

Eye on the World

Sept. 2, 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 September 2, 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).



A Reuters article by Ali Swafta and Dan Williams titled “Palestinians Vie With Israel Over Muslim Pilgrims to Jerusalem” was posted at reuters.com on Aug. 31, 2017. Following is the article.

On any given day, Muslim pilgrims arrive at a Middle East airport on a journey to one of Islam’s holiest sites.

At Tel Aviv’s Ben Gurion Airport, they rub shoulders with larger groups of visitors—diaspora Jews and Christian tourists—many of them headed for the same destination, a 45-minute drive away: the sacred city of Jerusalem.

The Muslims are only a small part of the Holy Land’s religious tourism market. But both Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the occupied West Bank are vying for their business.

They come mainly to pray at Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa mosque, in a compound that is one of the world’s most contested and volatile holy sites. Al-Aqsa is the most important shrine in Islam after Saudi Arabia’s Mecca and Medina, but less of a draw for foreign Muslims, many of whose countries spurn Israel or its claim of sovereignty over the eastern sector of Jerusalem, captured in the 1967 war.

Israel's Tourism Ministry recorded 115,000 Muslim tourists in 2016—3 percent of the 3.8 million foreigners who arrived at its airports or land borders it controls with Jordan and Egypt.

Half of these Muslim tourists identified as pilgrims, the ministry said. Most of them—around 100,000—came from Turkey, which recognizes Israel. But there were also some from Indonesia and Malaysia, which do not, and whose citizens Israel admits under special provisions for pilgrims.

Each Muslim tourist spends an average of \$1,133 on the trip, the Israeli ministry said. Palestinians fret that too much of that goes to Israel and want the tourists to opt for alternative Palestinian venues in Jerusalem or the West Bank.

"We have been conducting a campaign to introduce Turkish tourist companies to Palestinian hotels in Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, and we have started to see many of them booking their rooms in these hotels," said Jereyes Qumseyah, spokesman for the Palestinian Tourism Ministry.

He said the Palestinians have permanent displays at major tourism conferences in Turkey.

The Palestinian ministry offered no statistics on the scope of foreign tourism to the West Bank and East Jerusalem. But Qumseyah said Palestinians are also enjoying "big success" in teaming up their tour companies with counterparts in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Arab world so to draw more pilgrims.

Politics and Religion

Beyond the economic benefits, Palestinians see such visits as cementing pan-Islamic sympathy for their goal of establishing a state with East Jerusalem—whose walled Old City is dominated by Al-Aqsa and the gilded Dome of the Rock—as their capital.

To that end, Palestinian religious authorities dispute an edict by Youssef Al-Qaradawi of Egypt, Sunni Islam's top cleric, that non-Palestinian Muslims should not go to Jerusalem lest they be perceived as validating Israeli rule.

Even for Palestinians, access is not a given: Since their 2000 uprising against Israel, it has routinely restricted their travel to Jerusalem from the West Bank and imposed a tighter clampdown on the Gaza Strip, which is under Islamist Hamas rule.

Still, the senior Palestinian cleric, Grand Mufti Mohammad Hussein, sounded cautiously optimistic about foreign pilgrims.

"An increasing number of Muslims are visiting Al-Aqsa. Maybe the numbers are not as high as we had hoped, but we hope they will increase in days to come," he told Reuters.

One British pilgrim, Adeel Sadiq, came to Al-Aqsa this week with 15 fellow Britons. "We want to show our support to the people here, that you are not alone and Al Masjed Al Aqsa (Al-Aqsa mosque) is for all Muslims," he told a Palestinian reporter.

Israel has no counter-campaign aimed at attracting Muslim pilgrims. The Israeli Tourism Ministry said its marketing budget is allocated to countries in North and South America, Europe and the Far East and Russia, and does not include Turkey.

At the height of tensions in Jerusalem last month over Israeli controls on access to Al-Aqsa, Turkey's Islamist-rooted president, Tayyip Erdogan, urged his compatriots to flock there in solidarity with the Palestinians.

The general manager of Turkish Airlines followed up with an ad offering \$159 round-trip flights to "Jerusalem"—though in fact the planes land at Ben Gurion. Israel's envoy to Ankara, Eitan Na'eh, tweeted in turn: "We will always be glad to warmly welcome Turkish tourists to Israel and our capital Jerusalem."



An article by Kate Shellnutt titled "Prayer Vigil Buried by Sierra Leone Mudslide That Killed 1,000" was posted at christianitytoday.com on Aug. 31, 2017. Following is the article.

Christians in Sierra Leone are still reeling and recovering from the worst flooding their West African nation has faced in recent memory, after a mudslide covered homes and churches on the outskirts of the capital city two weeks ago.

More than 150 Christians lost their lives and hundreds more have been wounded or displaced in the disaster; the total death toll has surpassed 1,000. This week, bodies swept away by the floods washed up as far away as Guinea, 90 miles up the coast from Freetown.

While most in the mountainside town of Regent were sleeping when the mudslide hit, Power of Praise Ministry was holding an all-night prayer vigil. Pastor David S. Dumbuya, his wife, and his children died. One survivor told the *Daily Telegraph* that he lost 13 of his relatives who attended the event.

"Everybody died. It covered the whole church," said Saidu Kanu, World Hope International's country director in Sierra Leone.

Further downhill, the floods landed on the western and central parts of the capital, where the majority of Freetown's Baptist churches are located, according to the Baptist World Alliance.

Samuel Conteh, a leader with the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone, reported that Bethany Baptist Church lost 60 members, making it one of the hardest-hit congregations reported so far. (Regent, alongside Mount Sugar Loaf, also happens to be home to the first Baptist church in Africa, founded in 1792 by a formerly enslaved African American who migrated there.)

Several other churches, including fellow Baptist and Pentecostal churches, have death tolls in the dozens, according to Jonathan Titus-Williams, gener-

al secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone. Many more believers lost their homes in the disaster.

Christians, who make up just 20 percent of the population in the majority-Muslim nation of approximately 7 million people, have led efforts to minister to victims and mourn the dead.

Evangelical and Pentecostal leaders orchestrated a period of fasting, followed by a citywide prayer event during the week following the mudslide, with as many as 300 victims buried in a single day, Titus-Williams said. The Council of Churches of Sierra Leone held an ecumenical service at the mudslide site last weekend.

Churches continued to meet for weekly worship on Sunday, though Freetown was still at risk of further flooding, particularly in its slums, Kanu said.

Nearly everyone has been impacted by the disaster and the efforts at recovery, as NGOs rally to care for victims and volunteers in the community skip work to help with the cleanup. World Hope's focus has been on protecting children who were victims of the mudslide, making sure they have access to social workers and trauma counseling. "It's a highly traumatic situation. Some of have lost whole families," Kanu said.

The massive mudslide comes just a couple years after Sierra Leone's Ebola outbreak, and some families have lost loved ones in both.

"Enough is enough," United Methodist bishop John Yambasu prayed as he visited the mudslide site with fellow pastors. "Have mercy Papa God; have mercy upon this nation."

Bishop emeritus Arnold Temple, a fellow Methodist (the largest Protestant group in Sierra Leone), challenged whether more could be done to mitigate the disaster. Some environmental groups suggested that deforestation and unregulated, sloppy construction alongside the mountain increased the risk of a mudslide.

"It may well be over 1,000 Sierra Leoneans we are mourning now. But why should about 1,000 of our compatriots' lives end tragically like this?" Temple preached from a church near Regent. "Who should we really blame? We are bound at a point in the blame game to attribute the blame so that corrective measures can be put in place so that never again should we allow this to happen."

Meanwhile, major cities around the globe have also been swamped by recent flooding, including Hurricane Harvey in Houston and a deadly monsoon in Southeast Asia.



An article by Kevin Sullivan, Arelis R. Hernandez and David A. Fahrenthold titled "Harvey Leaving Record Rainfall, at Least 22 Deaths Behind in Houston" was posted at chicagotribune.com on Aug. 29, 2017. Following is the article.

The biggest rainstorm in the history of the continental United States finally began to move away from Houston on Tuesday, as the remnants of Hurricane Harvey and its endless, merciless rain bands spun east to menace Louisiana instead.

But, after more than 50 inches of rain over four days, Houston was less of a city and more of an archipelago: a chain of urbanized islands in a muddy brown sea. All around it, flat-bottomed boats and helicopters were still plucking victims from rooftops, and water was still pouring in from overfilled reservoirs and swollen rivers.

Between 25 and 30 percent of Harris County—home to 4.5 million people in Houston and its near suburbs—was flooded by Tuesday afternoon, according to an estimate from Jeff Lindner, a meteorologist with the county flood control district. That's at least 444 square miles, an area six times the size of the District of Columbia.

Authorities added that there had been reports of people impersonating law enforcement officers in communities such as Kingwood, falsely telling people they needed to evacuate.

On Tuesday morning authorities discovered the body of a Houston police officer who had drowned in his patrol car two days earlier, at the storm's height. Sergeant Steve Perez, a veteran officer, was on his way to work on Sunday morning—spending two and a half hours looking for a path through rain-lashed streets—when he drove into a flooded underpass.

Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo said that Perez's wife had asked him not to go in that day. He went, Acevedo said, "because he has that in his DNA."

In all, authorities said at least 22 people had been confirmed dead from the storm. But they said it was difficult to know how many more were missing. They also said it is too early to assess the total number of homes and other buildings damaged, in part because rescue crews were still having trouble even reaching some areas because of flooded or flood-damaged roads, said Francisco Sanchez, spokesman for the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

"We're still in the middle of the response," he said.

Authorities said more than 13,000 people had been rescued from floodwaters, according to the Associated Press, but that number was surely low. Many had been rescued by strangers with boats, who had rescued so many that they themselves had lost count. They left behind homes that could be flooded for days, or weeks, and perhaps lost forever.

Harvey made landfall Aug. 25, 2017, near Corpus Christi, Texas, as a Category 4 hurricane, bringing 130 mph sustained winds and driving rains and left devastating floods in its wake.

Officials said more than 13,300 people were already in shelters. Federal authorities estimated that 30,000 people could be forced from their homes in Texas and surrounding states.

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All around Houston on Tuesday, the helping and the helpless repeated the same thing.

This doesn't happen here.

"I've lived here since 1994, and it's never been this high," said Bonnie McKenna, a retired flight attendant living in Kingwood, along the raging San Jacinto River on Houston's northeast side.

McKenna's house was dry, but down the street rescue boats were unloading neighbors rescued from flooded streets nearby. McKenna didn't have a boat.

But she did have a blanket.

She cut it into quarters, and offered them to soggy evacuees when they got off on dry land.

"I'm thankful it didn't come to my house, but I'm very sad for the people who have just lost everything," McKenna said.

President Donald Trump flew to Texas on Tuesday, and he visited both Corpus Christi—near where the storm made landfall—and state officials in Austin. At one point, he shouted a message to a crowd outside a fire station in Corpus Christi.

"This is historic, it's epic what happened. But you know what, it happened in Texas and Texas can handle anything," he told the crowd, which applauded his remarks and cheered more loudly when he waved the Texas state flag.

The Department of Labor on Tuesday announced that it had approved an initial \$10 million grant to help with cleanup efforts in Texas. Trump on Monday declared "emergency conditions" in Louisiana, where the storm was headed next.

Before Harvey struck this weekend, the biggest recorded rainstorm in the continental U.S. had been Tropical Storm Amelia, which dumped 48 inches on Texas in 1978 (even larger storms have been recorded in Hawaii).

Harvey—which drifted out of the jet stream and spun around Houston like a top—smashed the record. By Tuesday afternoon, a rain gauge near Mont Belvieu, 40 miles east of Houston, had recorded 51.9 inches of rain.

Over Harris County alone, Lindner estimated that more than a trillion gallons of rain fell. That was like letting Niagara Falls run full-blast onto Houston for 15 days straight.

The water rushed off the concrete of the expanding city, and overwhelmed the meandering bayous that were its natural path to the sea. The hardest-hit areas were often in the south and southeast, the downstream end of the waterways.

But the water was everywhere: a map of flooded streets, compiled by the Houston Chronicle, showed a city dotted with blue. There were concentrations to the west

of the city, too, where water had filled up two enormous upstream reservoirs, named Addicks and Barker, that were built to shield the city from floods like this.

Officials released water from those reservoirs to ease the pressure, but at least one of the reservoirs still overtopped its banks. More than 3,000 homes were flooded around the reservoirs.

They may remain flooded for some time. The Army Corps of Engineers said it would continue to release water from the reservoirs for weeks, to make room in case another rain comes.

"We're still in tropical storm season," said Edmond Russo, an official with the Corps of Engineers.

Across Texas, the storm has shut down 14 oil refineries, causing damage at some that released harmful chemicals.

In Crosby, Texas, a fertilizer plant was in critical condition Tuesday night after its refrigeration system and inundated backup power generators failed, raising the possibility that the volatile chemicals on the site would explode.

Arkema, a maker of organic peroxides, evacuated all the personnel from the plant and was attempting to operate the facility remotely. The material must be kept at low temperatures to avoid combustion.

Around the city, schools and universities were closed, with some unable to say when they would reopen.

The George R. Brown Convention Center downtown had taken in 10,000 people as of Tuesday morning, said Turner. That number is double the center's anticipated capacity of 5,000.

The convention center is the landing site for all air evacuations, Charles Maltbie, a regional disaster officer for the Red Cross, and bus evacuations are being diverted to other shelters. When asked what the center's top capacity is, he said: "We will meet the need."

Some of the evacuees at the center will be moved to a new shelter at the Toyota Center, Turner said.

About 250 miles to the north, the city of Dallas was preparing to take at least 6,000 evacuees from the Houston area, according to Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins, the county's top official. There were showers. Phone-charging stations. There was a dining hall manned by volunteers, including the Texas Baptist Men and local Israeli-American and Muslim-American groups.

The Dallas shelter was still mostly empty on Tuesday because the storm was too bad to get evacuees out of Houston.

"The planes are grounded, so we can't get C-130s in" with evacuees, said Jenkins (D). "The roads are covered with water, so we can't get buses in."

Dallas housed 28,000 evacuees after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Jenkins said. He said he's not sure if that many will come this time.

"We don't know what we'll get," he said, "until the water recedes."

That was the future. In Houston on Tuesday, the city's islands were still busy with the present.

Evacuees came by helicopter, by truck, by pool float. They were brought in by the National Guard, by the fire department, by volunteers from the "Cajun Navy," and by a crew of brewery employees who had once bought a surplus military truck on a lark and now used it to rescue their neighbors.

As the rain began to subside, and some bayous began to recede, both those who were saved—and those who did the saving—began to reflect on what comes next.

One of them was Tom Cullen, 54, who had rushed over to save his parents on Sunday, as their backyard filled with water. He drove his Ford pickup until the truck couldn't go further, hitting hip-deep water.

Then he took a one-seat kayak he'd borrowed from a neighbor. He got both his parents—ages 81 and 88—into the kayak, then into the truck, and then safely home.

Cullen eventually sat down and cried.

"When I think of what could have happened, reality just hit me right there," he said, his voice breaking. "With all they have done for me since I was born, there was no way I wasn't going over there. Anyone would do the same for their parents."

The home his parents left behind is filled with more than 4 feet of water. It is still rising, he said.



A Reuters article titled "Largest US Refinery Motiva May Be Shut Up to Two Weeks" was posted at reuters.com on Sept. 1, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Motiva Enterprises' Port Arthur, Texas refinery, the nation's largest, may be shut as long as two weeks for assessment of the plant and repair of any damage, sources familiar with plant operations said on Thursday.

The 603,000 barrel per day (bpd) Port Arthur Refinery was shut on Wednesday due to flooding from Tropical Storm Harvey.

In a statement to CNBC, Motiva said it "cannot provide a timeline for restart at this time." The oil company says it will begin assessing the refinery "as soon as the local area flooding has receded," although Motiva is uncertain about how long it will take for floodwaters to diminish.



Various videos and an article by Katie Pavlich titled "Liberal Media Finally Discovers Antifa and One Professor Defends Their Violence" were posted at townhall.com on Aug. 28, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

After declaring the "alt-left" is a made up concept that doesn't exist, it seems the liberal media has finally caught on to the violent, alt-left group Antifa.

Over the weekend at UC Berkeley Antifa rioters showed up and engaged in violent beat downs against who they perceived as "neo-Nazi" opponents, which included assaulting members of the media.

The Washington Post took notice, reporting "Black-clad antifa attack peaceful right wing demonstrators in Berkeley."

- Their faces hidden behind black bandannas and hoodies, about 100 anarchists and antifa—"anti-fascist"—members barreled into a protest Sunday afternoon in Berkeley's Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park.

- Jumping over plastic and concrete barriers, the group melted into a larger crowd of around 2,000 that had marched peacefully throughout the sunny afternoon for a "Rally Against Hate" gathering.

- Shortly after, violence began to flare. A pepper-spray-wielding Trump supporter was smacked to the ground with homemade shields. Another was attacked by five black-clad antifa members, each windmilling kicks and punches into a man desperately trying to protect himself. A conservative group leader retreated for safety behind a line of riot police as marchers chucked water bottles, shot off pepper spray and screamed, "Fascist go home!"

It seems, ladies and gentlemen, liberal media has finally found another side to the violent protests and riots we've seen around the country in the wake of Charlottesville.

Just a week ago, the same newspaper published an op-ed under the headline "Why the American left gave up on political violence." CNN ran with "[Antifa] Activists seek peace through violence," and then quietly changed the headline after backlash.

Over the weekend, Dartmouth University Professor Mark Bray defended Antifa's violence as justified. His argument? They claim to fight white supremacy and therefore their cause is just.

There's just one major problem. Antifa allegedly beat a man into a coma over the weekend after claiming he was a neo-Nazi. He isn't.

There are numerous examples of Antifa members going after journalists and peaceful protestors, yet they've been protected by the liberal media machine and their political allies for years under the guise of "fighting white supremacy."

When will the left roundly condemn Antifa at the highest levels of political power?

When will liberal reporters demand leaders like Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer and Barack Obama take a stand against this hate filled wing of their political spectrum?

Conservatives have repeatedly condemned the alt-right, it's long past time for progressives to do the same with the alt-left.



An editorial by Walter Williams titled "Racial Lies and Racism" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Aug. 30, 2017. Following is the article.

Earlier this month, The New York Times ran an article titled "U.S. Rights Unit Shifts to Study Antiwhite Bias" on its front page. The article says that President Donald Trump's Justice Department's civil rights division is going to investigate and sue universities whose affirmative action admissions policies discriminate against white applicants. This is an out-and-out lie.

The truth is that the U.S. departments of Justice and Education plan to investigate racial bias in admissions at Harvard and other elite institutions where Asian-Americans are held to far higher standards than other applicants. This type of practice was used during the first half of the 20th century to limit the number of Jews at Harvard and other Ivy League schools.

Drs. Thomas Espenshade and Alexandria Radford documented discrimination against Asians in their 2009 award-winning book, "No Longer Separate, Not Yet Equal: Race and Class in Elite College Admission and Campus Life."

Their research demonstrated that, when controlling for other variables, Asian students faced considerable odds against their admission. To be admitted to elite colleges, Asians needed SAT scores 140 points higher than whites, 270 points higher than Hispanics and 450 points higher than blacks. An Asian applicant with an SAT score of 1500 (out of a possible 1600 on the old SAT) had the same chance of being admitted as a white student with a 1360 score, a Latino with a 1230 and a black student with a 1050 score.

Another way of looking at it is that among applicants who had the highest SAT scores (within the 1400-1600 range), 77 percent of blacks were admitted, 48 percent of Hispanics, 40 percent of whites and only 30 percent of Asians.

The case of Austin Jia is typical of what happens to Asian students.

In 2015, Jia graduated from high school and had a nearly perfect score of 2340 out of 2400 possible points on the new SAT. His GPA was 4.42, and he had taken 11 Advanced Placement courses in high school. He had been on his school's debate team, been the tennis team's captain and played the violin in the all-state orchestra.

His applications for admission were rejected at Harvard, Princeton and Columbia universities, as well as at the University of Pennsylvania.

Jia said that his rejection was particularly disturbing when certain classmates who had lower scores but were not Asian-American like him were admitted to those Ivy League schools.

California universities present an interesting case. At one time, they also discriminated against Asians in admissions, but now it's a different story. As of 2008, Asians made up 40 percent of the students enrolled at UCLA and 43 percent at the University of California, Berkeley. Last school year, 42 percent of students at Caltech were Asian.

You might ask what accounts for the high numbers. It turns out that in 1996, Proposition 209 (also known as the California Civil Rights Initiative) was approved by California voters. The measure amended the state constitution to prohibit state governmental institutions from considering race, sex or ethnicity in the areas of public employment, public contracting and public education.

The experience of California, where racially discriminatory admissions policy has been reduced, suggests that if Ivy League universities were prohibited from using race as a factor in admissions, the Asian-American admissions rate would rise while the percentages of white, black and Hispanic students would fall.

Diversity-crazed college administrators would throw a hissy fit. By the way, diversity-crazed administrators are willing accomplices in the nearly total lack of racial diversity on their basketball teams. It's not unusual to watch games in which there's not a single white, Hispanic or Asian player.

Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz says, "The idea of discriminating against Asians in order to make room for other minorities doesn't seem right as a matter of principle."

Dershowitz is absolutely right, but he goes astray when he argues that investigating discrimination against whites raises a different set of questions. He says, "Generically, whites have not been the subject of historic discrimination." Dershowitz's vision fails to see people as humans, because what human is deserving of racial discrimination?



An article by Susan Stamper Brown titled "Leftists' Goal is to Wear Us Down" was posted at townhall.com on Aug. 28, 2017. Following is the article.

They are trying to wear us down.

Although they don't understand anything about those with whom they are dealing.

Regular folks who love God, their family and their country aren't the fascists or racists the left makes them out to be, with the daily barrage of propaganda designed to take good people down.

Normal folks don't have time to entertain the darkness the left promotes. They are too busy working or going to church or tending gardens or splitting wood at night to keep their families warm. Then they go to bed and get up the next day and do it all again.

There is no time for the nonsense littering the internet and television intended to cast guilt over their values and votes. The more insane the left and their propaganda becomes, the more confident they are about the choices they will make in 2018 and 2020.

They have zero interest in protests across the country about which the media incessantly reports. They have no patience for the violence and chaos and destruction. They interpret it as something city folks do when they have too much time on their hands and too much money they didn't earn in their pockets.

They are intuitive, but too busy to be distracted.

They are fully aware of heavily funded temper tantrum groups ingratiated by the Democrat Party such as the former Occupy Movement. A movement whose members expressed their adulation for spreading the wealth around by spreading their own feces around public places during Barack Obama's first term.

Normal people respect and appreciate cops, so they were repulsed when an occupier disrespectfully did the "big nasty" on a cop car while others poured human waste down a flight of stairs and at a bank ATM vestibule in New York. Obama and Congressional Democrats cheered them on.

And whose mental state are we currently questioning?

Those who learned stamina from the school of hard work were not impressed when reports emerged the Occupy Movement fizzled into obscurity after temperatures dropped and smarmy snowflakes retreated to their taxpayer subsidized safe spaces upon realizing they could tolerate cold about as much as they do opposing opinions.

Now, according to Politico, they are back.

Those who do the right thing every day even when they don't feel like it, don't have time to care this group resurrected from dormancy. But they do hope protesters pack diapers or pooper-scoopers this time around because poop disposal fairies do not exist. They resent when their taxes are used to clean up these messes.

Those who work for a living aren't worried this group, "Refuse Fascism," has a mission to oust President Trump and threatens to march and demonstrate and occupy city centers and parks until "Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have fallen," as Politico reports.

We all should be concerned, though, that one of this group's lead organizers is "a Maoist activist," as Politico reports. The left is full of history-challenged non-thinkers who have no clue that Mao Zedong was a mass murdering com-

unist dictator whose policies killed tens of millions of people by starving, working and beating them to death.

While millions less people on the planet might excite someone like Gloria Steinem who recently said, "forcing women to have children" is the "fundamental cause of climate change," those who value life find it concerning Democrats have not disavowed this Maoist activist group organizer.

This should also serve as a reminder to the miniscule fraction of rightwing never-Trumpers that the enemy of your enemy is not always your friend.

With that said, and this column complete, I need to get to work. Sorry Gloria, it's been snowing in our mountains here since early August, so I must sign off to go outside to split more wood.



An article by Jack Hellner titled "You Know You are an Extremist . . ." was posted at americanthinker.com on Aug. 26, 2017. Following is the article.

In Overland, Ohio, Columbus Day will now be known as Indigenous Peoples Day so as not to offend the Native Americans. Anyone who thinks differently must be an extremist.

Maybe some are:

- I believe that PETA will be offended because the Indians killed animals for food and clothing.
- Environmentalists will be offended because Indians tore down trees.

But most of us are not. We hold mainstream views our country was founded on. And to the rulers of Overland, those are just a lot of extremism.

You know you are an extremist if you believe:

- That there are two genders instead of more than thirty.
- That people should use facilities that match their body parts.
- That prayer should be allowed in public places and schools.
- That life begins at conception.
- That the climate changes naturally.
- That people should have freedom of choice on health care.
- That if your name is Robert Lee, that is not offensive.
- That mayors and governors should enforce the law.
- That borders are important.

- That the power and purse belong to the people, not the government.
- That there is nothing offensive about the American flag or the National Anthem.
- That politicians and others are allowed to speak with Russians and not be accused of collusion.
- That every adult has the ability to obtain a photo ID, and that capacity oppresses no one.
- That capitalism is the greatest system to reduce poverty and that socialism holds people down.
- That freedom for the people is the key to everything.



An article by Ned Barnett titled "Abortion Versus Popular Culture" was posted at americanthinker.com on Aug. 27, 2017. Following is the article.

Advocates of abortion—especially those who see abortion as little more than a somewhat more painful version of birth control—would like us all to believe that the vast majority of women, as well as a significant majority of all Americans, support abortion on demand. They couldn't be farther from the truth.

Setting aside the fact that *Roe v. Wade* was really bad constitutional law, building on the only recently set precedent of an unspecified "right to privacy," a right that nearly 200 years of Supreme Court rulings had never before discovered, the claims that the right to an abortion on demand actually has relatively few supporters.

Flawed as it is, the shaky constitutional precedent *Roe v. Wade* set is less flawed than the pro-abortionists' claim of widespread public support.

A Marist poll published last year found that a clear majority of Americans believe that abortions do women more harm than good—including 56 percent of all women and 27 percent of pro-choice advocates.

Nationally, Gallup finds that just 29 percent of Americans agree with abortion-on-demand advocates that abortion should be legal under any circumstances.

However, the real metric that shows what Americans really believe can be found in popular culture—especially in mass-market mainstream movies and television programs. Those films and programs live or die based on audience acceptance of their messages.

While this may not be true for feminist cable networks such as whatever Oprah's network is called this week—or for narrowly focused "chick flicks" that target the pro-choice segment of the market—mainstream media

movies, along with cable and broadcast TV programs, view abortion as a “third rail,” one devoutly to be avoided.

You find this especially in television programs, usually when a program’s star becomes pregnant in “real life”—but also when a pretend pregnancy is written into the script, only to be terminated, but never by abortion.

Over the past year of watching a significant number of crime dramas on Netflix and Amazon—research for a mystery novel I’m writing—I have seen a significant number of lead character or ensemble cast regular character pregnancies. In not once instance has the character had an abortion, nor has that option been discussed, even if only in passing.

Of those on-screen pregnancies, roughly one third ended in the character’s first trimester, generally because of a crime job-related accident. I presume that those were written in from the beginning with the accidental termination in mind. A lost but wanted pregnancy creates a sympathetic character, which builds strong audience support.

Overall, in every single on-screen pregnancy I’ve seen, either the baby is carried to term or the pregnancy ends in a tragic manner. Not one of those pregnancies ended in abortion, and in no case was the “choice” option even seriously discussed. The closest these programs came to talking about abortions have featured dialog that runs something like this:

Leading man: “So are you really . . .?”

Leading lady: “What the hell do you think?”

Leading man: “So are you going to . . .?”

Leading lady: “What the hell do you think?”

That is the alpha and the omega of on-screen discussions of the “choice” option. She’s pregnant (duh!), and she’s going to carry the child to term (duh!) unless the screenwriters end her pregnancy tragically.

Why is this significant? When it comes to TV and the movies, it’s always easy to find the answer. Just follow the money.

Prime-time television and cable programming—and to an even greater extent, mainstream theatrical movies—depend on mass audiences to succeed. Without millions of viewers, programs get canceled. Worse, movies that can’t find audiences are consigned to the cinematic hell presided over by film disasters such as *Ishtar*, *Heaven’s Gate*, *Gigli*, and *Battlefield Earth*.

If the choice option were as popular as the abortion-on-demand crowd claims, networks and movie producers would be rushing to create dramatic crises that are ended by well timed and well received abortions. But that hasn’t happened—and that fact says more than any poll about how American adults really feel about abortion.

They won’t buy it—literally, they won’t buy it.



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.”