, colors, and shapes. Each day we’re barraged not just by beautiful sights of cedars, oaks, and firs, but by sundry smells of wildflowers and ripening fruit, or the sweet sounds of songbirds and rustling wind. The deeper we explore our world, the more beauty we find.

How did all this come to be? Understanding creation isn’t just about explaining matter or the complex moving parts of living things, but “added beauty.” Experience tells us that beauty doesn’t come by accident — it offers no obvious survival benefit, and many existing natural laws promote deterioration and decay. So what created and sustains the earth’s beauty?

Of course, people might object that

beauty is partly *subjective*, which is why it is not possible to give an exact score for the degree of beauty in an object. However, many aspects of beauty are *objective*, universally recognized by design experts who readily identify features that contribute to beauty, such as patterns, curves, borders, brightness, contrast, purity, and smoothness. Every architect, for instance, can prove that the United States Capitol Building has objective beauty because it has many beautiful features that are combined to produce a beautiful overall effect. This beauty is real, not an accident, and it points to a designer.

The designed beauty of creation is so exquisite that the best of human technology struggles to replicate the quality of creation’s beauty. The petals of man-made flowers, for instance, are rough and not natural looking, especially the closer you examine them. The best man-made works of art struggle to compare with a simple flower. Jesus pointed out that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like a single flower of the field (*Matthew* 6:29).

A key feature of intelligent design is that only a designer can add beauty for the sake of beauty. An architect embellishes his buildings, and a car designer embellishes his cars, both for the sake of beauty. The Capitol Building shows strong evidence for design because the beautiful features are there for beauty’s sake. In contrast, evolution has no random mechanism to explain how beauty could evolve for beauty’s sake. The atheist Steve Jones once wrote that evolution does its job and no more. This is why added beauty in creation is evidence for a Creator.

The beauty of nature is one of those things we tend to take for granted. But when we stop and think about why something is beautiful, we can appreciate the wisdom and goodness of the Creator. Let’s consider some of the beautiful aspects of creation in detail.

The One who originally created beauty in nature accomplished much more than any human artist or architect could. The Creator made *from nothing* the paint, canvas, and stone with which He worked; and He also fashioned the manifold, interconnected natural laws that sustain this beauty!

Consider just one example of creation’s beauty: the general color scheme. All sorts of factors are at play to give us our blue-and-green color scheme, which is both restful and coordinated. If we were surrounded by large amounts of red, for instance, it would raise our blood pressure and not be restful at all. However, neither earth nor sky is dominated by a red color. Instead, the earth is dominated by green and the sky is dominated by blue, both of which are restful colors. Indeed, if the world’s top-rated interior designer were to judge the color scheme of creation, they would struggle to find any imperfections.

Moreover, it is also clever how God has made the color of the earth contrast with the sky. How strange it would be if both the earth and sky were green, or both the earth and sky were blue! This color scheme is no accident. When God designed chlorophyll for plants, He deliberately made it a green color so as to produce the right color scheme for creation. And when God designed air molecules, He deliberately made them scatter light so that the sky would be blue.

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Another important design feature of green is that it is just the right background color for bright flowers. One of the reasons for the beauty of a field of flowers is not just the bright yellows, reds, and blues of the flowers but the fact that they contrast with the green background.

Yet another beautiful feature of the color scheme in creation is that blue is the most uncommon color for wild-flowers, trees, and fruit. This gives the most beautiful effect because when blue dominates in the sky, it is best if it is the least common color on the ground.

When you consider the color scheme of creation, it is as if an expert in art has coordinated and planned the colors with great care and attention. The Bible says that God is perfect in knowledge (*Job 37:16*), so we should not be surprised that the elements and laws of nature work together to produce such a beautiful color scheme. According to naturalistic views, it is a coincidence that the color scheme is so pleasing to mankind. But naturalism has a big problem — there is no random mechanism that could produce such a color scheme and no reason we should even see colors in the first place.

Even if a person denies the beautiful design of our planet overall, every one of its parts provides added testimony of exquisite, inexplicable beauty. Experts in every field can recognize them; just ask. You don't have to get esoteric to prove your point. An obvious example — like the one that troubled Charles Darwin — will do: peacock feathers.

Like so many other birds, peacocks have amazingly bright colors and patterns in their feathers. The colors on their tail feathers are due to a perfectly

implemented optical effect called thin-film interference. The feathers have layers of keratin that are so thin that they are comparable with the wavelengths of colored light. So, when white light is reflected by the layers, some colors are removed and the white light changes to a color. The thin-film interference produces a color with a deep luster that changes with the angle of view (called iridescence). Amazingly, the peacock produces a pattern of different colors due to precise differences in the design of thin-film layers across the feather.

No wonder Charles Darwin said, "The sight of a feather in a peacock's tail, whenever I gaze at it, makes me sick" (in a letter to Asa Gray, April 3, 1860).

— Stuart Burgess

Answers Magazine

Jan.-March 2015, p. 70, 71, 72

Obamacare

Brought before a House inquisition, MIT professor and Obamacare architect Jonathan Gruber bumbled a recantation of his beliefs about how that triumph of liberalism had been achieved.

Yet, something needs to be said in defense of Gruber.

For while he groveled and confessed to the sin of arrogance, what this Ivy League con artist boasted about rings true.

Here, Gruber explained, is how we got Obamacare passed:

"This bill was written in a tortured way to make sure [the Congressional Budget Office] did not score the mandate as taxes. If CBO scored the mandate as taxes, the bill dies. OK? ...

"Lack of transparency is a huge political advantage. And basically, call it the stupidity of the American voter or

whatever ... that was really, really critical to get the thing to pass. Look, I wish ... we could make it all transparent, but I'd rather have this law than not. ...

"[I]f you had a law which explicitly said that healthy people pay in and sick people get money, it would not have passed."

Call it the new candor. Yet, is Gruber not right on almost all counts?

The "tortured way" the bill was written led a narrowly divided Supreme Court to uphold the act. As for the "lack of transparency," did not Speaker Pelosi, midwife to Obamacare, say, "We have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it."

Under Obamacare, "healthy people pay in and sick people get money." Is that not true? Is it not true that had Obama and his party been honest like Gruber — that this was another rob-Peter-to-pay-Paul wealth transfer scheme — Democrats could not have passed it?

"Look, I wish ... we could make it all transparent," said Gruber, "but I'd rather have this law than not."

Gruber is saying that, though the selling of Obamacare required obfuscation and deceit, it was worth it! We got Obamacare!

Liberals are beating up on Gruber for spilling state secrets.

And what did Gruber do that Obama himself did not do?

For the most persuasive lie in selling Obamacare was the one Obama told again and again: "If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. If you like your health care plan, you can keep your health care plan."

Indispensable to running the Big Con, said Jonathan, was "the stupidity

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of the American voter.”

Here Gruber was wrong. The American people are not lacking in intelligence, but they are trusting, often lacking in knowledge, and they do rely on elected representatives to read and understand those thousand-page bills in Congress.

And their faith is often misplaced.

Bottom line: Gruber & Co. won; America lost. Though the nation did not discover how badly it had been swindled until Obamacare began to be implemented.

The victory of Obamacare raises a question addressed by this writer 40 years ago in “Conservative Votes, Liberal Victories.”

Why, even when conservatives win elections, does the nation continue to move inexorably leftward? As a friend from that era wrote me recently, other than our victory in the Cold War, what do we conservatives have to show for all of our political victories?

In the half century since 1964, the GOP won the White House in seven of 12 elections. Since 1994, the GOP has won more off-year elections than it has lost, including the major wins in 2010 and 2014.

Republican strength on Capitol Hill today rivals that of the 80th Congress of 1946, and the dominance the party enjoyed in the 1920s.

Yet, from past disappointments, current hopes and expectations are not high.

What is it that pushes the nation leftward even when conservatives win at the ballot box?

While there are conservative enclaves within the major media, they are few. Our mammoth bureaucracy — 22

million municipal, county, state and federal employees — has a vital interest in the preservation and growth of government.

Add up the beneficiaries of all social programs, and the number now approaches 100 million. They don't tend to stay committed to folks who will take away what they have come to depend upon.

Higher education is dominated by tenured leftists and radicals. The Ivy League is “No Conservative Need Apply” country.

Our popular culture, from movies to music to TV, is dominated by the left. Conservatives in Hollywood meet in catacombs.

There are conservative judges and justices on the courts, but few counter-revolutionaries. The decisions that come down either advance or confirm decisions handed down half a century ago by the Warren Court.

Yet, as Herb Stein observed, “If something cannot go on forever, it will stop.” From Illinois to Puerto Rico to France, Italy, and Greece, debt-ridden Western social welfare states seem to be coming to the end of the line.

Like the shepherd boy in Aesop's fable, the right has often cried, “Wolf!” This time, the kid may be right.

—Patrick J. Buchanan
lindamuller@buchanan.org
December 12, 2014

Islam

The courageous ex-Muslim human rights activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali recently recounted that at a speech in Washington not long ago, she met Vice President Joe Biden. Biden seized the opportunity to tell her that “ISIS had nothing to do

with Islam.” Hirsi Ali politely disagreed, whereupon Biden began a lesson in the teachings of the Religion of Peace: “Let me tell you one or two things about Islam.”

Unfortunately, Hirsi Ali didn't hear much of Imam Joe's Islamic wisdom: “I politely left the conversation at that. I wasn't used to arguing with vice presidents.”

This wasn't just Joe being Joe, saying another foolish thing that, if he were a conservative Republican, would have ended his political career in an avalanche of ridicule long ago. For in confronting Hirsi Ali and assuming he knew more about Islam than she does, Biden was reflecting what virtually every policymaker in Washington believes — on both sides of the aisle.

Even though Ayaan Hirsi Ali was raised a Muslim in a Muslim country, and educated in Islam from an extremely early age, and despite the fact that Joe Biden has almost certainly never opened a Qur'an, Biden was sure that what she said about Islam must be wrong — it just had to be. Why? Because her opinion of the religion was negative, and the possibility that such a view could have any merit whatsoever is inconceivable in Washington circles. Those who hold it *must* be ignorant.

It's almost certain that Biden would never have confronted Karen Armstrong in a similar way. If Biden is familiar with what Armstrong says about Islam, such as her world-historically ridiculous claim that “Muhammad eventually abjured violence and pursued a daring, inspired policy of non-violence that was worthy of Gandhi,” he would no doubt warmly approve and even applaud. This would not be because Armstrong has done more formal study of Is-

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lam than has Hirsi Ali — she hasn't. Nor would it be because Imam Joe himself made a careful and judicious examination of Islamic texts and teachings, and came to the reasoned conclusion that Armstrong's representation of Islam was more accurate and true to the *ding an sich* than Hirsi Ali's.

On the contrary, Biden would favor Armstrong's Islam over Hirsi Ali's solely and wholly because the former confirms his view of the world and appears to bear out what he wishes were true, and the latter does not. This is likewise the stance of all of Biden's colleagues in the Obama Administration. John Kerry, like Biden, confidently takes a stand on what he believes Islam is all about, based not on any study of his own or anyone else, but on what he wishes is true and hopes is true.

Indeed, on these fantasies are based numerous foreign and domestic policies. The idea that new Israeli concessions will end the Palestinian jihad against Israel and make possible a two-state solution with Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace is based on a determined refusal to consider the possibility that the Palestinians really mean the jihadist rhetoric that they pump out endlessly on official Palestinian Authority and Hamas airwaves about destroying Israel utterly.

The idea that stable, secular, Western-oriented republics could ever have been constructed in Afghanistan or Iraq was based on a refusal to confront what Sharia really is and to study the degree to which the populations in both countries were attached to it. Ultimately, the United States oversaw the adoption of Constitutions in both countries that enshrined Sharia as the highest law of the

land—something that would never have been done had not Washington policymakers been listening to smooth apologists who assured them that Sharia was benign and completely compatible with republican government and Western principles of human rights.

Those policymakers are still entrenched, despite their abysmal track record. There is no accountability for them, for those who would hold them accountable believe in the same fantasies that led to the policy errors. Joe Biden's interaction with Ayaan Hirsi Ali played out with dreary predictability: It was inevitable that Biden would think his fantasies and wishful thinking to be defensible, established fact, and unthinkable that he would regard the judgment of a Somali ex-Muslim woman with unconscious ethnocentric and chauvinistic paternalism: *She is just wounded by her anomalous experiences*, he might have thought to himself, while Joe Biden — Joe Biden! — man of the world, savvy political thinker, diplomat, statesman, and humorist, would gently and affably set her straight, and introduce her to the pluralistic open-mindedness that are the hallmarks of what make us great in the West.

That open-mindedness, that openness to non-Western cultures and people, the linchpin of the multiculturalist imperative, is what Biden and Kerry treasure so much and are trying to protect when they assure the world that Islam is a religion of peace and that those who commit violence in its name are violating its core principles. But even as they preen about their open-mindedness, Biden and Kerry and the rest are actually quite close-minded. When he heard Ayaan Hirsi Ali speak, Biden had an opportu-

nity to hear truths that existed outside of his habits of thought. A truly open-minded person would have adjusted his thinking to fit reality.

Instead, Biden placed himself in the preposterous position of attempting to lecture an ex-Muslim, someone who had once revered the Qur'an and studied it deeply, about the true tenets of Islam. In this latest exercise in making himself ridiculous, Biden is a symbol of the entire Western world, staking its life and future on fantasy and wishful thinking. In response to his foolish nonsense, Ayaan Hirsi Ali was polite. If they ever encounter Biden face to face, those pious believers in Islam who know that what she says about their religion is accurate, and hate her for revealing it, will be substantially less so.

—Robert Spencer
Front Page Magazine
December 12, 2014

Islamic State beheadings of James Foley, Steven Sotloff, and several other Westerners have stunned Americans, but that's because we don't know much about the history of cities like Otranto.

I read the deathly news stories while exploring this city at the heel of the Italian boot. Walking on rain-soaked cobblestones, I headed to Otranto Cathedral, a Norman church built in 1068 on the remains of a much earlier church. Just to the right of the church's altar is the shrine to the 800 martyrs, three walls stacked with skulls and bones.

The story of those skulls begins on May 29, 1453, when Ottoman soldiers broke through the seemingly impregnable walls of Constantinople — now Istanbul, Turkey. Their leader, the 21-year-old Sultan Mehmet II, rode proudly into

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the city and promptly turned Hagia Sophia, Justinian's great sixth-century church, into a mosque.

Mehmet II may then have said his final goal was to stable his horses in St. Peter's in Rome. Whether or not the general uttered those words, Otranto became the first stop: In 1480 he sent a fleet of some 250 ships with 18,000 soldiers to establish a beachhead for the march to Rome.

The assault on Otranto, then a city of 6,000 to 12,000 (sources differ), began on July 29. By Aug. 14, with thousands of citizens killed defending their city, Otranto was in the hands of Ottoman soldiers who killed Archbishop Stefano Agricoli and Bishop Stephen Pendinelli — who, according to historic accounts, was sawed in two.

The surviving women and children went to the slave markets. Muslims gave male survivors aged 15 to 50 the choice to convert or be beheaded. Led by a courageous tailor named Antonio Primaldi — or Pezzulla in some accounts — about 800 of the men refused and one by one suffered beheading on the Hill of Minerva just outside the town.

Historian Norman Housley, author of *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat, 1453-1505*, says it was “the fall of Otranto, rather than Constantinople, that constituted 15th-century Europe's ‘9/11 moment.’” King Ferdinand I of Naples rallied his forces. Mehmet II died on May 3, 1481, distracting the Ottomans with wars of succession. In September, Naples soldiers, with help from papal and Hungarian forces, recaptured Otranto. The Ottomans never landed on Italian soil again.

Some historians question the beheading story, but the Roman Catholic

Church does not: It beatified “the 800 Martyrs” in 1771. That's the third of four steps to declaring them Catholic saints, but the process stalled until 1980, when Pope John Paul II visited Otranto, and 2006, when Benedict XVI reopened the canonization process.

On May 12, 2013, Pope Francis declared all 800 martyrs to be saints: “They refused to deny their faith and died professing the Risen Christ. Where did they find the strength to stay faithful? In the faith itself, which enables us to see beyond the limits of our human sight, beyond the boundaries of earthly life.”

Muslims and Catholics are fighting over the last days of James Foley, beheaded by Islamic State on Aug. 19. Foley had said his Christian faith sustained him when he was a captive in Libya for 44 days in 2011. He told Marquette University's magazine that “prayer was the glue that enabled my freedom, an inner freedom first and later the miracle of being released.” But a Belgian Muslim, Jejoen Bontinck, who spent time with Foley during his second captivity, says the journalist converted to Islam.

Bontinck is hardly a reliable witness, since he is now in a Belgium jail awaiting trial for his membership in Sharia-4Belgium, a terrorist group. But if Foley did say some words in the hope of relief from prolonged beatings, waterboardings, and hangings by his shackled ankles, so what? Catholic priest Luke Mata of Los Angeles says torture mitigates or absolves culpability: Foley most likely died a faithful Roman Catholic, just like the martyrs of Otranto.

— Roberta G. Ahmanson
World Magazine
December 13, 2014, p. 76

In a recent interview on CBN News, Andrew White, an Anglican priest known as the “Vicar of Baghdad,” tried to recount the horrific atrocities Christians in Iraq are suffering at the hands of the Islamic State. After explaining how Christian minorities fled Baghdad to Ninevah when Islamic militants began terrorizing them and bombing their churches, White said:

Then one day, ISIS, the Islamic State, the Islamic caliphate, came [to Ninevah] and they hounded all of them [Christians] out. Not some, all of them. And they killed huge numbers. They chopped their children in half; they chopped their heads off.

It should be noted that the targeting of Christian children in Iraq goes back years before the creation of ISIS. For example, in June 2008, a Canadian parliamentary committee heard about how “militant Muslims” were crucifying Christian children: “Since the war began in 2003, about 12 children, many as young as 10, have been kidnapped and killed, then nailed to makeshift crosses near their homes to terrify and torment their parents.”

During his interview, White offered the following, likely surreal to Western sensibilities, anecdote: *ISIS turned up and they said to the [Christian] children, ‘You say the words [shehada, convert to Islam], that you will follow Muhammad.’ And the children, all under 15, four of them, they said, ‘No, we love Jesus [Yesua]. We have always loved Jesus. We have always followed Jesus. Jesus has always been with us.’ They [ISIS] said, ‘Say the words!’ They [children] said, ‘No, we can’t.’ [White starts sobbing] They chopped all their heads off. How do you respond to that? You just cry. They’re my children. That is what we have been going*

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through. That is what we are going through.

As callous as it is to say, perhaps these faithful children are better off. After all, ISIS members have been known to compel Christians to convert to Islam, and still cruelly hack their heads off—thus damning them twice.

Similarly, in one of his Facebook postings, White wrote: *Today's pictures are too awful to show. You know I love to show photos, but the photo I was sent today was the most awful I have ever seen. A family of eight all shot through the face laying in a pool of blood with their Bible open on the couch. They would not convert, it cost them their life.*

During his CBN interview, White also told of how ISIS members came to a Christian man saying, “Either you convert to Islam or we kill all your children.” The desperate father declared the words, the *shehada*, that “there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah,” thus becoming a Muslim. Contrite at heart, he phoned White crying, “Abouna, abouna [father, father] I said the words! Does that mean Jesus doesn't love me anymore? I've always loved Jesus, but I said those words because I couldn't see my children being killed!”

White responded: “No Elias, Jesus still loves you—he will always love you.”

The two types of anecdotes offered by White—Christians refusing to embrace Islam and dying for it, and Christians embracing Islam under duress—are an integral part of how the “Islamic world,” the majority of which was almost entirely Christian before the Islamic conquests, came into being: a historic fact Western people were once well acquainted with, before the current age of political correctness and alternate realities.

A historic anecdote that combines the twain—forced conversion to Islam followed by Christian remorse—comes from Egypt: *In 1389, a great procession of Copts who had accepted Muhammad under fear of death, marched through Cairo. Repenting of their apostasy, they now wished to atone for it by the inevitable consequence of returning to Christianity. So as they marched, they announced that they believed in Christ and renounced Muhammad. They were seized, and all the men were beheaded one after another in an open square before the women. But this did not terrify the women; so they, too, were all martyred* (Crucified Again, pgs. 113-114).

First forced to convert and then forced to remain in Islam—both on pain of death: these are two facts of Islam, past and present; facts that, according to top ranking Islamic cleric Sheikh Qaradawi, are responsible for the existence of Islam today. Just ask Sudan's Meriam Ibrahim, Egypt's Muhammad Hegazy, or Iran's (rather America's forsaken) Saeed Abedini.

Aside from the numerous historic accounts of Christians slaughtered for refusing Islam—whether 100,000 Georgians beheaded or burned alive, or a “mere” 813 Italians beheaded—Christians are still being forced to convert to Islam, and not just at the hands of ISIS:

- Palestine, July 2012: Christians in Gaza protested over the “kidnappings and forced conversions of some former believers to Islam.” The ever-dwindling Christian community banged on a church bell while chanting, “With our spirit, with our blood, we will sacrifice ourselves for you, Jesus.”

- Pakistan: In 2004, a two-year-old

child was raped because her Christian father “refused to convert to Islam.” Another “devoted Christian” was butchered by Muslim men “with multiple axe blows [24 per autopsy] for refusing to convert to Islam.” In April 2014, A Muslim security guard murdered a Christian worker who refused to convert to Islam.

- Uganda, July 2014: After a gang of Muslims brandishing machetes stormed a church during service, hacking one 18-year-old woman to death and leaving three others, including a one-year-old baby, injured, the pastor explained that the attackers belong to a local “group of Muslims” which seeks “to transform [Christian-majority] Uganda into an Islamic nation and would kill anyone who refused to convert.”

- Nigeria, May 2014: A Christian teenage girl told of how Boko Haram came to her household and slaughtered her father and brother because they refused to convert to Islam. After abusing her, they tied her up and left her in a state of shock between the two corpses.

- Bangladesh, October 2013: After shutting down the construction of a church, a local government official threatened Christians with eviction from their village unless they renounced their faith and embraced Islam. Said one of the Christians: “Their threats chilled me to the bone. That is why I pretended to accept Islam, but faith in Christ is the wellspring of my life.” Another said: “The chairman is clipping the wings of our faith. I do not know how long we can grin and bear it. We want religious freedom. We want to practice our religion freely.”

- Russia, 2013: In Tatarstan, a Muslim-majority republic in Russia, seven

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churches were burned and “increased pressure on Christians to convert to Islam” was widespread.

• Uzbekistan, August 2012: A 26-year-old Christian woman, partially paralyzed from youth, and her elderly mother were violently attacked by invaders who ransacked their home, confiscating “icons, Bibles, religious calendars, and prayer books.” At the police department, the paralyzed woman was “offered to convert to Islam.” She refused and was accordingly fined almost two years’ worth of her wages.

Pakistan, Uganda, Russia, Nigeria, Palestine, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh: these are not “ISIS.” Yet Christians there are experiencing the same intolerance and violence that Christians under ISIS are experiencing.

The lesson? If all around the Muslim world Christian minorities are being forced to embrace Islam, often on pain of death, the very least the non-Muslim world can do is embrace the fact that Islam is inherently hostile—a costly lesson that countless innocents have been paying for nearly 1,400 years.

—Raymond Ibrahim
Front Page Magazine
December 8, 2014

Christian Anger

I really thought, back then, that we were in a unique point in American history. Bill Clinton, through his obnoxious personal behavior, had earned what seemed to be the unparalleled anger of the American electorate. I had lived through the ignominy of Watergate. His besmirching of the presidency went beyond anything most of us had ever experienced. We were fit to be tied.

Now we’re there again—and so many of the things we had to learn about civil behavior in the Clinton years, we’re having to relearn now. So may I pick up a conversation from 20 years ago?

There’s a difference, I said back then, between anger and meanness. Christians have a right now and then, and maybe even a duty, to be angry. We never have a right to be mean.

By my count, the Bible includes nearly 400 specific references to anger and being angry. Amazingly, most of them refer to the anger of God. That suggests that anger, by itself, is not an evil emotion. You might even go so far as to call it a holy response—provided we learn to exercise it in a God-like fashion. Maybe it’s appropriate to see our “anger drive” in the same light in which we view our “sex drive.” There’s a high and holy use for it, but there’s also a wrong use. And like the sex drive, the anger drive is volatile and easily subject to major abuse.

All of which is probably why the Apostle Paul gives the Christians at Ephesus this simple advice: “In your anger, do not sin.” Some of God’s very best gifts are placed immediately adjacent to some of the greatest opportunities for slipping up. And because we’re fallen, it isn’t easy. Our hearts and minds are so skewed that we develop a mean streak and call it righteous anger. We revise Paul’s advice to say: “In your anger, don’t feel bad if you slip over the edge now and then.”

So how do you know when anger has turned to meanness, when truly righteous anger has taken on unrighteous aspects?

Part of the problem is that in our common usage, the word anger has a whole handful of synonyms. There’s *indigna-*

tion, implying righteous anger. There’s *rage*, suggesting a violent outburst with loss of self-control. There’s *fury*, implying a frenzied madness. There’s *ire* and there’s *wrath*. Which of all these fits the God of the Bible? All, except *ire*, are in my Bible, referring to God. That bears careful study.

The word *mean* also has some synonyms—but not a single one seems appropriate as a descriptor of God. “Ignoble, base, small-minded, petty,” my dictionary says. “Stingy, miserly, pernicious, bad-tempered, vicious, contemptibly selfish, disagreeable, malicious.”

So the question comes: When we look at the nature of the anger we feel, are we talking about something from List No. 1 or something from List No. 2? It may seem subtle, but it’s the difference between holiness and sin.

Whose interests are at stake? Are we worried about our interests, or God’s? Is it simply our sense of well-being that’s been disturbed, or are we truly jealous for the standards and reputation of God Himself?

Those aren’t typically easy questions to grapple with. But here are some further queries to guide our thinking:

1) What attribute of God is being offended? Write it down. Spelling it out is a good mental discipline.

2) Have you been consistent in applying the standard? Does the same behavior in your own political party earn the same anger that it gets when the behavior comes from a political opponent?

3) Can you sleep on the issue and still feel just as passionately about it? I have a friend who keeps a scrapbook of hot letters he’s written but never sent.

4) Have you subjected your anger to

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the counsel of godly people? Ask two or three people known for their good judgment what they think about the issues.

5) Make sure you know your facts. As a journalist, I'm chagrined how many good stories get ruined by the facts.

Do all that, and I think you will have made your point. Your anger drive is in gear and ready for battle.

—Joel Belz

World Magazine

December 13, 2014, p. 8

Religious Freedom

In 1991, I lit Hanukkah candles with Mikhail Gorbachev, then president of the Soviet Union. After the ceremony he asked, through his interpreter, what we had just done—what was the meaning of the ritual? I asked the interpreter to tell him that more than 2,000 years ago, under a repressive government, the Seleucid Greeks, Jews fought for the right to practice their faith in freedom. “My people won,” I said, “and ever since we have performed this ceremony in memory of that event.”

I then noted that for 70 years after the Russian Revolution, Jews also lived under a repressive government in the Soviet Union and were not allowed to practice their faith. “You gave them back their freedom,” I said, “so you too are part of that story.”

As the interpreter translated my reply, President Gorbachev blushed. He had recently made history with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but I guess he wasn't accustomed to praise for the significance of his actions resonating quite that far back. It was true, though: He had liberated Soviet Jews from silence, and the Jews at that Hanukkah celebration felt it. For Jews world-wide, it was one of the high points of recent history.

But of course those were remarkable days for millions of people. As the Berlin Wall fell a quarter-century ago, Soviet communism imploded and the Cold War came to an end, Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History* made thrilling sense. The era of ideological conflict was over. The last great secular ideology, communism, had failed. What had succeeded were liberal democracy and market economics, neither of them ideological, simply systems for liberating the energies of individuals and allowing them to live peaceably and creatively together despite their differences. Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill turned out to be greater prophets of the human spirit than Karl Marx.

Rarely has a dream been so rudely interrupted. Already in 1991 the Bosnian conflict had flared, and it was this event that was to prove the shape of things to come. Bosnians who had lived together for decades found themselves, under the toxic leadership of Slobodan Milosevic and Radovan Karadzic, divided along ethnic and religious lines. Three years later in Rwanda came the massacre of Tutsis by Hutus. Tribalism had returned with a vengeance.

Religious freedom has been the casualty of the new global disorder. There is an onslaught against Christians in the Middle East, who are being butchered, crucified, and beheaded in Syria and Iraq, and persecuted and threatened in sub-Saharan Africa, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, and elsewhere. Muslims are dying at the hands of their fellow Muslims across the Sunni-Shiite divide. Bahai are suffering persecution in Iran and Egypt, Buddhists in Vietnam, Myanmar in China, and Hindus in Pakistan. And within living memory of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism has returned to Europe.

According to the Religious Freedom in the World Report 2014 by the Catho-

lic Church's Aid to the Church in Need organization, freedom of religion has deteriorated in almost half the countries of the world, and sectarian violence is at a six-year high. Yet freedom of religion is one of the basic human rights, as set out in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. More fundamentally, it was the cause for which the modern world established the concept of human rights in the first place. Revulsion at a century of religious wars in Europe helped spur Enlightenment thinking about the social contract, the moral limits of power, and the centrality of human rights.

The world needs a new, enlightened movement: of people of all faiths working together for the freedom of all faiths. The record of religion in the past, and tragically also in the present, has not been good. Throughout history, people have hated in the name of the God of love, practiced cruelty in the name of the God of compassion, killed in the name of the God of life, and waged war in the name of the God of peace. None of the world's great religions has been exempt from this at one point or another. The time has come to say—enough.

The challenge is simple and it is posed in the first chapter of the Bible. Can we recognize God's image in a person who is not in our image; whose color, creed, or culture is not our own? When Hanukkah begins on Tuesday evening, I will light the first candle and pray that the day may come when people of all faiths light a menorah together to celebrate a new festival of religious freedom, when we finally have learned to honor the brotherhood and sisterhood of humankind under the love and forgiveness of God.

—Jonathan Sacks

The Wall Street Journal

December 26, 2014, p. A 13

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C.S. Lewis

This is a notable month for fans of C.S. Lewis: He was born on Nov. 29, 1898, and left the world on the 22 of the same month in 1963. The passing of this major figure in Christian thinking thus became a footnote to the day of President Kennedy's assassination.

Lewis deserves to be remembered as one of the great lights of English academics for his scholarship on Medieval and Renaissance literature. But he is deservedly best known as a spokesman for Christianity. If anything, Lewis' work is more widely read now than during his lifetime, thanks in part to the Hollywood films based on his landmark fantasy series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. A fourth movie, based on *The Silver Chair* in Lewis' Narnia series, is poised for production and scheduled for a 2016 release.

His more-theological books—such as *The Screwtape Letters*, in which devils discuss how to corrupt a well-meaning human—have broad appeal because they defend Christian belief by answering questions that a doubting public might be struggling with. Author Anthony Burgess once wrote that “Lewis is the ideal persuader for the half-convinced, for the good man who would like to be a Christian but finds his intellect getting in the way.”

Lewis grappled with crisis and struggle, and he came down on the side of faith. It was his honesty and intellectual rigor in describing his trials that help make him so compelling.

The crises that Lewis faced were substantial—his mother's death when he was 9; being sent to a series of boarding

schools that he detested; fighting and being wounded in World War I; living through the Great Depression and World War II; caring for his alcoholic brother; and, finally, the death of his wife, Joy.

How did he work through those crises? His stepson, Douglas Gresham, comments on Lewis' response to Joy's death, “He did what he always did under extreme stress. He sat down at his desk, and looking into himself and carefully observing what was happening deep in his mind where we keep our inmost secrets, he picked up his pen and an old exercise book and began to write.”

He wrote about the crises he faced with atheism, with the Christian faith, and the crises he faced simply because he was human. Lewis tells us that he became an atheist around age 14, but that he sought something more. “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy,” he wrote, “the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”

In his early 30s he became “the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England,” as he put it. He struggled on his way to prominence as a champion of Christian orthodoxy, and that struggle animates his writing.

As he pondered conversion, Lewis grappled with his love of myth, which he called “at its best, a real unfocused gleam of divine truth falling on human imagination.” How could he believe in the Bible in light of all the other myths he treasured?

Here his love of literature helped him. “There is nothing in literature which does not, in some degree, percolate

into life,” Lewis determined in his 1936 academic study, *The Allegory of Love*.

He believed that the Bible was a book full of narratives and meaningful stories that “carries” the word of God and that derives its authority from Jesus Christ. He was not a fundamentalist, who believes every word from scripture contains literal truth. Instead, Lewis interpreted the Bible as a literary text.

Finally, Lewis took on crises that no human being can avoid—suffering, death, and what one might call “the crisis of feeling.” The latter is that problem everyone faces when emotions simply don't lead us to contentment. If life is supposed to feel good, what happens when it doesn't? Feelings—particularly the emotional rush of life—remain for many the final arbiter of truth.

Yet Lewis found his own wisdom hard to take when his wife died. Not only had he lost a cherished spouse, but he saw his own life replayed—Joy had two young sons whom she left behind at almost the same age as Lewis and his brother at their mother's death. His searing honesty remains the most arresting feature of *A Grief Observed*, the book he wrote after Joy's death: “Not that I am (I think) in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is of coming to believe such dreadful things about Him.”

But later in the book he resolved that even God does not respond to every inquiry: “When I lay these questions before God I get no answer. But a rather special sort of ‘No answer.’ It is not the locked door. It is more like a silent, certainly not uncompassionate, gaze. As though He shook His head not in refusal but waiving the question. Like,

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‘Peace, child; you don’t understand.’”
Accepting that not every question receives an answer brought Lewis the resolution and peace that lie beyond human understanding.

— Gregory Cootsona

Wall Street Journal

November 28, p. A 13

Communism

As the world marks the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on Nov. 9, 1989, we should also remember the many dozens of people who died trying to get past it.

Ida Siekmann, the wall’s first casualty, died jumping out of her fourth-floor window while attempting to escape from East Berlin in August 1961. In January 1973, a young mother named Ingrid hid with her infant son in a crate in the back of a truck crossing from East to West. When the child began to cry at the East Berlin checkpoint, a desperate Ingrid covered his mouth with her hand, not realizing the child had an infection and couldn’t breathe through his nose. She made her way to freedom, but in the process suffocated her 15-month-old son. Chris Gueffroy, an East German buoyed by the ease of tensions between East and West in early 1989, believed that the shoot-on-sight order for the Berlin Wall had been lifted. He was mistaken. Gueffroy would be the last person shot attempting to flee Communist-occupied East Berlin.

But Gueffroy was far from the last victim of communism. Millions of people are still ruled by Communist regimes in places like Pyongyang, Hanoi, and Havana.

As important as the fall of the Berlin

Wall was, it was not the end of what John F. Kennedy called the “long, twilight struggle” against a sinister ideology. By looking at the population statistics of several nations we can estimate that 1.5 billion people still live under communism. Political prisoners continue to be rounded up, gulags still exist, millions are being starved, and untold numbers are being torn from families and friends simply because of their opposition to a totalitarian state.

Today, Communist regimes continue to brutalize and repress the hapless men, women, and children unlucky enough to be born in the wrong country.

In China, thousands of Hong Kong protesters recently took to the streets demanding the right to elect their chief executive in open and honest elections. This democratic movement — the most important protests in China since the Tiananmen Square demonstrations and massacre 25 years ago — was met with tear gas and pepper spray from a regime that does not tolerate dissent or criticism. The Communist Party routinely censors, beats, and jails dissidents, and through the barbaric one-child policy has caused some 400 million abortions, according to statements by a Chinese official in 2011.

In Vietnam, every morning the unelected Communist government blasts state-sponsored propaganda over loud speakers across Hanoi, like a scene out of George Orwell’s 1984.

In Laos, where the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party tolerates no other political parties, the government owns all the media, restricts religious freedom, denies property rights, jails dissidents, and tortures prisoners.

In Cuba, a moribund Communist junta maintains a chokehold on the island nation. Arbitrary arrests, beatings, intimidation, and total media control are among the tools of the current regime, which has never owned up to its bloody past.

The Stalinesque abuses of North Korea are among the most shocking. As South Korea’s President Park Geun-hye recently told the United Nations, “This year marks the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, but the Korean Peninsula remains stifled by a wall of division.” On both sides of that wall — a 400-mile-long, 61-year-old demilitarized zone — are people with the same history, language, and often family.

But whereas the capitalist South is free and prosperous, the Communist North is a prison of torture and starvation run by a family of dictators at war with freedom of religion, freedom of movement, and freedom of thought. President Park is now challenging the U.N. General Assembly “to stand with us in tearing down the world’s last remaining wall of division.”

To tear down that wall will require the same moral clarity that brought down the concrete and barbed-wire barrier that divided Berlin 25 years ago. The Cold War may be over, but the battle on behalf of human freedom is still being waged every day. The triumph of liberty we celebrate on this anniversary of the Berlin Wall’s destruction must not be allowed to turn to complacency in the 21st century. Victory in the struggle against totalitarian oppression is far from inevitable, but this week we remember that it can be achieved.

—Marion Smith

a look at our world

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The Wall Street Journal
November 7, 2014, p. A 11

Racial Tension

Ferguson police Officer Darren Wilson resigned from the police force stating that he hopes his resignation will help calm the town. It won't calm Michael Brown's parents, who accept zero responsibility for their son's actions.

On the night of the Ferguson grand-jury announcement clearing Officer Wilson, Brown's mother, Lesley McSpadden, stood atop a car outside the Ferguson police station yelling incoherently to a large crowd of protesters. Once the announcement not to charge Officer Wilson was broadcast, McSpadden began weeping uncontrollably while being embraced by Brown's stepfather, Louis Head, and others.

Then the stepfather turned toward the mob and yelled, "Burn this motherf—er down" and "Burn this bi-ch down." McSpadden and Head took no responsibility for the rioting and looting that ensued.

Brown's mother could also be facing jail time for reportedly attacking people selling T-shirts that read "Justice for Michael Brown."

Michael Brown Sr. appeared on CNN and called Officer Wilson a "murderer." He also said that if his son were white, Wilson would have said "hi" and kept driving.

With these kinds of parents as role models, Michael Brown didn't have a chance. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree, and bad parents raise rotten children.

Michael Brown is dead because of Michael Brown and because his parents

failed him.

Look at the so-called "leaders" who are blaming the cops and "racism" for Brown's death. Most of them are products of bad parenting:

- Barack Obama continues to draw moral equivalency between police and rioters. His dad was a raging alcoholic who neglected him. His mother was a radical who pushed young Obama on bad role models who shaped his anti-American and racist worldview.

- Jesse Jackson was born out of wedlock, and his biological father did not raise him.

- Al Sharpton's father left his wife to have a relationship with Sharpton's half-sister. Sharpton grew up without his father.

The very people that are making excuses for bad parenting and bad behavior didn't have good parents themselves.

Sharpton said that despite the grand jury decision, Holder's Department of Justice still has an ongoing investigation into Brown's death. These race hustlers are promoting the lie that police-on-black killings are the norm. Yet, other black civilians — not police — kill 93 percent of blacks.

Liberals cite police shootings to highlight violence against blacks, but let's look at the circumstances surrounding some recent shootings.

Notice the commonalities:

- Tamir Rice was killed on Nov. 22 in Cleveland, Ohio. The 12-year-old boy was shot by a police officer after brandishing what turned out to be a BB gun. According to reports, *Tamir's parents have been in and out of jail for drugs, assault, and domestic violence.* Who was looking out for Tamir?

- VonDerrit Myers Jr. was killed in early October in St. Louis after the 18-year-old shot at an off-duty police officer. Myers had been out on bail in a gun case, *but his family claimed he was unarmed and holding only a sandwich in his hand.*

- In October, Chicago police responded to reports of someone breaking into cars, and 17-year-old Laquan McDonald was shot after he lunged at police with a knife. *The community is blaming police and ignoring the teen's actions.*

Denial runs deep in the black community.

Family and friends of Michael Brown described him as humble, quiet, and respectful — a "good boy" who "was never in trouble." But good people don't rob, and they don't assault police officers.

Brown's actions — captured on surveillance video showing him robbing a convenience store and assaulting a clerk — indicate he was a thug. Yet, Brown's parents argue that their son shouldn't be judged based on the video. And now they don't want us to judge their son based on grand-jury findings, either.

Children need a father and a mother in the home to guide them. When the family is broken, it results in angry and undisciplined teens. If we don't rebuild the family while we still have the chance, our whole societal fabric will disintegrate.

Recently I received an email from a father whose son was killed due to his own actions. He wrote:

Rev. Jesse, when I heard you on "Kilmeade & Friends" (Fox News Radio), I needed to tell you I agree. It is tough to say and come to the realization your child is to blame. One day — maybe tomorrow, maybe next year, when all the dust settles — Mrs.

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Brown in a very private moment will say to herself, "Michael killed Michael." —R. Barnes

If Brown's parents ever come to that conclusion, they may also recognize how they contributed to his death.

When fathers and mothers accept responsibility for how they are raising their children, we'll have fewer Mike Browns — and fewer preventable deaths on our nation's streets.

—Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson

Radio.foxnews.com

November 26, 2014

"Duty to Die"

Recently an ethics professor at the University of Pennsylvania raised eyebrows when he wrote that he wants to die at age 75. That birthday, he believes, will mark the end of his useful years — and by implication, everyone else's as well.

Since that particular age is not far beyond my own horizon, he got my attention.

Prof. Ezekiel Emanuel concluded that after 75, his creativity will diminish, his chance of dementia will increase, and therefore he may well become an unwanted burden to his family. Besides, by age 75 he will have seen his children get started and his professional contributions completed.

His article, published in *The Atlantic*, approaches the topic from a typically academic, and therefore secular, point of view. That means it bears a "duty to die" trendiness, is choked with statistics, and is — well, extraordinarily selfish. The article is all about him, and it extends little sympathy to those who love him. His intended exit, by the way, is not suicide,

but rather a refusal to take medicines and undergo routine health tests, and thus to dwindle away naturally.

Were I to choose his course of action, I know the questions that would come to me quickly. These questions the professor does not pretend to answer.

My oldest granddaughter would plunk this one at my feet: "Grandpa, why would you rather be dead than have me visit you on weekends like I always do?"

Granddaughter Number Three would ask this: "Mom, why doesn't Grandpa want to live long enough to take care of Nana?" Granddaughter Number Two would say little, but would quietly ponder this strange development and eventually draw a picture of the family, from which I would be missing. Regarding Grandchildren Four, Five, and Six, I do not yet know. They are too young.

And what would the professor have me say to my beloved wife of 44 years? How would I abandon Deb after all this time? If the treasure of youth is discovering a love that lasts, then doesn't the durability of that love become an even more precious treasure across the years? Why would I cast it aside now?

My own dad succumbed to cancer at about the same age as the professor intends to die, but that was far too young. When Dad was still vital, I was too busy with career and family to ask him any of the questions that I had for him later, after it was too late. On the wall before me as I write this is a photo of him as a young Army officer standing before a regimental sign that read: "You Are Now Entering Tokyo." I have no idea what he was doing in that photo, because he never talked about World War II. How I'd love to know about it now. Profes-

sor, please don't deny your children the chance to ask you the questions they'll have for you only in the future.

It seems to me the professor's problem is that he wants to measure his worth only by his professional output. But isn't the true measure of life the amount of ourselves we have poured into others? Those of us who are Christian have the ultimate model in Christ, who poured it all.

Without that model of selflessness, I can understand the professor's struggle. Without it, he's left with only the words of Simon and Garfunkel, who once sang: "I am a rock, I am an island. And a rock feels no pain. And an island never cries."

That sentiment may work in song — but professor, it doesn't work in life.

—Tom Minnery

Citizen

December 2014, p. 30

the essence of economic freedom

2014 summit adult conference lecture by dr. barry asmus

The Essence of Economic Freedom

Transcribed by Jodi Walker

We have already heard God created the heavens and the earth. We quickly learned that God is a truth teller. “In the beginning God” denies Atheism with its doctrine of no god. It denies polytheism with its doctrine of many gods. “In the beginning God” denies evolution with its doctrine of becoming. It denies fatalism with its doctrine of chance. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Pantheism, no, I don’t think so. God made the moon, the sun, and the stars. God is here and creation is over here. So, right away, the first 10 words out of the Old Testament — “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” — gives us a north star, gives us a direction. It gives us a reason to begin loving this kind of creator, this kind of magnificent God.

King David said, “Oh, Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You’ve created the sun, the moon, and the stars. What is man that thou are aware of him, the son of man that you would care for him? You’ve created him a little lower than the angels and have given him a dominion over everything that walks on the earth.” Oh, God, how could you love us so much? You are the creator, God, allowing us to be small little creators ourselves. He not only creates us, but he knows us. The Bible is so clear: I’ve searched you and I know you. I know when you stand up and I know when you sit down. I know all about your plans. I know all about your details of your life. I know every word that you are going to speak before you’ve ever spoken one word. That’s omniscience, folks. He says, “Where can I go to flee your presence? Where can I go to get away from the Spirit? If I ascend into heaven, you are there. If I descend into Hades, you are there. If I take the winds of morning and go to the deepest part of the ocean, even there. Your right hand will hold me and your hands will

guide me. God is truly everywhere present. He is also all powerful: “I was there,” he said, “I created you in your mother’s womb.” My 37-year-old daughter who has been married for three years is expecting her first baby in June. Our children were both adopted. We wanted children very, very badly, but we went 10 years and so we adopted our son and then adopted our daughter. So I never really got to do this with a woman: I got to put my arms around my daughter and hold her tummy. She says his name’s going to be Samuel Asher. Samuel was really kicking. I told her I can’t stand this, it’s so wonderful, it’s so powerful. Birth is wonderful. So we not only worship a Creator-God, a creator of you and me, created in the image of God, but we worship a God that we are allowed to call our Father. Our Father which art in Heaven and the Lord IS my shepherd and I shall not lack and I shall not want. That’s the guide. He knit us together in our mothers’ wombs. He knows every detail of our lives. He knows every day we are going to live before we’ve even lived a day.

What a God to worship and love and read about and get to know. The only other topic besides Jesus, God, and the Spiritual that I’m interested in, that I’ve given my life to, is economics. I decided to go into economics my freshman year in college, and I stayed for bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate degrees in economics. I’ve stayed there and I’m glad because it seems like there are a lot of terrible misunderstandings in economics, and it’s easy to misunderstand. But it’s been a joy to be in economics, especially the piece of economics that talks about freedom, entrepreneurs, etc. I really enjoy that.

Dr. Wayne Grudem and I got together three years ago, and have been friends for 17 years. Wayne wrote the book *Systematic Theology*, and he and I were elders at Scottsdale Bible Church for a few terms together.

Wayne and I have been in our home fellowship, and that’s been a joy. We’ve been mighty close the last 17 years. Wayne and I travelled the world three years ago and saw some of the poorest places in the world: New Guinea, India, China, South America, Africa. We’ve had the privilege of giving 20 hours of lectures: half-hour Wayne, half-hour me, half-hour of Q&A. We’d do that all day Friday, all day Saturday, half a day on Sunday. Then on Sunday afternoon, Wayne and the local churches would come in with pastors, and Wayne would answer questions that these pastors would have about the Bible. So he answers questions from about 12 noon to six o’clock Sunday night, and we’d call it a day and climb on an airplane and go home.

We’re not going to do that anymore now that the book is out. Now we are getting invitations to go everywhere. I said, “Wayne, I’ve been travelling my whole life, you’ve been travelling your whole life. I just don’t have it in me to go after this and try to sell this book. So we’re just going to turn it over to God, and if God so chooses that this book is good enough, that it’ll get traction.”

Here is a picture of the nations [image not available]. The green make \$20,000 annual per capita income, and that is not particularly high. The United States is \$52,000 per year, and that is not great. For those that are blue, that’s in the \$8,000 - \$20,000 range, and those are medium, modestly wealthy areas but nothing to be that excited about. Then the reds are from \$3,000 - \$8,000, and then the dark browns are poor at \$3,000 per year. The reason why I want you to see this, and it’s about 2012, is the color of these countries. Just imagine if it was just 200 years ago. Two hundred short years ago, if we had a chart like this, I would hold up the world and it would all be brown. It would all be dark red. I mean poverty is and has al-

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ways been the natural condition. Poverty is not hard, anybody can do it. Every country in the world figured it out. They said, “Hey, we can do poverty.” So just imagine this: Thousands and thousands and thousands of years and there’s the picture of the world in poverty — about \$2 annual per capita per day. In the United States we are something like \$50 or \$60 per day. The world was very, very poor. And the world tried everything. The world tried hunting and gathering, and the world tried subsistence farming, and the world tried slavery, and the world tried feudalism, and the world tried mercantilism, and the world tried socialism, and the world tried communism. So you can walk through this, walk through these systems, and all of them for different kinds of reasons just won’t get the job done.

Slavery has been the most common, the most persistent, and even the one today that we can’t get out of our blood, but we don’t have to go back very far: Egypt was built on the backs of slaves. China has by and large lived under dynasties and pseudo-slavery its entire history. It ends 4,500 years of history with the last 100 years of communism, and now things get even worse. Why? Because communists say our main principal is to abolish private ownership. Here’s the problem with that idea. It doesn’t work. Without property rights, there are no human rights. In other words, the last thing in the world you could expect from communism is freedom. Freedom will not happen without property rights. I’m not genius to think of that, John Locke thought of that and many other thinkers. Our founding fathers were well-versed in what really does create some prosperity. Our founding fathers said it’s not communism nor is it socialism: It’s free-market capitalism. What Wayne and I learned really quickly when we went to Europe and South America is the world is not going to put up with the word capitalism. Wayne and I found out that if we men-

tion the word capitalism, they shut their ears. We learned very quickly to get that out of our vocabulary and call it the free market. So what we tell audiences around the world, poor audiences especially, is that the free market is the only way out of poverty. The free market is a way out because all the market is a communicative mechanism. The market is a miraculous instrument of communication. Because as we are all living our lives with volunteer exchange (you buy, you sell, they buy, they sell), for trade, economics, prices, interest rates, and so on, the market is just a conduit. It is a beautiful conduit of telling us what’s going on in the world reflecting in these prices. The prices, then, can be very, very meaningful. So the market is a miraculous instrument of communication. The market is a stupendous transmitter of wisdom while determining value. The market is like a galactic bathroom scale where supply and demand determine price. Supply and demand determines interest rates and profits and losses. The free market is the best way to go, but it’s not the producer of wealth, it’s just a conduit. It’s a conduit of entrepreneurship.

We have founding fathers here in this country that get together and say we are going to put together a different kind of a country and it’s going to be by-and-large a free market. We’re going to put together a country that is going to have verifiable addresses. Well, who cares about verifiable addresses? Let me tell you why verifiable addresses are important. The poor people of this world have some housing (trillions of dollars worth), but individual poor housing (cardboard, tin shacks). Here’s the problem: They have some housing, but they don’t have title to that housing. The poor people of this world grow some crops, but they don’t have *deeds* to those crops. The poor people of this world have some small little businesses but no *articles of incorporation*. Here’s the problem with all of that: They

don’t have property documents. Unless you have a property documents, you can’t show that you own it. You can’t ever borrow a dime. You go to a bank and say you want to borrow \$50, they would say,

“What’s your collateral?”

“I don’t have any collateral.”

“What!?”

That’s why they need a verifiable address, a place to hang a shingle. Even though it’s poverty (cardboard, tin, nothing), they need to let people have verifiable addresses. Believe me, most presidents, prime ministers, and leaders of poor countries don’t understand what we’re talking about. We say, “That’s your main job.” We try not to over-emphasize it. In fact, sometimes we lecture all weekend long and never mention the United States one time. You’re an American crowd so I can say United States here.

Thomas Jefferson helped sign the Constitution, but in writing the Declaration of Independence of 1776 a few years later, Jefferson had the insight to say: Americans need verifiable addresses. So they laid down a measurement system in northern Ohio: north, south, east, west. All of America comes from that axis system. Six miles by six miles is called a township. They open up the shop and let people start buying land, which was unheard of. No nation has ever let its people own land. No nation has ever let its people own oil rights. No nation has ever let its people own anything. Our founding fathers said we are going to be a country of limited government and maximum ownership. A miraculous thing happens when you have verifiable address and can collateralize wealth, and be able to increase wealth. We share this with countries and it is helping them.

The map on the prime minister’s office in Albania showed a whole wall of Albania with everything that’s owned and who owns it. However, the government owns the beaches, and these are some of the most

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beautiful beaches in the world. Not one of the beaches has a hotel on it. We said, “Why don’t you develop?”

They said, “We don’t know how to do that. We don’t want to sell our land to foreigners.”

We said, “You don’t have to sell to foreigners, you can do leases.” So we got the head of Ritz Carlton and JW Marriott, and they signed some leases for 30 and 50 years. There will come a time in the next two or three years when we are going to wonder where to go for summer vacation and say, “Hey, let’s go to Albania!” No one’s ever said that before, but wait until these hotels are built.

What is it that creates entrepreneurship? What is it about a person who looks at a situation, and every time they see an opportunity? Early on, Eli Whitney, from the late 1700s, developed the cotton gin. It was Eli Whitney’s idea of interchangeable parts. Eli Whitney walks into Thomas Jefferson’s office (the year is 1800, we’re just a brand new country), and he has six gunny sacks. He dumps everything out. Eli Whitney says to Jefferson, “Take a piece from each of these sacks, Thomas, and put it together.” And he did. He made a musket. This was the first time a musket was made out of interchangeable parts. Then he said, “You know, this creates an agricultural revolution.” Cyrus McCormick makes a reaper, and others make combines, rakes, and plows. Although growth went straight for thousands and thousands of years, you come to the year 1800 and the growth curve begins to slowly bend upward because of the agricultural revolution. Agricultural revolution: Those are just fancy words. Cyrus McCormick’s reaper can do the work of 15 men. No wonder mankind is starting to get a little more productive. Then there’s the industrial revolution, and a huge part of that comes out of the United States. We don’t say that far and wide. We just pretend that England

and Western Europe were important because they feel more comfortable with that thought. The fact is, Thomas Edison gives a laboratory with 1,000 inventions. Henry Ford gives the gas engine and the car. Entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs.

Now we start moving into the industrial revolution and the growth curve starts turning up again. But as we enter the 20th century, as we got away from muscle and went to fossil fuel ... understand, from the beginning of time, we had ox, horse, wind, water, and man’s muscle. When I graduated from high school, my dad said, “Son, if you own a sharp shovel, you’ll always have a good job.” Wasn’t that great advice for a son: a sharp shovel? But that’s all my dad knew and that’s all I knew. I was born and raised on a little farm 80 miles from here. All we had was 80 acres. Eighty acres is not a very big farm. Cut that mile-by-mile in half, and cut it half again, and it’s not a lot. It was all dad and I needed to try to make something, and darn it, we had six cows. The problem with cows is that you have to milk them in the morning and milk them in the evening, 365 days a year. They never give up: They keep producing milk. You milk cows every morning at 5:30, and you come home from school and the next thing you know you’re milking those stupid cows again. You decide what you *don’t* want to do when you become a man.

“Dad! I’m not going to do this the rest of my life.”

“Well, son, what are you going to do?”

I said, “Dad, I’ll tell you what I’m going to do. I’m going to move to Fort Morgan, Colorado, a little town on the eastern plains, and I want to open up a Phillips 66 gas station. Brush has one, Sterling has one, Longmont has one, and Greeley has one, but Fort Morgan does not have one, so I’m gonna open up a gas station.” I showed a little sign of entrepreneurship. I graduate from high school, my dad puts his arms around me, he puts me

in the car, and he takes me to Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

My dad says, “You’re going to try college for one quarter. If you don’t like it, then you will come home and I’ll help you get into a Phillips 66 gas station.” The first day I’m there, I meet Mandy. I’ve already told that story. First day. I’m not a week into this thing and I’m already in love and wanting to get married, and I’m 18 years old.

The second thing on my first day there: I see the Alpha Tau Omega beer wagon. I’ve never seen one of those either. We hop in. We are hustling over to the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity house, and you are allowed to drink beer on the fraternity, but not in the fraternity. So, that was a problem. We had to somehow get the kegs of beer on top of the house, but we were not allowed to carry the kegs of beer through the house in the stairwell. For a farm boy, this was no problem at all. I jerry-rigged a system with belts and pulleys. The next thing you know, there are 60 fraternity brothers all with a mug of beer shouting: “Asmus! Asmus! Asmus!” I thought, “This is great; I never had this many friends in high school.” I’m up there when the phone rings:

“Asmus, it’s for you.”

“Son, this is your dad. How are you doing?”

“How am I doing? Pretty good, dad.”

“How do you like college?”

“Dad, so far I love it.” I hadn’t even been to class yet. I liked it so well, I stayed for bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate degrees. When I finished my doctorate degree, my dad puts his arms around me.

He said, “Son, if I’d known you were going to be in college for 10 years, by now we could own Phillips 66.” There’s some truth to that. So, I then chose the professorial lifestyle: easy, sweet, *and* I got to be a socialist. Oh, did that make my parents angry. I got dressed at the fraternity to go to church one day.

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“Where are you going?”

“I’m going to church.”

“Why?”

“That’s what you do on Sunday. To worship God.”

“Barry, Barry, Barry: You’ll soon find out there is no God.”

There’s a bunch of places from the age of 18 to the age of 25 that my dad mercifully should have got a gun and said, “Son, I’m going to put you down, out of love. Out of love! I am not going to listen one more time to your Keynesian economic theories where you take from the rich and you give to the poor.” He didn’t want me telling him (and this is exactly what Obama believes) that if government will borrow some money, print some money, and spend some money, then there’s a government multiplier on that money, and that the one dollar really becomes one and a half or two. Interestingly, Keynesian economics says that the government multiplier is bigger than the consumption: your multiplier. Dad says, “Translate that for me.”

“Dad, that means if the government gets some money from you in taxes and then goes and spends it, it has a bigger effect on the economy than if you spent it. The government multiplier, and we can show this mathematically, is that it’s the way it works. Really. Government takes my money, spends it, and creates prosperity.”

Obama believes Keynesian economics. He believes it in his heart, mind, and soul. He knew if he spent \$650 or \$750 billion that there would be a multiplier on that. Let me just say it this way:

“Scuze me! This is madness!”

My dad had to watch me in this state of madness for about eight or 10 years. My poor father-in-law from here in Colorado Springs, who headed up the Republican party... let me just say it was a total disaster. We’d have Christmases and I’d be fighting with everybody. Dad should have just said,

“Son, I’ve thought about this.” Bang! But he didn’t, and the moral of the story is this: Love on them. Parents can do that. Parents can love on their kids no matter how stupid their kids are and no matter how they act. Parents can love them, and if I learned anything at YoungLife, it was loving on unloveable kids. Man did I learn to do that. We still do that in our church at Scottsdale Bible Church. Admittedly, there are not that many unloveable people when most of them pull up in Lexus’ or a Mercedes, but they need Jesus as bad as anybody. Love on them when they are the most unlovely. The pay-offs will be wonderful. I’m so thankful that dad didn’t put me out of my misery.

But the main point I’m getting back to is that what the market system does is nurture and cherish and encourage entrepreneurs. Just like Eli Whitney, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs — this system produces builders, creators, dreamers, doers, inventors, and engineers. There are entrepreneurs by the millions, you just have to get out of their way. China lives under 5,000 years of slavery, oppression, and dynasty. Next, they have 100 years of lousy, stinking communism. Who would believe in a million years that Deng Xiaoping, who trained under Mao Zedong, would wake up eight days into becoming premier of China and decide public ownership won’t work. *No kidding, Lone Ranger.* This is the same Deng Xiaoping who killed those students in Tiananmen Square. This is no flag-waving act for Deng Xiaoping, so don’t start thinking he’s one great guy. I’ll tell you one thing he did was he said that public ownership is not going to work, and he began to allow people economic freedom. Religious freedom — no. Freedom of the press — no. Freedom to congregate — no. Freedom to live where you’d like to live — no. But he did allow a few economic freedoms — that is: to move, to own, to operate, to begin entering into a market system — and, all of a sudden, Chi-

na begins to get some lift off. I wonder why.

We’ve trained 50,000 Chinese students each year for the last 30 years. They come, they learn, and they’re not stupid. They see America and they go back to China. So China gets some lift off. Any country can get lift off. Countries wrongly feel that they just have to get foreign aid. Helping people to become helpless is not an act of kindness. It’s not an act of kindness.

God blessed Scottsdale Bible Church and my own Sunday school class where we have adopted a whole village in Tanzania — 7,000 people, all students. We are now 10 years into this and we now have 10th graders, very articulate 10th graders. All those kids are going to go to college We’ve dug four water wells: So great, pat us on the back, way to go Scottsdale Bible, way to go Barry’s Sunday school class. Four water wells, great, they needed it. Of course they needed it. They needed mosquito nets, malaria is a killer over there, but wait, step back.

You have said to your economic classroom that helping people to become helpless is not an act of kindness. So, when you meet the well digger over there in Tanzania and he asked what our church did, I told him we dug four water wells. “Did you do it for free?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“Do you think I could do that for free?”

“No.”

“Well, how can I compete with you then? I’m a water well driller. How can I compete with you?”

Do you see what I mean? Helping people to become helpless is not an act of kindness. So Wayne and I clearly show that the 15 countries in Africa that have received the most aid have done the worst. Bingo! So we’ve got to be intelligent with what we share with other nations, with how they might rise out of the muck, because poverty really is the natural condition. We got to go to China to lecture all through China

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on economic freedom. “Barry, what do you mean economic freedom?”

I mean the freedom to save, the freedom to invest, the freedom to hire, the freedom to fire. Most importantly, the freedom to own, own, own, and operate. There you go. Rational people begin to see this. Africa and China are beginning to see this: that they need some ownership, they need some private enterprise, they need some free market, and they need some verifiable addresses. They need people to have titles and deeds and property documents to show that they own something.

I know little cardboard shacks are only worth \$50. Maybe if I put a little path around it and bricked off part of it, maybe it would be worth \$60. Yes! You’ve just added to your wealth when you’ve done that. Ownership. When is the last time that you washed a rental car? See, you don’t. You don’t wash a rental car. Ownership, ownership. Thank God our founding fathers understood limited government, but we don’t anymore. They understood economic freedom, but we don’t anymore.

The Heritage Foundation and the *Wall Street Journal* had been publishing this for 20 years: the index of economic freedom. If you raise taxes, you are really hurting yourself as far as economic freedom. If you lower taxes, you are helping yourself as far as economic freedom. If you raise tariffs, you are hurting yourself as far as international trade. If you lower tariffs, you are helping yourself as far as international trade. So we look at all of it: the freedom to save, the freedom to invest, the freedom to get into business, the freedom to get out of business, the freedom to move where you want, the freedom to hire, and the freedom to fire. They’ve been measuring those 10 economic freedoms for 175 countries. Then they publish a book and each country gets one page. Here is Egypt [image not available]. It includes what’s happened in Egypt for the last five

years as far as economic freedom. The back side of the page gives you economic data. It has the GDP, population, main products, and highlights. It gives the 10 economic freedoms and we measure them across the board. My point is: When we started doing this 20 years ago, the United States used to be at the top 1, 2, or 3. Guess where we are in the 2013 edition? Twelve! Now that’s not the end of the world, but here’s the thing: If we keep going this way, we are not going to be the premier economy, the premier society on this planet. We must figure out how to turn that around.

It’s as much a spiritual problem as it is an economic problem. Any student who comes to me and says, “I want to be a missionary,” I tell them to do it because you’re going to kill two birds with one stone: 1) They will hear about Jesus, the only answer, the alpha and omega of our faith (What could be more important than that? Answer: nothing.); 2) If you choose to go to the marketplace, that’s OK too because God loves people who work. God says in six days he did his work and on the seventh day he rested, and he wants us to work. So the beautiful thing about Christianity is that it’s prosperity-prone. It’s progress-prone. In fact, we have a half chapter on the religions of the world: which ones are progress-resistant and which ones are progress-prone.

We told the leaders in Haiti: “As long as your people are going to practice Vodooism, you will be poor forever. No matter how much Bill Clinton digs up money (because the Clintons don’t give their own money) and gives it to Haiti, Haiti is going to remain in poverty because they are fundamentally backwards with Vodooism. It’s very progress-resistant.”

Hinduism, are you kidding me? When the British were going to build railroads throughout India, they bought 100,000 wheelbarrows, thinking when you move dirt and heavy rock, you need wheelbar-

rows. The Indians would have none of it; they used baskets on their heads. They built those railroads with baskets, not with wheelbarrows. Friends, when you are against the wheel, you’re in trouble. And Hinduism chooses to do that.

Muslims: don’t educate their girls. What are you thinking! Talk about being progress-resistant. They don’t like things coming in from the west.

We write a book with 79 factors with 450 scriptural references, and here was our thinking: that we do have some “in” with missionaries and countries when it comes to Christ. Christ is an entry point. Some of those churches are willing to listen. We never went into a country thinking we were going to be with the president or the prime minister. Somehow the Christians of the town were always able to get that done for us. We were just so very, very thankful that we could do that. But we, in America, are so blessed. We have economic freedom, religious freedom, and political freedom. Although our freedoms are getting ratcheted down one by one. Never has there been more of a need to do what Summit Ministries does times 10, and that has to be our prayer. It’s the right thing and it’s the proper thing.

There’s no beauty in being in poverty. You have to go and see the Amazon River people in Peru, you have to see India to really see poverty. China is very rich along the eastern seaboard: Mercedes Benz, etc. Shanghai alone has 50 empire state buildings and half of them are empty, but they are sure pretty. It looks like wealth in the 21st century until you step five miles inland and you fall off a cliff. It’s a very bifurcated country: rich for a few and poverty for the many. When you see it, you can’t believe it, and when you go to India, you can smell it before you get there. There’s nothing beautiful about poverty. God says, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth. You’ve got to be careful here, because

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if I say be prosperous — wait, has prosperousness destroyed more souls than anything else? Indeed it has. We can love money more than we love God.

My goal in the rest of my life is to stop travelling, even though it would help sell that book, but to be with students day in and day out. So, I'll be teaching at Grand Canyon Christian University and at Arizona Christian University this fall. I just want to lock into about 150 to 200 students and have about 16 weeks with them. I think that by doing that I can do to a small degree what Summit Ministries does. It's going to be so joyous to tell students how wonderful America is, and it really is. How wonderful it is to have founding fathers that believed the way they did. How wonderful it is to have a declaration endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights. To have currency that says: In God we trust. To have a Pledge of Allegiance that says: One nation under God, indivisible. How wonderful not only to have the spiritual side, but the free market and trade side. It will be wonderful to discuss with them the blessings that come from economic freedom.

In 1986, it was my privilege to help rededicate the Statue of Liberty. Both of my Russian grandparents came to Ellis Island at the turn of the century. They went to Flint, Michigan, at first, to a dairy farm. They asked why they were brought there since they were not dairy farmers but sugar beet farmers. So next they shipped Grandma and Grandpa to Denver in a boxcar. They got out of that boxcar with a little suitcase, and there was no one there to meet them. There was no one to tell them what to do. They wanted to be farmers. The South Platte River runs there, so they said why don't we stake a place down. Luckily, when you've had the whole nation surveyed, you know exactly what township you're in and are allowed to own land.

You own it for exactly what you can af-

ford: \$1, \$2, you start there. That's the way America did it, and they usually did it in the dirt. Resources are a curse. We found over and over that resources are a curse. I want you to understand, the beautiful thing about entrepreneurship is that resources are only a resource because an entrepreneur makes them so. If resources start running out, the price goes up, less is demanded; and when the price goes up it makes any kind of alternative unattractive.

Now we move to the fossil fuel era. We are importing 50 percent of our oil, then 60 percent of our oil, and now close to 70 percent of our oil. The Middle East has got us gripped around the neck. An entrepreneur in Texas says there's got to be another way. So he goes back to those Texas oil wells, and he says let's not stop at 3,000 feet, let's go 2 ½ miles. He says let's put a \$20,000 diamond bit on that drill, and when that bit starts turning all by itself, it will go horizontal. That bit will hit smack in the middle of that shale and then walk right along the top of that shale. Then they put explosives in that pipe and explode it, which fracks the shale. It releases oil, and they go down with sand and high pressurized water and release some more, and the next thing you know we have an oil well that is producing more oil than it did in the beginning. The next thing you know, we find the four largest gas fields in America. The next thing you know, North Dakota has a miracle going on. The point is, America has now become the Saudi Arabia of oil, the Saudi Arabia of gas, and the Saudi Arabia of coal.

There's not a nation in the world that is going to compete with us on the energy side. Right now, Japan pays four times as much for its energy as we do. Western Europe pays three times as much for its energy. This is only going to get better. I wonder what God has in mind? I'm not the one to ask. Wayne was the main editor of the ESV Bible: English Standard Version Bible. Wayne got 60 of

the best scholars in the world on various areas: Acts and Micah specialists, for example. He read what three guys wrote about Micah and determined which one did the best job of taking it from the Hebrew to the English or from the Greek to the English.

It was so much fun to be in the room with the prime minister of Tirana, Albania, and all he wanted to do was talk to me. Economics, economics, economics. And Wayne just sat there, very quiet and sweet.

"What are you doing here?" the prime minister said to Wayne.

Wayne said, "I'm giving lectures with Barry."

"Well, what are you lecturing on?"

"I'm a professor at Phoenix Seminar, and I've been the editor of the ESV study Bible. Prime Minister, here's where it talks about Albania ..." They opened it up and read it. Wayne gave him an autographed copy.

The professor took this big ESV Bible, put it down on his desk, and said, "What right do you have to write the Bible?"

Wayne said, "No, I didn't write the Bible. We wanted to get the best Hebrew and the best Greek explanation in English, that's all."

"Well, what do you know about Hebrew?"

Wayne says, "Well, I have a Ph.D. from Oxford and then I have another Ph.D. from Cambridge and then I have a bachelor's degree from Harvard."

The prime minister started talking more with Wayne. He's totally taken by Dr. Grudem. It's 5:45 in the afternoon and we have to give a speech. We have 1,000 people in the auditorium and we politely explain that we have a prior commitment. The prime minister asks if he can come with us. He says he wants to introduce us. We drive in the entourage to a big beautiful hotel with about 150 stairs and the prime minister is leading the way, Wayne's right behind, and I'm behind Wayne. We get to the top and go into the auditorium. Everybody's stunned that the Prime Minister is at this gathering.

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He introduced us so beautifully. We made a relationship so much so that his people have been to our office and we're getting them verifiable addresses. Every country has a wonderful story to tell. Just this week, South Africa wants us to come. I say to Wayne, "I won't come to this one. Flying time from Phoenix to Cape Town, South Africa, having to say good-bye to my wife and be gone for 10 days and be on the plane for 52 hours, I don't think so."

Tribute: I first delivered this on July 4, 1986.

Ladies and gentlemen, my name is The United States of America. I was born on July 4, 1776, conceived in freedom and liberty, and that freedom has brought millions to my shores to cast their economic plight with me, but that freedom has not been achieved. A million of my sons have lost their lives in Europe, in Asia, even on the home soil. And countless families have cried in anguish as they've heard of the loss of a father, a son, a husband, a brother, and sometimes even a sister. But thank God those lives stood for something. I am big from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to the northern reaches of Alaska to the beautiful Hawaiian Islands. I have 3 1/2 million square miles just teeming with economic opportunity. I have forests, lakes, oil, and coal. I am the Empire State Building in New York City, the Sears Tower in Chicago, and Disney Land in Southern California. I have almost 2 1/2 million farms that are unequal in productivity on any place on the face of the earth. But if you think my story is just about beautiful cities and beautiful bridges and fertile soil: no, no, no.

My story is mainly about people.

I've given birth to thousands, no, to millions, of entrepreneurs. Men and women like Cyrus McCormick, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, up to the contemporaries, people like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, etc. But even though I've given birth to millions of entrepreneurs and builders and creators and

doers, I'm not a country that just works, I'm also a country that likes to play. I am Babe Ruth of the World Series, Vince Lombardi of professional football, the Williams sisters of professional tennis, and the Manning brothers also of professional football. More than a nation that just works and plays, I'm a nation that prays. I have over 350,000 churches where people gather and worship the God who is there because He is not silent. I'm a country that goes out to defend and not to conquer, a country that goes out to protect and not to possess. When I see a defeated enemy, I bind its wounds, I see its people, I give it billions and billions and billions of dollars to restore itself to a place of honor among the nations of the world. A country's character, after all, is determined by the sum of its good deeds. I've instituted more humanitarian programs in the name of health and medicine and food than all the rest of the countries in the world combined. If you compare that record with the actual histories of both ancient and contemporary societies, America might not be the best conceivable society, but it just might be the best society that's ever existed on the planet. Perfect, of course not; mistakes, indeed so.

Slavery was a huge, huge mistake. But as we read about William Wilberforce and others, you just say, "God, thank you for the Christians that you brought to the front of the line here saying, this is an intolerable situation." Nevertheless, slavery was a huge, huge mistake. Imagine the sadness of Abraham Lincoln as he went to the Gettysburg Battlefield where 50,000 men fell in three days, and a Civil War where we lost 650,000 men. It would be like having 200 9/11s. Losing over three or four thousand people a week in that Civil War, his own wife was going crazy, he lost his son to fever, and the country was cut in half and bleeding to death. That's the setting for the Gettysburg Address. President ends his address:

"So we highly resolve that these dead

shall not have died in vain. That this nation under God shall experience a new birth of freedom, and that this government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

He's done.

It only took him less than three minutes to deliver the Gettysburg Address. It was only 270 words long, 10 sentences. The battlefield was totally quiet. A man raised his hand:

"Mr. President, I have a question. Can a nation of the people, by the people, and for the people survive?"

And Abraham Lincoln replied, "I don't know how history is going to speak on America, but I do know that America was born to be free."