

Eye on the World

Feb. 11, 2017

This compilation of material for "Eye on the World" is presented as a service to the Churches of God. The views stated in the material are those of the writers or sources quoted by the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Church of God Big Sandy. The following articles were posted at churchofgodbigandy.com for the weekend of Feb. 11, 2017.

Compiled by Dave Havir

Luke 21:34-36—"But take heed to yourselves, lest your souls be weighed down with self-indulgence, and drunkenness, or the anxieties of this life, and that day come on you suddenly, like a falling trap; for it will come on all dwellers on the face of the whole earth. But beware of slumbering; and every moment pray that you may be fully strengthened to escape from all these coming evils, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of Man" (Weymouth New Testament).



An article by Meleana Moore titled "Irate Response From Iran? Attack on Saudi Warship" was posted at townhall.com on Feb. 1, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Just days after President Trump's immigration and refugee executive order was signed, an attack by Iran-backed Yemeni Houthi rebels occurred Monday in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen. Although it wasn't a U.S. warship that was targeted, the attack, now presumed by U.S. intelligence to be a suicide mission, was carried out against a Saudi frigate. Two Saudi sailors were killed, while three were wounded.

In this video taken at the scene, FoxNews reported that the voice is shouting in Arabic, "Allahu akbar [God is great], death to America, death to Israel, a curse on the Jews and victory for Islam."

It is thought by American officials now that the attack may have been meant for an American warship. According to FNC, the Saudi frigate was in relatively the same spot as U.S. warships were they came under attack via missiles in October.



An article by Elad Benari titled "Iran Conducts Yet Another Missile Test" was posted at israelnationalnews.com on Feb. 9, 2017. Following is the article.

Iran is continuing to test missiles in defiance of UN resolutions and American sanctions.

The latest test came on Wednesday, Fox News reported, and took place at the Semnan launch pad, east of Tehran, the same place where Iran conducted a previous ballistic missile test last month.

The missile used in Wednesday's launch was a short-range Mersad surface-to-air missile, which impacted 35 miles away, a U.S. official told the news network.

Earlier this week, the Iranian government test fired five Sayyad (Hunter) surface-to-air missiles during military exercises.

In late January, Iran conducted a ballistic missile test, also at the Semnan launch pad, which is located about 140 miles east of Tehran.

Following that ballistic missile test, President Donald Trump's administration imposed new sanctions on 25 individuals and companies connected to Iran's ballistic missile program and those providing support to the Revolutionary Guard Corps' Qods Force.

On Sunday, Vice President Mike Pence warned Iran not to test the administration's patience.

"Iran would do well not to test the resolve of this new president," said Pence, adding that Iran should "think twice about their continued hostile and belligerent actions."

Iranian officials have responded to the U.S. sanctions with threats of their own. Iran's Foreign Ministry vowed that it too would ensure "legal restrictions" were imposed on the "American individuals and companies which have a role in aiding extremist and terrorist groups or contribute to the suppression and murder of the defenseless people in the region."

On Monday, Iran's Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri said that the "ultimate losers" are those who result to the language of force in dealing with Iran.

"The Americans have chosen a wrong path these days and we hope that they will revise their approach and practice interaction," he said.

On Tuesday, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed calls from the Trump administration to cease the country's ballistic missile tests, and said that Trump had showed the "true face" of America.

Asked about those comments, White House press secretary Sean Spicer told reporters that Trump will take whatever actions he sees fit against Iran, adding that Khamenei "is going to realize that there is a new President in

office. This President is not going to sit by and let Iran flout its violations, or its apparent violations to the joint agreement.”



An article by Guy Taylor titled “Trump to Approve Weapons Packages to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain Blocked by Obama” was posted at washingtontimes.com on Feb. 7, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

The Trump administration is poised to move quickly to approve major weapons packages for Saudi Arabia and Bahrain that President Obama blocked during his final months in office over human rights concerns in both nations, U.S. officials and congressional sources say.

While the White House declined to discuss its plans, one U.S. official directly involved in the transfers told The Washington Times that a roughly \$300 million precision-guided missile technology package for Riyadh and a multibillion-dollar F-16 deal for Bahrain are now in the pipeline ready for clearance from the new administration.

The deals, if approved, would send a significant signal about the priorities of the new administration, where the security challenge posed by forces such as Islamist jihadi groups and Iran is taking a much greater precedence in setting foreign policy.

“These are significant sales for key allies in the Gulf who are facing the threat from Iran and who can contribute to the fight against the Islamic State,” said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. “Whereas the Obama administration held back on these, they’re now in the new administration’s court for a decision—and I would anticipate the decision will be to move forward.”

The Pentagon also declined to comment. But congressional sources said they anticipate the Trump administration will easily overcome resistance on Capitol Hill, where Democrats and some Republicans have called for restrictions on sales to Riyadh amid an outcry from human rights groups over large-scale civilian casualties of the Saudi-led military campaign in neighboring Yemen.

Amnesty International has charged that the U.S.-backed, Saudi-led coalition waging war against Iran-backed rebels in Yemen “appear[s] to have deliberately targeted civilians and civilian objects such as hospitals, schools, markets and mosques, which may amount to war crimes.”



An article by Frank Zeller titled “Germany to ‘Speed Up Deportation’ of Failed Asylum Seekers” was posted at yahoo.com on Feb. 9, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Germany, which has taken in over one million asylum seekers since 2015, on Thursday announced plans to speed up the deportation of those denied refugee status—but controversy flared over sending people back to war-torn Afghanistan.

Chancellor Angela Merkel—who faces a re-election bid in September amid a voter backlash over the mass influx—won agreement from leaders of Germany’s 16 state governments on a repatriation plan, which she said would “quickly” be drafted as a proposed law.

“What we discussed today were the necessary conditions for us to be able to continue to be a country that welcomes those seeking protection,” she told reporters after the meeting.

Expediting the process of repatriation for failed asylum seekers “will, critically, give us the possibility of accepting people who are in emergency situations,” she said.

Among the planned measures is the establishment of national “deportation centres” aimed at coordinating federal and state operations. Financial incentives will also be offered for those who return voluntarily under the plan.

Germany also wants to increase pressure on countries which refuse to take back their national or hamper the process with red tape.

It has stepped up talks, especially with North African countries, since December’s deadly jihadist attack on a Berlin Christmas market, blamed on a Tunisian man, Anis Amri, who should have been sent back long before the attack.

Since that attack, which claimed 12 lives, Germany also announced reforms to make it easier to expel foreign nationals considered potentially dangerous extremists by police.



An article by Cedar Sanderson titled “Illegal” was posted at accordingto-hoyt.com on Feb. 2, 2017. Following is the article.

Words have meanings. As simplistic as that sounds when I write it down, it seems to have gotten lost in the current political atmosphere. I’ve taken to avoiding most social media because it seems most of y’all have taken to using dumb memes and absolutely no reading comprehension so that you can be filled with shrill self-righteous outrage. Learn to read. And then? Learn to comprehend. Then come back and talk to me, because before that, you’re not worth my time.

The word illegal is frequently used in discourse, and it means just what it means. It is not an optional modifier that you can discard when you’re tired of typing and don’t want to lift a finger to say what you actually mean. Illegal immigrants are breaking the law. Period, stop, end. Immigrants? Are working very hard to

stay within the law, and should be justifiably pissed to be lumped in with the people who are smearing their good name by flouting immigration laws.

They are not the same. And no, you cannot say that they are. Legality makes a difference. If they choose to break one law, why wouldn't they choose to break another? Ours is a nation that functions under rule of law, and if you want to come here and stay here, you need to learn what that means. It doesn't mean that you can claim victimhood and wave that around as a get-out-of-jail-free card. It certainly doesn't mean that you can come into our great nation, decide you don't like our laws, so you're only going to follow the ones you brought with you. Nope.

I'm all out of patience with memetic morons. If you can't wrap your mind around more than the shortest possible message, you may want to rethink your life. Seriously.

I'm proud to know many legal immigrants. There are immigrants in my family a couple of generations back. I've been able to sit in the audience and watch the swearing-in of a new citizen, and frankly I thought at the time that she was coming into this a better citizen than I, who was born to it. Studying to become a citizen, taking an oath forsaking all others. . . that's what it's about. That is what the illegals slinking in under the cover of darkness flout. It's not an easy process. I've been told it's in dire need of reform. So? Reform it. Get involved in the legislation. Make your voices known there.

But don't, for heaven's sakes, show your asses in public by shouting ignorant and dangerous slogans encouraging the masses waiting at our door to break our laws and swarm the walls. Words matter. Law matters. Anarchy will just get you tyranny. None of us want that.

It's not bigotry, or racism, to oppose the breaking of laws. I've always advocated that if you don't like a law, you should change it. Petition, get elected, donate to a cause—however you want to chase that dream. But while the law is on the books, it must be adhered to.

Let me take another tack, perhaps you'll understand this one. Let's say you want to open up your house to a renter. It's not a perfect analogy, but we'll run with it. You advertise, and you get a lot of calls from interested people. But before you sign papers agreeing that they can share your home, you check up on them. You get references, you run a credit check, you take a deposit against any damages they might do. In other words, you follow a similar procedure to the immigration policies of our nation. Other nations have even stricter immigration laws. Don't believe me? Look up what it takes to emigrate to Canada, or Australia.

Now, let's flip this around. I'm not even going to discuss renting without doing any checks on the applicants. You can imagine this. No—I'm going straight to squatters. Yes, this is what an illegal immigrant is doing. He's cruising through your neighborhood, looking for a house where the occupants are out of the house, on vacation—in other words, not enforcing house rules. When he finds one, he moves in. He brings along his family. He raids your refriger-

ator and pawns your jewelry for cash. Then, when you come home and want him out? He picks up the smallest doe-eyed child and holds it up, sobbing that you want to make babies homeless.

Who would you rather have living in your home? The respectful hardworking immigrant who has proven their intent and ability to contribute to our society? Or the illicit duplicitous one who flouts all the rules and destroys from within?

Illegal is not a useless modifier. It is, arguably, the most important defining characteristic in the phrase 'illegal immigrant.' That single word, with its clear meaning, tells you all you need to know about the person bearing it. Not their race, nor religion, nor any other modifier. Just illegal.



An editorial by Michelle Malkin titled "Not All Refugees Are Welcome" was posted at townhall.com on Feb. 1, 2017. Following is the article.

For years, left-wingers would contest my use of the term "open borders lobby" because, they sternly rebuked me, noooooobody in America seriously believes in open borders.

Whelp.

This weekend, thousands of anti-Trump liberals took to the streets, airports and college campuses chanting "all are welcome" and shrieking "let them in" to protest White House executive orders enforcing our borders. In case their position wasn't clear enough, the mobs bellowed:

"No borders, no nations, f— deportations!"

"No walls, no borders, f— executive orders!"

Militant mayors in Seattle, Denver and New York City re-declared themselves open-borders sanctuaries—or as I call them, outlaw cities. All of California will now consider declaring itself a "sanctuary state." Radical progressive companies vowed to hire 10,000 refugees (Starbucks), provide free housing to refugees (Airbnb) and subsidize left-wing legal efforts to fight President Trump's refugee moratorium and enhanced visa-holder vetting (Lyft).

Reasonable people can argue about the details and implementation of Trump's policies. But the John Lennon-addled "Imagine there's no country" crowd is post-reason. Their treacle is treacherous.

No, nitwits, not all refugees are welcome here.

Muslim extremist refugees seeking to wage jihad on our soil and kill all infidels are not welcome here.

Anti-American refugees seeking to transform our society and culture into a Balkanized hell are not welcome here.

Misogynist refugees who treat their (multiple) wives as second-class citizens and subjugate their daughters (who are vulnerable to “honor killings” for the slightest transgressions) are not welcome here.

Jobless refugees seeking to soak up our tax dollars while griping about our lack of generosity are not welcome here.

In 2014, New England mayors from both parties pleaded with the Obama administration to enact a refugee resettlement freeze as the flood of unasimilated newcomers strained their schools and municipal resources. “I have enough urban issues to deal with. Enough is enough,” Springfield, Massachusetts mayor Domenic Sarno, a Democrat, declared at the time. “You can’t keep concentrating poverty on top of poverty.”

President Trump understands what the Pollyanna protesters of his immigration enforcement reforms simply cannot or will not comprehend: America needs a break.

We cannot be responsible hosts when our immigration and entrance system is in shambles. Homeland security officials and inspectors general have warned for decades that our consular offices are filled with corrupt and incompetent clerks; our computer systems are outdated; criminal background checks have been abandoned wholesale; the deportation and removal apparatus has been sabotaged by pro-illegal immigration ideologues; and our southern border is overrun by drug cartel violence, human trafficking and misery.

- We already grant 1 million legal permanent residencies to people from around the world every year.
- That’s expected to increase to 10.5 million green cards by 2025.
- Add in between 11 million and 30 million aliens here illegally.
- An estimated annual influx of 70,000 asylees
- 500,000 foreign students
- Nearly 700,000 total foreign guest workers (skilled and unskilled, plus their spouses, many of whom are allowed to work here as well)
- More than 350,000 foreign high school and university students, researchers, physicians, and summer work travelers on J-1 exchange visitor visas
- 66,000 visas for nonagricultural temporary foreign workers
- 117,000 slots for seasonal agricultural workers

Section 7 of President Trump’s executive order calls for full construction of the long-delayed biometric entry-exit tracking system—which Congress and both parties have promised to do since the 1990s, but have failed to complete since the 9/11 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States recommended it 13 years ago.

The tourism industry, foreign governments, the ACLU, universities and the immigration lawyers' lobby have all conspired to prevent this meaningful tracking system from coming online. An estimated 40 percent of all aliens here illegally are visa overstayers.

It is not "fascist," "racist" or "xenophobic" to close our front door to tens of thousands more while we get our own house in order. It is self-preservationist.



An article by Alfonso Chardy titled "Hundreds of Immigrants Convicted And Not Deported Committed More Crimes—Even Murder" was posted at miami-herald.com on Feb. 7, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

At least 121 killings within a four-year span were carried out by convicted immigrants who were not deported, according to a 2015 U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee document recently reviewed by el Nuevo Herald.

Every year, federal immigration authorities release foreign nationals convicted of crimes—including murder—both because the U.S. Supreme Court has prohibited indefinite detention or because their countries refuse to take them back even after immigration judges have ordered deportation.

While the release of convicted immigrant criminals has been routine since the Supreme Court issued its landmark ruling 15 years ago, the practice is now in the national spotlight because President Donald Trump has made it imperative to deport immigrant convicts as quickly as possible lest they commit more crimes.

Research by the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee has elicited evidence that could be used to back Trump's claim. A committee document contains comprehensive information from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) about the number of immigrant convicts in the United States, their whereabouts, whether immigration authorities have succeeded in deporting them and whether they committed additional crimes after being released.

A committee letter sent to the Department of Justice and the Departments of State and Homeland Security nearly two years ago said that at least 121 homicides "could have been avoided" between 2010 and 2014 had Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), under the prior Obama administration, deported immigrant convicts instead of releasing them.

"This disturbing fact follows ICE's admission that, of the 36,007 criminal aliens it released from ICE custody in Fiscal Year 2013, 1,000 have been re-convicted of additional crimes in the short time since their release," according to the letter, dated June 12, 2015.

The Senate Judiciary Committee letter revealed that 121 immigrant convicts were charged with homicide following their release from ICE custody between 2010 and 2014. It also noted that in 2014, ICE released 2,457 immigrant

convicts because of the Supreme Court ruling prohibiting detention of deportable foreign nationals beyond six months.

The bulk of these convicted immigrants —1,183—were from Cuba

Most of these immigrant convicts are nationals of 23 countries described by ICE as “recalcitrant” because they routinely refuse to take back deportables. The bulk of these immigrant convicts in 2014—1,183—were from Cuba, according to the letter. The other “recalcitrant” countries include Afghanistan, Algeria, China, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and Zimbabwe, according to ICE.

In 2014, ICE released 2,457 convicted immigrants

While Trump has not himself articulated a threat to deny visas to nationals of these countries, he has suggested that he might take such a course of action.

Trump’s executive order temporarily halting the worldwide refugee program and the entry of nationals from the seven Muslim-majority countries contains language stipulating that if the countries from where those people came do not provide certain requested information, then the president will prohibit the entry of nationals from those countries.

If those countries refuse to provide the information Washington wants, then the secretary of state will deliver to Trump a list of countries “recommended for inclusion on a presidential proclamation that would prohibit the entry of foreign nationals . . . from countries that do not provide the information requested,” according to the executive order.

Denying any future visas from countries reluctant to take back deportable nationals has long been cited as a weapon to induce compliance but has never been widely used.

Former DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson told the Senate Judiciary Committee in April 2015 that he did not believe visa sanctions against recalcitrant countries was the right policy.

“I don’t necessarily believe that we ought to suspend immigration, travel from any of these countries because of this particular issue,” Johnson said at the time.

The letter from the Senate Judiciary Committee notes that the United States can “promote compliance” with ICE deportation efforts by denying diplomatic visas or any other types of visas to nationals of “recalcitrant countries that deny or delay accepting the return of one or more aliens.”

The letter also noted that Cuba has been “perpetually on ICE’s list of recalcitrant countries because it refuses to take back” deportable Cubans, except the 2,746 mentioned in a list agreed to by Washington and Havana in 1984.

On Jan. 12, when then-President Barack Obama revoked the “wet-foot/dry-foot” policy, American officials indicated that the new policy allowed for the return and deportation of undocumented Cubans who arrived after it took effect. They were nebulous as to whether the new policy will apply to the more than 35,000 Cuban convicts who have been ordered deported after 1984.

On the issue of convicted immigrants, the committee's letter focused on the 121 prisoners released between 2010 and 2014 because they were charged with homicide after they were allowed to walk out of jail.

This is a significant issue because one of the pillars of Trump's opposition to immigrants with criminal records is that some have been linked to murders of American citizens.

Trump has cited examples of his claim in various speeches.



An article by Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn titled "20 Metro Areas Are Home to Six-In-Ten Unauthorized Immigrants in U.S." was posted at pewresearch.org on Feb. 9, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Most of the United States' 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants live in just 20 major metropolitan areas, with the largest populations in New York, Los Angeles and Houston, according to new Pew Research Center estimates based on government data.

The analysis shows that the nation's unauthorized immigrant population is highly concentrated, more so than the U.S. population overall. In 2014, the 20 metro areas with most unauthorized immigrants were home to 6.8 million of them, or 61% of the estimated nationwide total. By contrast, only 36% of the total U.S. population lived in those metro areas.

But the analysis also shows that unauthorized immigrants tend to live where other immigrants live. Among lawful immigrants—including naturalized citizens and noncitizens—65% lived in those top metros.

By far the biggest unauthorized immigrant populations were in the New York and Los Angeles metro areas (1.2 million and 1 million, respectively). No other metro area approached a million. Among the top 20 areas, the smallest unauthorized immigrant populations included Orlando (110,000) and Austin (100,000).

Five of the 20 metros with the largest unauthorized immigrant populations are in California: Los Angeles, Riverside-San Bernardino, San Francisco, San Diego and San Jose. Three—Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth and Austin—are in Texas.

Some of these areas could be affected by the Trump administration's promise to take action against localities that do not cooperate with federal officials in identifying unauthorized immigrants. The president's executive order promises to cut federal funds to these "sanctuary jurisdictions." Mayors in several big cities have said they will not comply with the order.

The top 20 metropolitan areas for unauthorized immigrants have been remarkably consistent over the past decade, according to the Center's analysis. Nineteen of the 20 top metropolitan destinations for unauthorized immigrants in 2014 ranked among the top 20 each year over the previous decade.

The Census Bureau dataset used for this analysis does not separate cities from the larger metro areas that contain them in all cases. But such a distinction is possible for 11 of the top 20 metro areas. Within those areas, the cities with the largest unauthorized immigrant populations include New York City, with an estimated 525,000 unauthorized immigrants; Los Angeles, with an estimated 375,000; and Chicago, with an estimated 140,000. Other cities with available data are Miami (55,000), Denver (55,000), Philadelphia (50,000), Boston (35,000), San Francisco (35,000), Washington, D.C., (25,000) and Seattle (20,000).

Among the top 20 metro areas, only one city for which data were available—Phoenix—was home to a majority of the unauthorized immigrants in that metropolitan area, with about 140,000 out of a total 250,000. In the others, most of the unauthorized immigrants living in the metro area lived outside the borders of the largest city.

The Center's analysis relies on augmented data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, using the same residual method as its previous reports on unauthorized immigrants. Unauthorized immigrants include people who either crossed the border illegally or overstayed their visas.

Because these estimates are from a sample, they have margins of error, so some apparent differences in unauthorized immigrant populations between metros or cities may not actually be significantly different. In 150 of the 155 metro areas analyzed, individual metro areas do not differ in rank from those immediately below them. The metro areas that do differ in rank from those immediately below them are New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Washington and San Francisco.

Nationally, unauthorized immigrants made up 3.5% of the total population in 2014. The Philadelphia metro area is the only one of the top 20 metropolitan areas for unauthorized immigrants that had a lower share, the Boston metro area had a roughly equal share and the rest had a higher share than that, including 8.7% in the Houston metro and 8% in the Las Vegas metro.

Unauthorized immigrants account for about one-in-four foreign-born U.S. residents. They make up a somewhat higher share of immigrants in the Houston (37%), Dallas (37%), Atlanta (33%), Phoenix (37%), Las Vegas (35%), Denver (37%) and Austin (34%) metro areas. They make up a somewhat lower share of all immigrants in the New York (19%), Miami (18%), San Francisco (17%) and San Jose (17%) metro areas.



An article by Natalie Johnson titled "Report: Assad Executed Up to 13,000 Syrians in Mass Hangings" was posted at freebeacon.com on Feb. 7, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

President Bashar al-Assad's regime has executed up to 13,000 Syrians through mass hangings at a military jail north of Damascus over a four-year

span as part of the government's crusade to squash dissent, human rights watchdog Amnesty International reported Tuesday.

The report said that between 5,000 and 13,000 Syrians have been executed extrajudicially in this manner starting in September 2011 and continuing through December 2015.

Other detainees at the Sednaya military facility are killed through systematic torture such as severe beatings and sexual violence. Prisoners additionally have been subjected to the deprivation of food, water, and medical supplies with the intention of dehumanizing the prisoners, according to Amnesty International.

The bodies of those killed are later dumped in mass graves located on military land near Damascus. Amnesty International characterized the killings as an "extermination" of political dissidents that has been authorized by the highest levels of the Syrian government.

The human rights group released a report in August finding that Syrian prisons had claimed the lives of more than 17,000 people dating back to the uprising against President Assad beginning in March 2011. The group believes this is a conservative estimate.

The victims were overwhelmingly civilians accused of opposing the Assad regime, according to the report. While some prisoners held in Sednaya were suspected rebels or soldiers who defected from government forces, the majority were "doctors, engineers, protesters" who were "somehow understood to be linked to the revolution," a former prison official said.

Thousands of people detained in the prison were condemned to death through "trials" lasting one to three minutes where victims "confessed" to their crimes while enduring torture.

The report described the process of weekly mass hangings, where prisoners would be rounded up in their cells in groups of up to 50 people in the middle of the night. Prison officials blindfolded the detainees, crammed them into white trucks known as "meat fridges," and told them they were being transferred to a civilian prison.

Instead, detainees endured severe beatings for hours before being taken into a separate room to be executed.

A former military officer who was held in Saydnaya from 2012 to 2013 described standing on his toilet at night to see the execution process.

"The first time I saw them, I was horrified. They were being brought to the slaughterhouse," he said. "But then I also felt happiness—they were coming to be killed, and I felt happy that their suffering would come to an end . . . It was a gift to be killed."



An editorial by Brian Lenney titled "Can You Be An Anti-Illegal Immigration Pro-American Christian?" was posted at townhall.com on Feb. 6, 2017. Following is the article.

(Note: This is the first installment of a two-part series discussing the reconciliation between Christian faith and a pro-security immigration stance.)

If you know a Christian or are one, chances are you've heard or said the following: "The loving or 'Christ-like' thing to do is to let immigrants in, welcome them with open arms, and open our borders. We just need to love people."

I'm all for love—but that's not all I'm for—which puts me at odds with a large swath of American Christians and other religious folks in the United States. I'm talking about those who think that merely adopting "a loving posture" toward immigrants is a magic elixir for what ails us (and them).

This is shallow thinking at best.

And, here's why: it's an oversimplification of a very complex issue. It's something called causal reductionism and is embraced by people who, intentionally or not, are avoiding critical thinking on immigration, American national identity, and national security.

It's easy to reduce everything in the Bible to one thing: love.

But, here's the reality: Jesus said a lot of things. If you're going to stick to one of his teachings, you have to stick to them all to be consistent. He said we should "turn the other cheek," but does that mean we're supposed to turn the other cheek to criminal activity in our own country, state, and even our neighborhood?

Like . . . theft?

Let me break it down further. You've heard the commandment "Thou shalt not steal," and every good Christian boy and girl would say that they agree with it. But the cognitive dissonance drilled into the heads of many Christians in America would have them give criminal behavior a free pass (as long as the criminals come from the Middle East or Mexico).

Because let's face it—most immigrants aren't coming here to assimilate. We're not a melting pot. We're a smorgasbord. If you live in the Southwest you see this when you meet Mexican immigrants who have lived here for decades and still refuse to learn English. When you go to Dearborn, Michigan, you feel like you just stepped into Yemen. And, let's not forget the large Somali population in Minnesota as well as the countless other places in the United States where white Americans aren't welcome.

Our National Identity

What's at stake in the current immigration and refugee debate is our identity as a nation. The integrity of America's borders is important, because our borders draw a line in the sand saying "you're in" or "you're out."

When you're in, you're (supposed to be) one of us. An American.

Immigrants who come here are invited into our "community." As George Washington said, "The establishment of our new Government seemed to be the last great experiment for promoting human happiness." To open our doors to those who want to join our community (like we always have) is the most loving and compassionate thing we can do, which is why we do it.

But, this doesn't mean we should put a "love label" on unchecked immigration and ignore criminal behavior "in Jesus' name." Didn't Saint Paul instruct Christians to ". . . be subject to the governing authorities" in his letter to the Romans? Is that no longer applicable in 2017?

Because if we look through our fingers at illegal immigration and let everyone come in, (like we're seeing all over Europe) the country's identity will begin to change. And it already has. The experiment will fail, and there'll be no happy community to invite people into anymore. At least, not one where they can flourish. Open borders lead to further segmentation of our nation, not unity.

So, how are Christians supposed to think about this?

There's the "just love people" way, but there could be a better way; we seek what's best for America, because if America prospers, the people in America prosper as a result. And, I'm not speaking financially here. We see this paradigm in the Book of Jeremiah. When the Jews were taken captive and brought to Babylon, they didn't segment themselves and hide in the corner, they integrated and became one with the nation they were living in. Even in captivity.

To seek the well-being of Babylon was good for Babylon and for them:

Jeremiah 29:4-7—"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.' "

Now, they could have walled themselves off, refused to integrate, and tried to maintain their "culture" in Babylon, but that isn't what God wanted for them. He wanted them to make the place they were living a better place for everyone there.

But, this isn't what we're seeing in America. We're not seeing people who want to come here, learn English and fit in. In some instances, we're seeing people who are coming here, taking advantage of the American safety net liberals have established, creating mini-nations within our nation, and trampling on the idea of American Exceptionalism.

So to them, I say, stay put.



An editorial by Brian Lenney titled "Should Christians Get on the 'We Welcome Refugees' Bandwagon?" was posted at townhall.com on Feb. 8, 2017. Following is the article.

(Note: This is the second installation of a two-part series.)

In part one of this post, I laid down a foundation for what I hope will spark a meaningful discussion about how Christians should respond to illegal immigration, the refugee crisis, and Trump's policies. This post picks up where I left off.

Let's begin by addressing the whole "God loves refugees!" claim we hear non-stop. First off, I don't disagree with that.

I think it's helpful to remember that we're not God. Let's take one step at a time here. If we can't love the person we see at work every day or the guy at the grocery store begging for change, why on earth do we think we're prepared to care for hundreds of thousands of people from halfway across the world? To truly embrace "loving our neighbor" like Jesus taught, we should start with . . . our actual neighbors!

We've done an awful job at caring for the people who are already here. Our vets quickly come to mind. They're committing suicide in record numbers and make up a large portion of our homeless population. But do they get a march? Are people flooding the streets rioting over our horrible treatment of them? Nope.

So liberals need to quit the virtue signaling and stop pretending they care about people, when they don't pay enough attention to the ones right in front of them. I propose that we start at home before we bring more people in.

Heck, why not encourage our "allies" (gag), the Saudis, to house refugees in their 3-million-person-capacity tent city complete with air conditioning, bathrooms, and kitchens?

It's just sitting there empty. (They only use it 5 days a year.)

Why is America the one being chastised by the world for wanting to shore up our own borders and secure our nation? Why aren't the progressives demonizing neighboring Arab countries?

According to Amnesty International: "Gulf countries including Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain have offered zero resettlement places to Syrian refugees."

But yet nothing from the regressive Left. Well, nothing that makes sense or helps—just name-calling, violence, and rioting. Their hypocritical spokesman Chuck Schumer recently cried about it, even though he advocated for the same thing just two years ago.

Is Chuck right? Is America just a bunch of meanies? Is President Trump pausing immigration from terrorist incubators because he's . . . unkind? Have we

devolved to such a point that progressives think a Tim McGraw song should dictate our national policy?

Being American Means Something

If we let folks in on a permanent basis, they should be let in to become Americans; but are immigrants from the countries that Trump is putting an immigration ban on wanting to blend in here? What do many of them think about Americans? How is the West viewed from the perspective of someone from a country like Iraq (generally speaking)?

Listen to what Steven Gern (a Marine veteran currently working in Iraq) has to say about it. [The website had a link to a video.]

If you look at the U.S. as an overflowing lifeboat with sick, dying, and vulnerable people hanging out over the sides, would adding hundreds of thousands of more people who can't row be the loving thing to do—even if it ends up sinking the whole thing and killing everyone in it?

A lot of Christians in America would say, yes . . . even to their own demise.

Let's go one step further—what if you translate this to your actual house? Do you let anyone just waltz right in, eat your food, sleep in your bed, use your stuff, and take your things? Is that loving toward your family, kids, and spouses? What if they get hurt because of it?

That'd be foolish. Because being part of your family means something. The same principle applies to being an American. It means something.

So, if we become something that we historically have never been (e.g. a socialist nation) what would our culture look like? What would your day-to-day life look like? How would it affect your kids? Your job? Would that new culture be conducive to seeking the peace and prosperity of the nation, or would it make things worse?

That's the question Christians should be asking.

What's an American Christian to Do?

Compassion is a praiseworthy thing, but it doesn't mean that you throw wisdom and prudence out the window to maintain it. It'd be unwise.

Having robust borders around our country and halting immigration from terrorist-friendly nations are good things, because they allow us to keep America free and safe. Mexico does it. The Vatican does it. Israel does it. The White House does it. Everyone with even a hint of common sense knows that fences, walls, and borders (generally) keep bad people out.

If the integrity of our borders and national security are compromised, the freedoms we enjoy will cease too (which, for you Christians reading, allows you to freely and openly proclaim the Gospel without any restraints).

If we lose our culture, we lose our identity. If we go from a shining city on a hill to a struggling lesser-developed country that has nothing to offer the world—everyone everywhere loses.

Reagan understood this well: “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.”

The solution

Securing the borders and putting a process of “extreme vetting” in place is long overdue in America. It ensures that the people here (and the ones we let come here) will have a shot at a good life.

This is how we see God deal with his people of Israel in the Old Testament. They had borders, rules, cultural practices, and laws that set them apart from other nations. They were different. They were sovereign. The national identity of Israel meant something. They had a purpose, and so do we.

If we flush our God-given national sovereignty down the toilet in the name of “love,” we’re flushing ourselves, too. The faulty dilemma that pits love against prudence needs to vanish.

“But Jesus said to love, bro . . .”

Sure he did; but love that negates wisdom isn’t love at all. It’s an imposter.



An article by Stephen Gutowski titled “Gun-Toting Good Samaritan Receives Commendation for Saving Arizona Police Officer” was posted at freebeacon.com on Feb. 7, 2017. Following is the article.

A good Samaritan who saved a police officer by shooting his attacker was honored by the governor of Arizona on Monday.

Gov. Doug Ducey (R.) presented Thomas Yoxall with an official commendation for his actions last month. Yoxall came upon Trooper Ed Andersson on Jan. 12 while he was trying to fight off a man who had already shot him twice and climbed on top of him to beat him. When the assailant refused to comply with Yoxall’s command to stop, Yoxall shot the attacker, killing him.

“Thomas Yoxall showed unbelievable bravery a few weeks ago,” Ducey said in a statement. “Today, we’re proud to honor him. He’s an inspiration.”

“That morning, I never would have dreamt that I was going to save somebody’s life, let alone take the life of another individual,” Yoxall said in a press conference shortly after the shooting. “It is something that will stick with me.

"I don't consider myself a hero. In all honesty, the heroes that day were the first responders who offered aid and comfort to Trooper Andersson, all members of law enforcement that were there on the scene assisting, and on a daily basis, those are the heroes and they always will be."

Ducey praised Yoxall's bravery and thanked him in a series of tweets. "What an example of bravery for all of us," he said. "Thank you, Thomas Yoxall."



An article by Cork Gaines titled "Robert Kraft Says After His Wife Died Trump Called Every Week for a Year to Console Him" was posted at businessinsider.com on Jan. 31, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

The New England Patriots triumvirate of owner Robert Kraft, head coach Bill Belichick, and quarterback Tom Brady have ruffled a few feathers in the heavily Democratic Commonwealth of Massachusetts for their friendship and loyalty to President Donald Trump.

For Kraft especially, the relationship is puzzling to many since Kraft is a life-long democrat and donated to President Barack Obama's campaigns.

While Belichick and Brady have largely stayed mum on the subject, Kraft opened up about his loyalty in an interview with the New York Daily News. Kraft brought up the time his wife died and how Trump was one of the few people who was truly there for him, a time that seemingly cemented Kraft's loyalty to their friendship.

"When Myra died, Melania and Donald came up to the funeral in our synagogue, then they came for memorial week to visit with me," Kraft told the Daily News. "Then he called me once a week for the whole year, the most depressing year of my life when I was down and out. He called me every week to see how I was doing, invited me to things, tried to lift my spirits. He was one of five or six people that were like that. I remember that."

It is hard to hear that story and not understand why their bond goes well beyond politics.



An editorial by Walter Williams titled "Lower Conduct Standards for Liberals" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Jan. 31, 2017. Following is the article.

One can only imagine the widespread media, political and intellectual condemnation of Republicans and conservatives if, after the inauguration of Barack Obama, they had gone on a violent and vicious tear all over the nation as did Democrats and liberals after the inauguration of President Donald

Trump. They committed acts such as assaulting Trump supporters, setting fires and stoning police.

Suppose Republicans/conservatives had carried signs that read "F— Obama" or talked about "blowing up the White House." The news media, instead of calling them protesters, would have labeled them evil racists, obstructionists and everything else except a child of the Lord. The reason for the difference in treatment is simple.

Republicans and conservatives are held—and hold themselves—to higher standards of behavior. By contrast, Democrats and liberals are held—and hold themselves—to less civilized standards of behavior. Let's look at some of the history of conservative and liberal behavior.

One of the nastiest more recent liberal events was the Occupy movement around the nation. During Occupy protests, there were rapes, assaults, robberies and holdups. These people publicly defecated and urinated on police cars.

The mess they left after their demonstrations can be described as no more than a pigsty. Does anybody recall any Democratic official, from the president on down, admonishing them to behave?

Contrast their behavior with that of tea party protesters. Tea partyers didn't set fires, stone police or engage in the other kinds of despicable behavior the liberal Democrats did. On top of that, they left the areas where they protested clean.

Ask yourself whether you have ever seen Republicans/conservatives rioting, turning over police cars, looting, setting places of business on fire and shouting obscenities while marching.

Have you ever seen conservatives marching with chants calling for the murder of police officers? You may have heard liberals yelling, "What do we want? Dead cops! When do we want it? Now!"

In fact, virtually all of the violence against police—whether it's throwing stones, ambushing or murdering—is committed by liberals or people who'd identify as Democrats. The fact of the matter is that if we were to examine criminality in America—whether talking about murderers, muggers or prisoners—it would be dominated by people who would be described as liberals, Democrats and Hillary Clinton supporters.

Democrats and liberals accuse Republicans of conducting a war on women. Assault, rape and murder are the worst things that can be done to a woman. I would bet a lot of money that most of the assaults, rapes and murders of women are done by people who identify as liberals, and if they voted or had a party affiliation, it would be Democratic.

One of the most glaring examples of how liberals are held to lower standards comes when we look at what they control. The nation's most dangerous big cities in 2012 were Detroit, Oakland, St. Louis, Memphis, Stockton, Birmingham, Baltimore, Cleveland, Atlanta and Milwaukee (<http://tinyurl.com/qeusjj4>). The most common characteristic of these cities is that for decades, all of them have been run by Democratic and presumably liberal administrations.

Some cities—such as Detroit, Buffalo, Newark and Philadelphia—haven't elected a Republican mayor for more than a half-century. It's not just personal safety. These Democratic-controlled cities have the poorest-quality public education despite the fact that they have large and growing school budgets.

Most of these dangerous cities have suffered massive decreases in population. Some observers have suggested that racism has caused white flight to the suburbs. But these observers ignore the fact that black flight has become increasingly significant. It turns out that black people do not like to be mugged and live in unsafe neighborhoods any more than white people.

Republicans and conservatives, including President Trump, should not gripe or whine about different treatment by the liberal media. Magnanimity commands that we have compassion and try to understand our fallen brethren. We should make every effort to sell them on the moral superiority of personal liberty and its main ingredient—limited government.



A video and an article by Randy Hall titled "Whoopi Goldberg to Rioting Berkeley Protesters: 'You're Not Helping!'" were posted at newsbusters.org on Feb. 3, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

During Thursday's [Feb. 2] episode of ABC's The View program, liberal host Whoopi Goldberg had strong words for the protesters who rioted at the University of California-Berkeley the night before and forced invited guest speaker and Breitbart.com Editor Milo Yiannopoulos to cancel his speech before being escorted to safety off campus.

"You know, I can't say this strongly enough," Goldberg stated. "You can protest any speaker you want to. But the minute you get violent . . . you say you're protesting because you want to protect people and stuff and then you go and burn people's stuff? What the hell, man?"

Referring to the rumor that outside agitators had provoked the violence, the comedienne then noted: "Whoever it is, it all happened in Berkeley. You can protest and say 'We don't want this speaker.'"

"Don't go hear him because the problem with you saying 'Stop. This person can't come' is the person you want to come then will be stopped by somebody else," she added.

Fellow panelist Sarah Haines asked: "Wasn't it Martin Luther King that always talked about when you get violent, you betray the message of what you're trying to say? You lose your power."

"You lose all your power," Goldberg asserted.



An editorial by Jonah Goldberg titled “The Right Can’t Defend Trump’s Behavior” was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Feb. 9, 2017. Following is the article.

By now you may have noticed the difficulty many conservatives have defending everything President Trump does and says. I’m not just referring to the big policy moves, most of which conservatives can support fairly easily (so far). I mean the whole whiplash-inducing spectacle: the unfiltered, impulsive tweeting, bizarre interview non sequiturs, glib insults and distractions.

If you honestly have no idea what I’m talking about, you may need to be de-programmed from a personality cult. But for example: over the weekend, Donald Trump questioned the legitimacy of what he described as a “so-called judge” and suggested—again—that America has no right to judge Vladimir Putin’s Russia given all the killing America has done. Other examples might include recent controversies over everything from inaugural crowd sizes to Arnold Schwarzenegger’s ratings on “The Apprentice.”

It’s been interesting to see how various Republican leaders respond to Trump Unfiltered. Sometimes they’ll simply say they’re not going to respond to every distraction emanating from the president’s mouth or Twitter feed. Others fall back on saying the president is “unconventional” in the way he communicates, so get over it.

This is a particularly popular talking point among his talk radio and cable TV boosters. It’s almost as popular as attacking the mainstream media’s very real double standard toward Trump and Obama.

Vice President Mike Pence has taken the “unconventional” defense to an art form. When asked about the “so-called” judge controversy by NBC’s Chuck Todd, Pence replied, “I think people find it very refreshing that they not only understand this president’s mind but they understand how he feels about things. He expresses himself in a unique way.” Political consultant Alex Castellanos, a Trump enthusiast, went so far as to suggest that, “Donald Trump’s unpredictability is a form of deterrence. It keeps bad people a step back.”

Recently a new defense has sprouted up: Trump promised to take “action” and action is what they’re getting. Yet another is to defend President Trump’s “right” to say something. “Every president has a right to be critical of the other branches of the federal government,” Pence said on CBS’s Face the Nation. Perhaps my favorite is to magically define-away any problems. “By definition, whatever he does is presidential, it’s just a new presidential,” Newt Gingrich recently explained. “So the new presidential tweets. That doesn’t mean he has to give up tweeting and start writing in longhand with a quill pen to think he’s presidential.”

But if you look closely, you’ll see that all of these defenses are not actually, well, defenses. The issue with Trump’s Twitter account isn’t the medium, but the message. If he took to skywriting, and blazed Bring Me The Head of Alfredo Garcia across the Washington sky, going out and saying, “He’s got an unconventional way of communicating” wouldn’t quite add up to a defense, now would it?

But the more worrisome defense is the one that I fear is coming—and I hear on social media all the time. Just trust him. He knows things we don't. He is playing chess and everyone is playing checkers. He won the primaries relying on his judgment, and we should have confidence he knows what he's doing. Place your faith in him. Or, as Ann Coulter puts it, "In Trump We Trust."

This sort of thing was creepy when Demi Moore proclaimed, "I pledge to be a servant of our president" at the beginning of the Obama administration. And it's creepy now. A staple tenet of modern conservatism—and to a lesser extent Americanism rightly understood—is skepticism for all politicians. As James Madison said, "The truth is that all men having power ought to be mistrusted."

What worries me about the nascent Trump administration is that he is making it difficult to defend Trump on the merits. Again, this isn't specifically a point about substance, but process. Trump's impulsively glandular style of governing and communicating frequently leaves his staff and surrogates guessing what he will do next and at a loss as to how to defend his statements. Numerous times he has undermined or contradicted his own supporters and spokesmen, particularly Sean Spicer.

When a political leader replaces fixed principles and clear ideological platforms with his own instincts and judgment, he gives his supporters no substantive arguments to rely on. Eventually, the argument to just say "Have faith" in our leader, he knows best, is the only safe harbor.

And that's not what conservatism is about—nor, for that matter, democracy.



An editorial by Cal Thomas titled "Be Careful What You Wish For" was posted at townhall.com on Feb. 7, 2017. Following is the article.

At the National Prayer Breakfast last week, President Trump promised to "totally destroy" the so-called "Johnson Amendment," a law that prohibits churches from endorsing or opposing political candidates at the risk of losing their tax-exempt status.

Politifact.com gives the background on how the amendment became law: "The restriction was championed by (Lyndon Johnson) in 1954 when Johnson was a U.S. senator running for re-election. A conservative nonprofit group that wanted to limit the treaty-making ability of the president produced material that called for electing his primary opponent, millionaire rancher-oilman Dudley Dougherty, and defeating Johnson. There was no church involved.

"Johnson, then Democratic minority leader, responded by introducing an amendment to Section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code dealing with tax-exempt charitable organizations, including groups organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literacy and educational purpos-

es, or to prevent cruelty to children or animals. It said, in effect, that if you want to be absolved from paying taxes, you couldn't be involved in partisan politics."

Conservatives have argued that the Johnson Amendment limits the free speech of pastors and ignores the history of the nation. They also claim the law is applied unevenly, especially when it comes to African-American churches, which have a long history of inviting mostly Democratic political candidates to speak in their churches and on occasion endorsing them without having their tax-exempt status challenged by the IRS.

Opponents of the amendment have a point, but there is a larger one. From the founding of the nation, through the Civil War when fiery pro- and anti-slavery sermons were heard from pulpits, to Prohibition, to contemporary examples, the ordained have played active roles in the nation's political and social life. Pastors should be as free as anyone to speak their minds on political issues, but should they do so from the pulpit? By focusing more on the temporal than the eternal there is the risk of diluting the power in their primary message.

There are legitimate concerns that government is not sufficiently protecting people whose consciences forbid them from participating in activities they consider immoral. Recent examples include lawsuits against Christian bakers and photographers who have refused service to people whose lifestyles offend their beliefs. The Obama administration ordered The Little Sisters of the Poor to provide contraceptives to staff members as part of their health insurance in contravention of Catholic teaching.

The subtle temptation for evangelicals to engage in partisan politics dilutes their primary message. If I go to a political rally, I expect to hear political speeches. When I go to church, I am expecting soul food.

Many political views are represented in my church. If the pastor began preaching on politics he would find people, including me, headed for the exits. There is also the presumption that people are uninformed, needing a pastor to tell them what to think. This is as silly as the notion that conservatives listen to Rush Limbaugh in order to know what to believe.

Yes, Congress should repeal the law prohibiting preachers from talking about politics from the pulpit while passing a new law protecting the consciences of believers. The larger question is: should preachers preach on politics and to what end?

Muslims would have to be included. How comfortable would those conservatives now campaigning for repeal of the Johnson law be if some imams began preaching death to America and endorsing Muslim candidates for political office? Would the repeal lead to activist mosques supporting terrorist groups? It's already happened in the Holy Land Foundation case where the government alleged money passed through the charity to support Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization.

Whether the Johnson law is repealed, or not, evangelicals have a more powerful message than partisan politics. Senate Chaplain Barry Black referenced that power by quoting from an old hymn at last Thursday's prayer breakfast: "My hope

is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly loan on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand." He said that includes government institutions.

Isn't that a better message for conservative Christians to preach than the sinking sand of partisan politics?



An editorial by Thomas Sowell titled "Education at a Crossroad" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Feb. 4, 2017. Following is the article.

In just a matter of days—perhaps next Monday—a decision will be made in Washington affecting the futures of millions of children in low-income communities, and in the very troubled area of race relations in America.

An opportunity has arisen—belatedly—that may not come again in this generation. That is an opportunity to greatly expand the kinds of schools that have successfully educated, to a high level, inner-city youngsters whom the great bulk of public schools fail to educate to even minimally adequate levels.

What may seem on the surface to be merely a matter of whether the U.S. Senate confirms or rejects the nomination of Betsy DeVos to be head of the U.S. Department of Education involves far bigger stakes.

The teachers' unions and the education establishment in general know how big those stakes are, and have mounted an all-out smear campaign to prevent her from being confirmed.

What makes Mrs. DeVos seem so threatening to the teachers' unions and their political allies?

She has, for more than 20 years, been promoting programs, laws and policies that enable parents to choose which schools their children will attend—whether these are charter schools, voucher schools or parochial schools.

Some of these charter schools—especially those in the chain of the Success Academy schools and the chain of the KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) schools—operate in low-income, minority neighborhoods in the inner-cities, and turn out graduates who can match the educational performances of students in affluent suburbs. What is even more remarkable, these charter schools are often housed in the very same buildings, in the very same ghettos, where students in the regular public schools fail to learn even the basics in English or math.

You and I may think this is great. But, to the teachers' unions, such charter schools are a major threat to their members' jobs—and ultimately to the unions' power or existence.

If parents have a choice of where to send their children, many of those parents are not likely to send them to failing public schools, when there are

alternative schools available that equip those youngsters with an education that can open the way to a far better future for them.

Already there are tens of thousands of children on waiting lists to get into charter schools, just in New York alone. Those waiting lists are a clear threat to teachers' unions, whose leaders think schools exist to provide guaranteed jobs for their members.

Mrs. DeVos has shown for more than 20 years that she thinks schools exist to educate children. One of the biggest complaints about her is that, unlike Secretaries of Education before her, she does not come out of the government's education establishment. Considering what a miserable job that establishment has done, especially in inner-city schools, her independence is a plus.

Teachers' unions have fought for years to prevent charter schools from being created. Now that such schools have been created, and there are now huge waiting lists, the teachers' unions have gotten politicians to put a numerical cap on the number of such schools, regardless of how large the waiting lists are.

Desperate attempts to smear Betsy DeVos, in order to prevent her from being confirmed as Secretary of Education, have not let the facts get in the way.

She is accused of "steering public dollars away from traditional public schools." But nobody can steer anything anywhere, when it is individual parents who make the decisions as to where they want their children educated. The money follows the children.

Neither the money nor the children get steered by education bureaucrats, as happens with traditional public schools.

If charter schools educate one-third of the students in a district, and get one-third of the money, how does that reduce the amount of money per child in the public school? Actually, charter schools usually get less money per student, but produce better results.

American education is at a crossroads. If the teachers' unions and their allies can defeat the nomination of Mrs. DeVos, and the Republicans substitute someone else more acceptable to the education establishment, a historic opportunity will be lost, and may never come again in this generation.



An editorial by Thomas Sowell titled "Education at a Crossroads: Part II" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Feb. 4, 2017. Following is the article.

One of the painful realities of our time is that most public schools in most low-income, inner-city neighborhoods produce educational outcomes that are far below the outcomes in other neighborhoods, and especially in more affluent neighborhoods.

Attempts to assign blame are too numerous to name, much less explore. But as someone who has, for more than 40 years, been researching those particular minority schools that have been successful, I am struck both by their success and by how varied are the ways that success has been achieved.

In doing research for a 1976 article, "Patterns of Black Excellence," I discovered that the educational methods used to educate low-income, minority children in successful schools ranged from very traditional and strict methods in some parochial schools to very different approaches in other schools.

One of the most successful schools I visited was in an aging building in a run-down ghetto neighborhood in New York, where a friend told me that I was "brave"—he meant foolhardy—to park a car.

Instead of being given a guided tour of the school, as happens in too many other places, the principal simply walked with me down the corridors on each floor, and let me decide which classroom door I wanted to open and go in.

Wherever we went in, the class in progress was clearly one where children were learning, were well-behaved, and were saying intelligent things in plain English. They were doing work that was either at their grade level or somewhat above their grade level.

Yet most of these kids were looked like kids you can see in any ghetto across the country. Most were from families whose incomes were low enough for their children to qualify for free or subsidized lunches in school.

After a day spent observing the classes, and later examining the statistics on their outstanding performances on various tests, I was moved to the verge of tears as I left. Why couldn't this be done in many other schools?

One reason was that this principal did not follow the rigid dogmas imposed by the educational establishment, but used whatever ways of teaching produced good results. That makes waves. There were attempts to get him removed as principal.

Nor was he the only successful educator to come under fire from the educational establishment.

In California, high school teacher Jaime Escalante taught calculus so successfully in a predominantly Latino school that, at one time, something like one-fourth of all Latino students who passed the AP Calculus test—in the entire country—came from the school where he taught.

Like other highly successful educators, especially in places where failure is the norm, Escalante was controversial within the education establishment. The teachers' union demanded that his large math class be reduced in size. He ended up leaving that high school to go teach elsewhere.

When Marva Collins was a public school teacher who came to work early to help some of her students, and who used teaching methods that differed from what education schools and education bureaucrats prescribed, she likewise came under fire.

She left and created her own school in a Chicago black neighborhood. This was done with little money and initially with old textbooks discarded by the public school system. Her success was striking enough for her to be offered an opportunity to be nominated to be Secretary of Education.

After much soul-searching, Marva Collins declined the offer. It was probably just as well. She could run her own school in Chicago as she wished. In Washington, the political jungle was another story.

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that Betsy DeVos, who has for more than 20 years been promoting parental choice in the schools their children attend, has come under heavy fire from the educational establishment.

If she becomes Secretary of Education, the stranglehold of the teachers' unions and the educational bureaucracy on the education of millions of students will be in jeopardy. If her nomination is rejected, millions of children from low-income, inner-city families will lose a chance to escape a painfully failing system.



An article by Christine Rousselle titled "These People Were Thrilled When Harry Reid Killed the Filibuster; Now, They're Angry DeVos was Confirmed" was posted at townhall.com on Feb. 7, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Back in November of 2013, then Sen. Harry Reid effectively killed the filibuster for federal appointments, meaning that only a simple majority was needed to confirm an appointment. Reid even gloated about it on Twitter, saying that filibuster reform "had to be done."

At the time, scores of progressives were utterly tickled by him and were thrilled at his actions.

Now, those very same people may want to take back their praise of Reid's filibuster reform. Namely, because it resulted in Betsy DeVos being confirmed as Education Secretary.

Be careful what you wish for!



An article by Leah Barkoukis titled "Krauthammer: We All Need to Be Thanking Harry Reid for Gorsuch" was posted at townhall.com on Feb. 3, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

When Harry Reid finally left Congress, conservatives rejoiced that his contemptible tenure in Washington, marked by extreme partisanship and baseless slanders, had finally come to an end. And while it's hard to find much to be thankful for about the Nevada senator, writing in the editorial pages of The

Washington Post Friday [Feb. 3], syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer says there is one thing: Judge Neil Gorsuch.

Yes, Hillary Clinton's defeat in the 2016 election clearly played a huge role, as did Sen. Mitch McConnell's refusal to move on Obama's SCOTUS nominee—but it's Reid that conservatives ought to be most thankful for, he says.

Krauthammer: "God bless Harry Reid. It's because of him that Gorsuch is guaranteed elevation to the court. In 2013, as Senate majority leader, Reid blew up the joint. He abolished the filibuster for federal appointments both executive (such as Cabinet) and judicial, for all district and circuit court judge-ships (excluding only the Supreme Court). Thus unencumbered, the Democratic-controlled Senate packed the lower courts with Obama nominees.

"Reid was warned that the day would come when Republicans would be in the majority and would exploit the new rules to equal and opposite effect. That day is here.

"The result is striking. Trump's Cabinet appointments are essentially unstoppable because Republicans need only 51 votes and they have 52. They have no need to reach 60, the number required to overcome a filibuster. Democrats are powerless to stop anyone on their own.

"And equally powerless to stop Gorsuch. But isn't the filibuster for Supreme Court nominees still standing? Yes, but if the Democrats dare try it, everyone knows that Majority Leader McConnell will do exactly what Reid did and invoke the nuclear option—filibuster abolition—for the Supreme Court, too.

"Reid never fully appreciated the magnitude of his crime against the Senate. As I wrote at the time, the offense was not abolishing the filibuster—you can argue that issue either way—but that he did it by simple majority."

Reid's lack of foresight—something many of his Democratic colleagues warned him about—is Republicans' gain for now.



An article by Katie Pavlich titled "Uh Oh: Schumer Voted for Gorsuch in 2006 (And a Bunch of Other Democrats Did Too)" was posted at townhall.com on Feb. 1, 2017. Following is the article.

Democrats are preparing for all out war against President Trump's Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch and Minority Leader Chuck Schumer is leading the way.

On Monday, before anyone knew who Trump would choose, Democrats vowed to put up a fight. Last night protestors swarmed the steps of the Supreme Court in Washington D.C. with fill in the blank signs, proving opposition was inevitable no matter who Trump chose.

But in their extreme opposition, Senate Democrats' are already losing any credibility they had left on the issue.

When Gorsuch was nominated to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals by President George W. Bush in 2006, he was confirmed unanimously 95-0 in the Senate. Chuck Schumer, along with Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Joe Biden and a number of other Democrats in the Senate, voted in approval.

Former

- Barack Obama—D-IL
- Joe Biden—D-DE
- John Kerry—D-MA
- Hillary Clinton—D-NY

Current

- Patrick Leahy—D-VT
- Dianne Feinstein—D-CA
- Patty Murray—D-WA
- Ron Wyden—D-OR
- Richard Durbin—D-IL
- Jack Reed—D-RI
- Chuck Schumer—D-NY
- Bill Nelson—D-FL
- Tom Carper—D-DE
- Debbie Stabenow—D-MI
- Maria Cantwell—D-WA
- Bob Menendez—D-NJ

Based on the current Republican majority and former Senator Harry Reid's decision to nuke the filibuster, Gorsuch will get confirmed with or without Democrat support. Whether Democrats will maintain any political capital at the end of this fight is another story.



An article by Brent Scher titled "Dem Leader Chuck Schumer Given 'Porker of the Year' Award from Gov Waste Watchdog" was posted at freebeacon.com on Feb. 7, 2017. Following is the article.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.) was awarded the title of 2016 Porker of the Year after he pulled away from five fellow wasteful congressman in a poll conducted by Citizens Against Government Waste, a government spending watchdog group.

Schumer was highlighted by the group for his work on supporting the policy of making “debt free” college for all college students.

“The top spot goes to Sen. Chuck Schumer, for his complete lack of understanding of the student loan bubble and promoting policies that would worsen the current crisis,” wrote CAGW in a release. “That is why taxpayers named him the 2016 Porker of the Year.”

The group says that Schumer’s proposed legislation would “exacerbate rather than resolve the student loan crisis.”



An article by Susan Jones titled “Warren Falsely Claims That Republicans ‘Silenced Mrs. King’s Voice on the Senate Floor’ ” was posted at cnsnews.com on Feb. 8, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

A liberal advocacy group is already fund-raising off Tuesday’s Elizabeth Warren kerfuffle, urging fellow Democrats, “Let’s turn this outrage into a fiasco for the GOP.”

Warren had been speaking on the Senate floor for more than 45 minutes Tuesday night—and she had already been warned once—when Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) invoked Senate rule 19 to shut her down.

Sen. Warren was actually quoting the words of Coretta Scott King, who wrote a letter 30 years ago objecting to Sessions’ nomination to a federal court.

She had already finished reading King’s letter in its entirety—and had been warned once before about Senate rules—when McConnell interrupted her again.

After she’d been silenced, Warren falsely claimed that Sen. McConnell had “silenced Mrs King’s voice on the Sen floor.”

In fact, Warren read King’s very long letter in its entirety, and she had moved on to other complaints when she was finally interrupted by McConnell and asked to take her seat.



An article by Susan Jones titled “Sen. Tim Scott: ‘True Violation of Rule 19’ Were the Remarks Originally Stated by Sen. Kennedy” was posted at cnsnews.com on Feb. 9, 2017. Following is the article.

“Love trumps hate,” as some liberals like to say.

But that sentiment was nowhere in evidence on Tuesday night, when a white liberal from the Northeast dragged the name of Sen. Jeff Sessions though the mud, violating Senate rules in the process.

One day later, a black conservative from the South stood on the Senate floor to reflect on “what occurred last night.”

“First, there is no doubt in my mind that the letter written by Coretta Scott King could and perhaps should be read by each and every member of this chamber,” Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) said. “Regardless of if you disagree with her conclusions, her standing in the history of our nation means her voice should be heard.

“What I took issue with last night—and the true violation of Rule 19, in my eyes—were the remarks shared last night, originally stated by Sen. Kennedy—not Coretta Scott King.”

(In her attempt to portray Sen. Sessions as a hateful racist, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) quoted Sen. Ted Kennedy as saying 30 years ago: “Mr. Sessions is a throwback to a shameful era, which I know both black and white Americans thought was in our past. It is inconceivable to me that a person of this attitude is qualified to be a U.S. attorney, let alone a U.S. federal judge. He is, I believe, a disgrace to the Justice Department, and he should withdraw his nomination and resign his position.’ Those were the words of Sen. Ted Kennedy, and I will stand with Sen. Kennedy,” Warren added.)

“Whether you like it or not, this body has rules,” Sen. Scott said on Wednesday, “and we all should govern ourselves according to the rules.

“Last night, there’s no doubt that emotions were very high. And I’m not necessarily happy with where that has left us today. The Senate needs to function. We need to have a comity in this body if we are to work for the American people.

“This should not be about Republicans and Democrats. It’s not about us. It’s about the American people. And if we remember that point as we move forward, our nation will be able to heal where we hurt. We’ll be able to disagree without being disagreeable. This should be the norm. Not a unique experience in public discourse.”

Sen. Scott spent the rest of his speech explaining the discrimination he faces, not necessarily for being black, but for being conservative. He even read aloud some of the hateful messages that have come into his office because of his support for Sen. Sessions.

Scott explained why he supports Sen. Jeff Sessions for attorney general—based not on newspaper accounts, but “by calling folks in Alabama.”

“I wanted to know firsthand how he was before he was nominated and how he would respond in a room full of African American leaders,” Scott said.

“So I brought Jeff Sessions down, to see from a distance how he interacts with these African American pastors and hear the tough questions . . . and other issues so I could have an appreciation and affinity for how the Justice Department under his leadership would act.

“I take this responsibility seriously, and I wonder if my friends in the chamber have had a chance to see what others think. Not the political echo chamber, not the organizations, but run-of-the-mill people.”

Scott also spent some recounting Sessions’ support for civil rights legislation and black political figures, finally announcing that he would vote to confirm Sessions—and “hold him accountable” if and when they disagree.



Isaiah 55:6-11—“Seek you the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”