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GREATEST PROBLEM WE HAVE

Being a disciple of Saul Alinsky might not be so easy as it would appear. President Obama and his minions obviously can't decide whom to scapegoat for the nation's credit downgrade and our financial crisis.

One thing is for sure: It's not in Barack Obama to accept personal responsibility for the consequences of his actions and policies. He still won't own this economy and the exploding spending spiral, reminding us at every turn that our problems are a result of what he "inherited" from President Bush.

Instead of seeking to soothe the nation on word of the downgrade by Standard & Poor's, Obama played golf, prepared for more campaign fundraisers and avoided the cameras — for a change. But there can be little doubt he was strategizing about whom to blame for this unfolding catastrophe.

The first and most obvious choice would probably have been his treasury secretary, Timothy Geithner — except that to blame Geithner would have been tantamount to blaming himself; Geithner is Obama's guy. Nix that.

So why not blame Europe and the global markets? Well, there was some of that, but that's a bit too far from home, so to speak. An Alinsky-model target is usually more accessible and less sympathetic — you know, someone or some entity against whom one can gin up white-hot hate.

So he settled on blaming S&P itself — the proverbial messenger — and who else? The evil tea party for the debt ceiling impasse. Pathetic. Oh, yes, and for good measure, his liberal colleague Rep. Barney Frank threw in the military and said he hopes the downgrade will force large military spending cuts.

An unrepentant Geithner immediately took the offense and insultingly attacked S&P for its decision to downgrade our credit rating. "I think S&P's shown really terrible judgment. And they've handled themselves very poorly, and they've shown a stunning lack of knowledge about basic U.S. fiscal budget math."

S&P's managing director, David Beers, didn't receive the slander sitting down. He said he had "absolutely" no second thoughts about the decision. He also said it was a gross exaggeration to suggest that the downgrade was mainly responsible for the market sell-off, pointing to the extreme volatility of the market in the period preceding the downgrade.

Consider also the arrogance of this administration for lecturing anyone else about his budgetary acumen. We've not experienced a financial train wreck in our national history so directly traceable to the White House.

There is no question Republicans bear some degree of blame for all of this, but Obama (and his party) has ratcheted up spending to an entirely new level of profligacy. His deficits are three times those of his

predecessor and 10 times the Bush deficit of 2007.

But this spending orgy is only our second-greatest problem, because spending — discretionary and entitlement — is reversible if the political will exists to make it happen. **The greatest problem we have** is a stubborn, defiant lack of will on the part of President Obama and his Democrats to join Republicans in implementing the reforms. This nation is in quicksand because of its spending, but we've got a chief executive and his party preventing Republican reformers from extricating it.

Obama has no idea how to govern or lead — beyond leading us into financial disaster. His forte is campaigning and propaganda. He still hasn't presented a plan but has instead chosen to generally call for more taxes on the "wealthy" and — incredibly — more "stimulus" spending. For perspective, the Congressional Budget Office's latest projected 10-year deficit is estimated to be some \$13 trillion, whereas Obama's vaunted tax on the rich would only bring in \$1 trillion — and this assumes no growth-smothering effects of raising rates.

But Obama knows only class warfare and blame projection. How convenient for Obama that the tea party forced a debt ceiling showdown on which he could blame the downgrade. But if it weren't for the tea party's efforts, we still probably wouldn't have turned the national conversation to our spending and debt crises. Congress wouldn't have initiated even the reductions in the rates of spending (euphemistically called "cuts") that we've seen this past year.

The debt ceiling showdown was a positive development because it focused the national spotlight on our debt picture and the president's refusal to join the problem-solvers instead of continuing as the problem-maker in chief.

More and more Americans are coming to realize that our three humongous problems — runaway unsustainable discretionary spending, insanely unsustainable and exponentially exploding unfunded entitlement liabilities, and a lifeless economy — are mostly Obama's fault. But more importantly, they are coming to see that our far greater problem is his (and his party's) abject refusal — as evidenced yet again in his disgraceful speech Monday — to make the government live within its means. - David Limbaugh, *Townhall.com*, 8/9/11

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AMERICA DOWNGRADED!

My father was a product of the Great Depression and World War II. Like so many others of his generation, he, like his parents before him, knew how to “do without.”

When he told us, “we can’t afford it,” that did not mean our family was deprived of material things we deserved, instead it marked a boundary not to be crossed because on the other side, waiting to greet us, were the twin demons of bad credit and financial ruin. “Always pay the bank,” was my father’s sound advice. And so I have, which is why my credit score remains high.

Not so with the United States government. Under both parties, but especially free-spending Democrats, the greatest nation on Earth has seen its credit rating downgraded from AAA to AA-plus, putting us on the same level as Belgium and New Zealand.

This would be shameful if America had any shame left. In our race to give everyone what they want, politicians have failed miserably to give us what we need.

Saying “no” is not in their vocabulary. Living within our means has been replaced with “entitlement,” “spreading the wealth around” and “fairness.” Instead of promoting people who have made right decisions that have allowed them to be self-sustaining and contribute to the nation’s health and strength, President Obama and congressional Democrats ridicule and seek to penalize the successful (while happily receiving their campaign contributions). Success and wealth are frowned upon, while failure and poverty are a kind of preferred righteousness worthy of being subsidized by the “evil” productive.

This attitude is the polar opposite of the optimistic, risk-taking and reward culture that built and sustained America through previous economic downturns. And it has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Who will lead us out of this mess and make the necessary spending cuts?

Jimmy Carter, to whom President Obama is increasingly compared, attempted to sell “malaise” and retreat to a nation with optimism and progress in its DNA. It is no shame to be ignorant of how to solve a problem as long as you continue to press on toward a solution. However, it is a great shame to know how a problem can be solved and not solve it because you prefer the issue to remain an issue.

That is where we are with the recent debt-ceiling agreement. It means little to Standard & Poor’s analysts. In their decision to downgrade America’s pristine credit rating, S&P said it does not substantially reduce debt and they are not persuaded America is serious about doing so in the near future. The Obama administration’s response has been to attack S&P’s methodology. S&P has threatened to downgrade us again.

What don’t liberals understand about bloated government? Instead of a commission made up of politicians who created the problem, outside auditors with no political connections should be brought in and empowered to eliminate every government agency that does not produce services essential to strengthening the nation.

They can start with the Departments of Education, which does not educate, Energy, which produces none, Housing and Urban Development, which builds no houses and Veterans Affairs, whose responsibilities can be handled by the Defense Department. Some of these — and many others — were created as political gifts to various constituencies. We can’t afford them. They can be eliminated. Loads of money can be saved.

In April, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said on the Fox Business Network there was “no risk” America’s credit rating would be downgraded. Like so many other forecasts by this administration,

he was wrong.

Ric Edelman, chairman & CEO of Edelman Financial Services, rated by Barron’s as America’s top independent financial adviser, tells me the market’s downturn “is a political reaction, not an economic reaction. Soon, investors will realize their folly, and prices will recover nicely.” He adds, “The economy is improving. Growth is slower than we’d like, but growth it is ... the 500 biggest companies in America are still sitting on \$1 trillion in cash.”

Getting that \$1 trillion off the sidelines will also require a different political reaction. That will come in November 2012, which cannot come fast enough. - Cal Thomas, *Townhall.com*, 8/9/11

THE FIRE THIS TIME

“You’ve damaged your own race,” said Mayor Michael Nutter to the black youths of Philadelphia whose flash mobs have been beating and robbing shoppers in the fashionable district of downtown.

“Take those ... hoodies down,” the mayor went on in his blistering lecture. “Pull your pants up and buy a belt, ‘cause no one wants to see your underwear.”

And the mayor had some advice for teenagers looking for work.

“You walk into somebody’s office with your hair uncombed and a pick in the back and your shoes untied and your pants half down, tattoos up and down your arms and on your neck, and you wonder why somebody won’t hire you?”

“They don’t hire you ‘cause you look like you’re crazy.”

Nutter is African-American and the first leader to speak out about the racial character of the flash mobs attacking people in one American city after another. And where are our other leaders?

At the Iowa State Fair last August, black thugs beat a white man so savagely he was hospitalized. Police only began to look into the possibility of a racial attack and hate crime after fair-goers said the thugs were calling it “Beat Whitey Night.”

After Memorial Day, Chicago cops had to close a beach when a flash mob formed, attacked people and knocked cyclists off bikes.

In Miami Beach, there were beatings and shootings that same weekend. In D.C., flash mobs of black youths have turned up a half-dozen times in stores to loot clothes and merchandise and flee.

The media almost never identify the race of the thugs. Their reticence would disappear were a white mob in some Southern city to be caught beating up on black shoppers at a mall.

But the flash mob scourge hitting U.S. cities has been eclipsed by the pillaging and burning of London and other British cities in the worst violence visited on that nation and its capital since Goering’s Luftwaffe executed the “Blitz.”

Thousands of hoodlums, thugs and criminals have firebombed buildings, looted stores and stripped, beaten and robbed people for no reason other than that they were white.

Overwhelmed cops virtually surrendered the city for three days. By the fourth night, the rampage had taken on a multiethnic caste as Asians and white trash appeared to join in the festival of criminality.

Asian and black store owners, too, are victims. In Birmingham, three Pakistani men defending their neighborhood were run over and killed by a truck reportedly driven by a black rioter.

In a country-and-gospel tune recalled often in the ’60s, the one that gave James Baldwin the title of his polemic, this couplet appears:

God gave Noah the rainbow sign,
No more water, the fire next time./i>

A half-century after the long hot summers of the 1960s and two decades after the worst riot in U.S. history since the New York draft riots of 1863 — the Los Angeles riot of 1992, in which blacks and

Hispanics attacked Koreans and whites — the “next time” may have arrived.

In Europe, the harbinger of the new century came a half-decade ago when North African youths in the Paris banlieues went on a days-long rampage of firebombing cars and attacking police and firemen, many of whom drove off and let the fires burn out.

This week, it was London’s turn. And when the fires burn out, we shall hear anew the old liberal litany about poverty, despair, inequality and unemployment, the excuses that long ago ceased to persuade.

For poverty existed in far greater measure in the Depression. Yet our parents and grandparents did not form mobs to burn, beat and loot.

The West is in decline because the character of its people is in decline. In Europe, Christianity is dead. The moral code it gave men to live righteously is regarded with mockery. The London riots were the work of moral barbarians with no loyalty to the people in whose midst they live and no love for the society to which they give nothing, only take.

In America, millions of fatherless young seek out in gangs the familial ties they never knew. Those gangs are now almost always formed on the basis of ethnicity or race.

What were the British thinking when they threw open their doors to mass immigration from the Third World?

Over centuries, they had failed to assimilate a few million Irish, who were European Christians. So, having failed to assimilate the Irish, they decided to invite in millions of Hindus and Muslims from South Asia, Arabs from the Middle East, Africans from the sub-Saharan, black folks from the Caribbean.

But with no common faith or culture to hold the nation together, Britain is coming apart. Multiculturalism has “utterly failed,” said Germany’s Angela Merkel, only to be echoed by Nicolas Sarkozy and David Cameron.

Is multiculturalism a success here? Or does the sudden eruption of flash mobs suggest that the curtain has begun to be pulled back on diversity’s dark side here in America? - Pat Buchanan, *Townhall.com*, 8/12/11

STOP SEXUALIZING OUR CHILDREN

The recent cover of the French edition of *Vogue* magazine caused considerable controversy, and it was not because of the all too typical, female model featured in a sensual pose. Instead, it was the fact that the model this time was a 10 year-old girl.

The headline of an article appearing on JewishJournal.com announced that, “Vogue Blurs the Line between Fashion & Pedophilia with 10 Year Old Model,” and the article’s author, Ilana Angel, rightly noted that, “A 10 year old is not able to distinguish between playing dress up in mommy’s make-up and high heels, and proving a sexual aid to pedophiles.” How true!

But this is only one, extreme example of the way our kids are being sexualized. How many children watch MTV and VH1, mimicking the moves and memorizing the lyrics of the latest song by Britney Spears or Lady Gaga, having no clue that the moves they are making and the words they are mouthing are sexually charged. These kids are too young to have any understanding of sexuality, and yet it is no secret to the TV execs that these same children are a major part of the viewing audience.

And was anyone really surprised when Miley Cyrus outgrew Hannah Montana and discovered pole dancing instead? What are her youthful followers to make of her now? Perhaps they’ll follow her

lead? Perhaps they’ll ask mom and dad for a pole of their own at home?

But there’s more. There is the sexualizing of our children in the public schools, and I’m not talking about sex-ed classes. I’m talking about teaching gay history to elementary school children, as now mandated by law in California with the recent passing of SB 48, thereby introducing sexual categories to little ones who haven’t the slightest clue what sexual orientation is, let alone have the ability to wrap their minds around “bisexual” or “transgender.”

To add insult to injury, parents will have no right to opt their kids out of these classes, a hard lesson parents in other states have already learned, where the courts have sided with the schools rather than the parents. Already in Massachusetts, a couple was so upset with this state-sponsored sexualizing of their first grader that they took their battle to court, where Judge Mark Wolff of the US Court of Appeals ruled that the schools have a greater responsibility to teach “diversity” than to honor the requests of the parents. In other words, “Sorry, moms and dads. We know what is best for your children, and when we decide it’s time to introduce them to ‘diversity’ – our codeword for gay activist curricula – we will do so. You, on your part, have no right to interfere, so don’t even think about it.”

What is unique in California is not that gay-themed lessons will be taught to little children. Rather, it is that these lessons will be mandated across the entire state for all schools and all classes, which, of course, will be reflected in the textbooks that will be used. And, as is well known, what happens in California doesn’t stay in California, meaning that the textbooks printed for our most populous state will be used throughout the nation.

In the specific language of SB 48, the bill amended “the Education Code to include social sciences instruction on the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.” And note that previous bills relating to LGBT issues – including AB 537, AB 1785, AB 394, SB 777, SB 572 – were not enough. SB 48 had to go one step further.

What exactly will this mean? For starters, it will demand that the categories of “gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender” be introduced to six year-olds. I have watched videos of classes taught in different parts of the countries where elementary school children are shown pictures of artists or musicians or politicians or other famous figures and are told, “He (or she) was gay,” as if they had the slightest real concept of what “gay” actually meant. (As I recall, in the early years of elementary school, boys like boys and girls like girls. Does that make all of them “gay”?)

Of course, we are told that introducing this curriculum will reduce bullying of LGBT kids in schools, but the best way to reduce bullying is to teach that *bullying is bad rather than gay is good*. And does anyone really think that, say, showing kids images of a fat Buddha will stop the bullying of fat kids? More to the point, who gave the public schools the right to sexualize our children? - Michael Brown, *Townhall.com*, 8/14/11

TEA PARTY TERRORISTS

According to the website Politico, Vice President Joe Biden agreed “with a line of argument made by Rep. Mike Doyle (D-Pa.) at a two-hour, closed-door Democratic Caucus meeting” that congressional tea party members “acted like terrorists” in the way they stood against attempts to raise taxes and force spending reductions as part of the debt-ceiling deal.

Biden denied making the comparison. Given the heated rhetoric behind and in front of the scenes, the use of such a phrase, particularly in light of Biden’s known salty language, has credibility.

Apparently tea party critics are constitutional illiterates. The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution begins, “We the people.” Rights come from God, not politicians who think they are God. We grant power to our leaders to serve us. We are not their slaves.

The arrogance in the reported slander by Biden and Doyle is what voters hate most about many politicians. They see them as out of touch and unwilling to face challenges average citizens must confront when it comes to their personal budgets and behavior.

It is not tea party people who are the “terrorists.” A terrorist seeks to destroy. Who is the real destroyer in the debt-ceiling debate? Who wants to continue spending money we don’t have, borrowing it from nations like China that would be happy to destroy us if our politicians don’t do it first? Tea party people simply want to make their government accountable again and for this they are called “terrorists”?

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell acknowledged there would not have been a deal in which taxes are not raised and spending curtailed had it not been for tea party members. He is right. Asking career politicians not to spend other people’s money is like asking Lady Gaga to sing from the Great American Songbook, dressed in conservative clothing. For her, that would be an unnatural act. What we are witnessing in America is a re-awakening to the idea that the people own the power and do not have to sit idly by while the country they love and often sacrifice for is torn apart by irresponsible political leaders who wouldn’t have their jobs if the rest of us weren’t paying their salaries and benefits. The debt-ceiling debate showed that more people are demanding their government live within our means. We are tired of spending money we don’t have on things we don’t need.

Instead of hacking away at defense, should this “bipartisan commission” not reach the bill’s spending targets, how about closing the Department of Education, which does not educate, the Department of Energy, which produces no energy, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which builds no homes?

Far from being a spent force, as many predicted, individual citizens are rediscovering a power many may have thought they no longer possessed. Heading into the 2012 election, this renewed sense that the power to make or break a nation does not reside in Washington, but rather in the hearts and minds of its citizens, will add to a sense of hope that real change is about to happen.

While tea party critics are re-reading the Constitution, they should also consult the Declaration of Independence. That philosophical foundation of the Constitution reserves the right of the people to change their government when it no longer serves the interests of its citizens. The Declaration outlined the proper relationship between government and citizens, noting that government derives its “just powers from the consent of the governed” (and) “whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

The British no doubt considered those who wrote and believed such things “terrorists.” We call them patriots. And those patriots just might force the vice president and his boss out of a job next November. That is their right. They have it in their power. - Cal Thomas, *Townhall.com*, 8/4/11

POVERTY: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

If there were a contest for the most misleading words used in politics, “poverty” should be one of the leading contenders for that

title.

Each of us may have his own idea of what poverty means — especially those of us who grew up in poverty. But what poverty means politically and in the media is whatever the people who collect statistics choose to define as poverty.

This is not just a question of semantics. The whole future of the welfare state depends on how poverty is defined. “The poor” are the human shields behind whom advocates of ever bigger spending for ever bigger government advance toward their goal.

If poverty meant what most people think of as poverty — people “ill-clad, ill-housed, and ill-nourished,” in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s phrase — there would not be nearly enough people in poverty today to justify the vastly expanded powers and runaway spending of the federal government.

Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation has for years examined what “the poor” of today actually have — and the economic facts completely undermine the political rhetoric.

Official data cited by Rector show that 80 percent of “poor” households have air-conditioning today, which less than half the population of America had in 1970. Nearly three-quarters of households in poverty own a motor vehicle, and nearly one-third own more than one motor vehicle.

Virtually everyone living in “poverty,” as defined by the government, has color television, and most have cable TV or satellite TV. More than three-quarters have either a VCR or a DVD player, and nearly nine-tenths have a microwave oven.

As for being “ill-housed,” the average poor American has more living space than the general population — not just the poor population — of London, Paris and other cities in Europe.

Various attempts have been made over the years to depict Americans in poverty as “ill-fed” but the “hunger in America” campaigns that have enjoyed such political and media popularity have usually used some pretty creative methods and definitions.

Actual studies of “the poor” have found their intake of the necessary nutrients to be no less than that of others. In fact, obesity is slightly more prevalent among low-income people.

The real triumph of words over reality, however, is in expensive government programs for “the elderly,” including Medicare. The image often invoked is the person who is both ill and elderly, and who has to choose between food and medications.

It is great political theater. But, the most fundamental reality is that the average wealth of the elderly is some multiple of the average wealth owned by people in the other age brackets.

Why should the average taxpayer be subsidizing people who have much more wealth than they do?

If we are concerned about those particular elderly people who are in fact poor — as we are about other people who are genuinely poor, whatever their age might be — then we can simply confine our help to those who are poor by some reasonable means test. It would cost a fraction of what it costs to subsidize everybody who reaches a certain age.

But the political left hates means tests. If government programs were confined to people who were genuinely poor in some meaningful sense, that would shrink the welfare state to a fraction of its current size. The left would lose their human shields.

It is certainly true that the elderly are more likely to have more medical problems and larger medical expenses. But old age is not some unforeseeable misfortune. It is not only foreseeable but inevitable for those who do not die young.

It is one thing to keep people from suffering from unforeseeable

things beyond their control. But it is something else to simply subsidize their necessities so that they can spend their money on other things and leave a larger estate to be passed on to their heirs.

People who say they want a government program because "I don't want to be a burden to my children" apparently think it is all right to be a burden to other people's children. - Thomas Sowell, *Townhall.com*, 8/3/11

THE DEBT DEAL AND NANCY PELOSI

The agony of Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, is palpable these days. When she speaks on the House floor, she waves her arms and talks with great passion. She has the look of a politician in torment.

The cause of her distress is the change this year in the political culture of Capitol Hill. Congress has traditionally been dominated by the impulse to spend more and more of the public's money. In 2011, and especially in the Republican-controlled House, that has been replaced by a culture of spending cuts.

Republicans are thrilled by the change. . . - Fred Barnes, *The Wall Street Journal*, 8/4/11

THE YOUNG -- DEPRIVED OR DECADENT

A once civil and orderly England was recently torn apart by rioting and looting — at first by mostly minority youth, but eventually also by young Brits in general. This summer, a number of American cities witnessed so-called "flash mobs" — mostly African-American youths who swarmed at prearranged times to loot stores or randomly attack those of other races and classes.

The mayhem has reignited an old debate in the West. Are such criminally minded young Americans and British turning to violence in protest over inequality, poverty and bleak opportunities? The Left, of course, often blames cutbacks in the tottering welfare state and high unemployment. The havoc and mayhem, in other words, are a supposed wake-up call in an age of insolvency not to cut entitlements, but to tax the affluent to redistribute more of their earnings to those unfairly deprived.

The Right counters that the problem is not too few state subsidies, but far too many. The growing — and now unsustainable — state dole of the last half-century eroded self-reliance and personal initiative. The logical result is a dependent underclass spanning generations that becomes ever more unhappy and unsatisfied the more it is given from others. Today's looters have plenty to eat. That is why they target sneaker and electronics stores — to enjoy the perks of life they either cannot or will not work for.

We might at least agree on a few facts behind the violence. First, much of the furor is because poverty is now seen as a relative, not an absolute, condition. Per-capita GDP is \$47,000 in the U.S. and \$35,000 in Britain. In contrast, those rioting in impoverished Syria (where average GDP is about \$5,000) or Egypt (about \$6,000) worry about being hungry or being shot for their views, rather than not acquiring a new BlackBerry or a pair of Nikes. Inequality, not Tiny Tim-like poverty, is the new Western looter's complaint.

So when the president lectures about fat-cat "corporate jet owners," he doesn't mean that greed prevents the lower classes from flying on affordable commercial jets — only that a chosen few in luxury aircraft, like himself, reach their destinations a little more quickly and easily. Not having what someone richer has is our generation's lament instead of lacking elemental shelter, food or electricity. The problem is not that the bathwater in Philadelphia is not as hot as in Martha's Vineyard, but that the conditions under which it is delivered

in comparison are far more basic and ordinary.

Second, the wealthy have not set an example that hard work and self-discipline leads to well-deserved success and the good life. Recently, a drunken, affluent young prospect for the U.S. ski team urinated on a sleeping 11-year old during a transcontinental flight. And the more the psychodramas of drones like Lindsay Lohan and Paris Hilton, or some members of the royal family, become headline news, the more we see boredom and corruption among the pampered elite. The behavior of John Edwards, Eliot Spitzer, Dominique Strauss-Kahn or Arnold Schwarzenegger does not remind us that good habits of elite public figures follow from well-deserved riches and acclaim — but only that with today's wealth and power comes inevitable license and decadence.

Third, communism may be dead, but Marxist-inspired materialism still measures the good life only by equal access to "things." We can argue whether those who loot a computer store are spoiled or oppressed. But even a person in faded jeans and a worn T-shirt can still find all sorts of spiritual enrichment at no cost in either a museum or a good book. Did we forget that in our affluent postmodern society, being poor is often an impoverishment of the mind, not necessarily the result of a cruel physical world?

Finally, there is far too much emphasis on government as the doting, problem-solving parent. What made Western civilization rich and liberal was not just free-market capitalism and well-funded constitutional government, but the role of the family, community and church in reminding the emancipated individual of an affluent society that he should not always do what he was legally permitted to. Destroy these bridles, ridicule the old shame culture of the past, and we end up with unchecked appetites — as we now witness from a smoldering London to the flash mobbing in Wisconsin.

Our high-tech angry youth are deprived not just because their elders put at risk their future subsidies, but because they were not taught what real wealth is — and where and how it is obtained and should be used. - Victor Davis Hanson, *Townhall.com*, 8/18/11

PRAYER, THE FABRIC OF AMERICA

Ours is nation built on liberty, the ideals of Western Civilization, and prayer. It is also a nation under assault by people who wish to erase prayer from the list: this much was evident in the vitriol hurled at Texas Gov. Rick Perry when he recently called his fellow governors and President Obama to join him for prayer for our nation.

The current backlash is due either to a genuine lack of knowledge concerning prayer's place in American history or a seeming untamable desire, on the part of some, to usher in a secular state. For those who seek secularization, there's probably not much that can be done here to change their mind, but for those whose animosity toward prayer in America is the result of a lack of historical proof, perhaps some good can be done in the next few paragraphs.

For starters, when the First Continental Congress met to decide how the colonies ought to respond to the ongoing tyranny of King George III, they opened their session with a prayer that began this way:

"O Lord our Heavenly Father, high and mighty King of kings, and Lord of lords, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers on earth and reignest with power supreme and uncontrolled over all the Kingdoms, Empires and Governments; look down in mercy, we beseech Thee, on these our American States, who have fled to Thee from the rod of the oppressor and thrown themselves on Thy gracious protection, desiring to be henceforth dependent only on Thee."

During the middle of the following year, and just three months

after British forces attacked the colonies and ushered in the American Revolutionary War, “the Continental Congress declared July 20, 1775, a national day of ‘fasting & prayer.’” In none of these things did they go against the principles that would come to characterize America: rather, they epitomized them.

In 1784, three years after the United States of America had emerged victorious from the war, General George Washington sent a letter to every governor in the country to announce the disbandment of the Continental Army. That letter contained these words:

“I now make it my earnest prayer that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection; that he would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large.”

Five years later, after the United States had chosen George Washington as the first President under the U.S. Constitution, the schedule of events for the first inauguration day ran in the *New York Daily Advertiser*:

“[O]n the morning of the day on which our illustrious President will be invested with his office, the bells will ring at nine o’clock, when the people may go up to the house of God and in a solemn manner commit the new government, with its important train of consequences, to the holy protection and blessing of the most high. An early hour is prudently fixed for this peculiar act of devotion and . . . is designed wholly for prayer.”

Just months after Washington had been sworn in as president, both the House and Senate passed a resolution asking him to declare a day of “public thanksgiving and prayer.” Concurring, on Oct. 3, 1789, Washington issued a proclamation which read in part:

“Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me “to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness”

“Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation.

These historical examples, drawn from the many that are extant and accessible, show the centrality of prayer in the earliest years of our Republic. And they demonstrate that Gov. Perry’s proclamation of “a Day of Prayer and Fasting for our Nation to seek God’s guidance and wisdom in addressing the challenges that face our communities, states and nation,” epitomizes the way George Washington and the Founding Generation approached matters during our Republic’s earliest years. - Alan Sears, *Townhall.com*, 8/6/11

SOLUTION TO THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS

There is only one solution to the world’s problems, only one prescription for producing a near-heaven on earth.

It is 3,000 years old.

And it is known as the **Ten Commandments**.

Properly understood and applied, the Ten Commandments are really all humanity needs to make a beautiful world. While modern men and women, in their hubris, believe that they can and must come up with new ideas in order to make a good world, the truth is there is almost nothing new to say.

If people and countries lived by the Ten Commandments, all the great moral problems would disappear.

Or, to put it another way, all the great evils involve the violation of one or more of the Ten Commandments.

Here is the case in brief for the Ten Commandments (using the Jewish enumeration, which differs slightly from the Protestant and Catholic):

1. I am the Lord your God.

There are moral atheists and there are immoral believers, but there is no chance for a good world based on atheism. Ultimately, a godless and religion-free society depends on people’s hearts to determine right from wrong, and that is a very weak foundation.

Plenty of people have died in history in the name of God. But many more have been killed, tortured, and deprived of liberty in the name of humanity and progress or some other post-Judeo-Christian value. Religion gave us an Inquisition and gives us suicide terrorists, but the death of God gave us Nazism and Communism, which, in one century alone, slaughtered more than a hundred million people. All the founders of the United States - yes, all - knew that a free society can survive only if its citizens believe themselves to be morally accountable to God.

2. Do not have other gods.

The worship of false gods leads to evil. When anything but the God of creation and morality is worshiped, moral chaos ensues.

No one is godless. Either people worship God, or they worship other gods — nature, intelligence, art, education, beauty, the environment, Mother Earth, power, fame, pleasure, the state, the fuhrer, the party, progress, humanity. The list is almost endless. And no matter how noble — and false gods are often noble — when they become ends in themselves, they lead to evil.

3. Do not take God’s name in vain.

People have misinterpreted this commandment. They think it prohibits saying something like, “Oh, my God, what a home run!” But the Hebrew literally means “do not carry” the name of the Lord in vain.

In other words, we are forbidden from doing evil in God’s name. Only when thus understood does the rest of the Commandment make sense — that God will not “cleanse,” or forgive — the person who does this.

Thus, the Islamist who slits an innocent’s throat while shouting “Allahu Akbar” is the perfect example of the individual who carries God’s name in vain and who cannot be forgiven. These people not only murder their victims, they murder God’s name. For that reason, they do more evil than the atheist who murders.

4. Keep the Sabbath day and make it holy.

Leaving the world one day a week and elevating it above the others is the greatest vehicle to family harmony and to harmony with friends.

One day a week without video games, without parents leaving to go to work or to do their own thing on the computer forces parents and children to spend time together and to actually talk. It even encourages couples to make love. It also weakens the institution of slavery. If even your servants get a day off because God commands it, that means you do not have absolute control over them.

5. Honor your father and mother.

The first thing every totalitarian and authoritarian movement

does is to try to undermine parental authority. That's why it is dangerous, even in a democracy.

Take our universities, for example. Woodrow Wilson, the first progressive president, said, "The use of the university is to make young men as unlike their fathers as possible."

And that is exactly what colleges have been doing for over a half a century. Instead of searching for truth and beauty, the universities have been alienating American youth from their fathers' — and the Founding Fathers' — values.

6. Do not murder.

If people lived by this commandment alone, the world would enter a heavenly state. At the same time, the commandment has been widely misunderstood. The Hebrew originally prohibits murder, not killing. By mistranslating the Hebrew as "Do not kill," too many modern Westerners have been taught that pacifism is moral and noble. It is neither. It is an accessory to murder, since it prevents pacifists from doing the only thing that stops mass murder — killing the murderers.

The Nazi death camps were liberated by soldiers whose job was to kill murderers, not by pacifists or "peace activists."

7. Do not commit adultery.

Observance or even near-observance of this commandment alone would end the formation of the underclass. No amount of state aid can do what marriage and commitment to a spouse do to end poverty and almost all social pathologies.

8. Do not steal.

This commandment prohibits the stealing of people, the stealing of property, and the stealing of anything that belongs to another. The first prohibition alone, if obeyed, would have rendered the slave trade impossible.

Protecting the sanctity of private property makes moral civilization possible. That is why the recent riots in London should frighten every citizen of the U.K. and the West generally. Just as the burning of books leads to the burning of people, so, too, the smashing of windows and the looting of property leads eventually to the smashing of heads.

The rampant violation of this commandment by the governments of Africa is the primary reason for African poverty. Corruption, not Western imperialism, is the root of Africa's backwardness.

9. Do not bear false witness.

Lying is the root of nearly all major evils. All totalitarian states are based on lies. Had the Nazis not lied about Jews, there would not have been a Holocaust. Only people who believed that all Jews, including babies, were vermin, could, for example, lock hundreds of Jews into a synagogue and burn them alive. That similar lies are told about Jews today by Arab governments and by the Iranian state should awaken people to the Nazi-like threat that anti-Semitism still poses.

10. Do not covet your neighbor's spouse, property, etc.

The cultivation of class warfare — i.e., the cultivation of coveting what richer citizens legitimately own — inevitably leads to violating the other commandments, most particularly the ones that prohibit stealing and murdering.

There is only one way to achieve a great society, and it is not by creating a massive state that doles out other citizens' money; it is by cultivating citizens who try to live by these Ten Commandments. They are as relevant today as they were 3,000 years ago. - Dennis Prager, *Townhall.com*, 8/16/11

(Dennis Prager is a radio talk show host and columnist who is an Orthodox Jew who loves evangelical Christians, probably because we love Israel.

He is right about the Ten Commandments, but the ultimate

solution to the world's problems and any individual's needs is repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shed His blood on the Cross to pay for the sins of the world, violations of the commandments he wrote about. Prager needs salvation and so do any others who have not been born again. - N.P.)

A NEW WAVE OF BIGOTRY

As defined by Collins English Dictionary, a bigot is "a person who is intolerant of any ideas other than his or her own, especially on religion, politics, or race."

In contemporary culture, those who claim to tolerate everything are intolerant of ideas that come from perspectives other than their own, especially when those ideas are rooted in conservative politics or evangelical faith.

Though Antisemitism and anti-Catholic bigotry sadly are still with us, the new and "accepted" bigotry among some on the left is for those who call themselves — or are sometimes mislabeled by people who don't know the difference between born again and born yesterday — evangelical Christians.

With two evangelicals running for president, the opening salvo in what is likely to be a God vs. government battle has already been launched.

A June 22 article in Rolling Stone magazine gives bigots permission for more bigotry. The illustration by Victor Juhasz, which accompanies it, reveals where the writer is headed. Michele Bachmann is dressed as Joan of Arc with a Bible in one hand, a bloody sword in the other, a cross on her chest, and the "finger of God" pointing at her from heaven. In the background, people are being burned at the stake. Father Charles Coughlin at his worst would have had trouble topping this on his bigoted radio broadcasts in the 1930s.

Rolling Stone writer Matt Taibbi says Bachmann is "a religious zealot whose brain is a raging electrical storm of divine visions and paranoid delusions." One of many examples he cites is her assertion that China is "plotting to replace the dollar bill."

Recently, China's official Xinhua News Agency editorialized in favor of a new global reserve currency, replacing the dollar. Don't look for a retraction.

There's plenty more in "Michele Bachmann's Holy War" on which the bigots can feast. This is the argument of anyone who has little or no faith in God. They attack people who believe the Supreme Being does not sit in the Oval Office.

The secular left is also going after Rick Perry's faith. Writing in *The New York Times*, Timothy Egan refers to the Texas governor as a "biblical bully" and asks, if "God is ignoring Rick Perry?"

Ideas that come from the minds of secular liberals are considered right and good, no matter their track record. Ideas from conservatives, be they secular or especially evangelical, are "crazy," according to Taibbi's scatology.

There is a way to blunt this coming tidal wave of anti-evangelical bigotry. Bachmann and Perry — and any other Republican who wishes to join in — should not play on the territory of their opponents. Instead, they should focus on what works and whose lives have been transformed by embracing similar faith and similar attitudes.

Each time a liberal wants to raise taxes to pay for more programs, Republican candidates should introduce to the public people who liberated themselves from government, as examples for others to follow. Some will have experienced a spiritual conversion. Others will have simply "gotten their act together" and decided they can do more for themselves than government.

In the tradition of Horatio Alger, a story about people who have

overcome is better than a story about those still wallowing in self-pity, low expectations and welfare dependency. A positive message beats whining and class envy every time.

Growing numbers of people are addicted to government and need help getting "clean." Bachmann and Perry could respond to the bigotry by announcing a joint project to be continued no matter who wins the nomination and election. People who want to escape poverty would be introduced to local churches and synagogues, or secular organizations that operate on similar principles.

Scriptures command outreach to the poor, which most religious institutions used to do a lot more of before many ceded that role to government. Helping to transform a life is one of the greatest pleasures on Earth.

The bigots, like the poor, will be with us always, but this is one way they might be shamed into silence - Cal Thomas, *Townhall.com*, 8/18/11

OBAMA PLAYS THE BLAME GAME

A Washington, D. C. think tank has labeled President Barack Obama's recent taxpayer-funded trip to three Midwestern states "Obama's Tour of Denial and Blame."

The bus trip to Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois was billed as a listening tour for the president to directly hear from Americans about the economy and to discuss his ideas about job growth. But critics say it was nothing more than a campaign trip, which should have been paid for by Obama's well-funded re-election war chest.

Rory Cooper, director of strategic communications at The Heri-

tage Foundation says Obama passed the buck instead of taking responsibility for the nation's economic mess.

"He blamed Congress. He blamed the weather. He blamed Europe," says Cooper. "The only thing that he didn't seem to recognize is that it is his policies over the last two and a half years that have gotten us into this current mess that we're in -- it was his stimulus, it was his ObamaCare bill."

Cooper argues that Obama's foreign policy record is not any better than his domestic policy record, with the expectation of the Osama bin Laden raid.

"The relationship that we have developed with Great Britain over the past hundred years has been greatly diminished over President Obama's term. We have not been taking the economic competition of China seriously. We have not looked at the threats of North Korea and Iran seriously," he states.

"We have a lot of things going on in this world that are being ignored, just as President Obama is ignoring the economy."

Cooper believes at some point the American electorate is going to get fed up with what they view as the president's indifference to their economic calamity. - Chad Groening, *OneNewsNow*, 8/19/11

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