

February, 2010 Vol.I No.13

A New Generation of Conservative Thought

Obama's military misstep



GOP's rise • Haiti tragedy • Exposing abortion

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The conservative movement is in crisis. Modern conservatism was born in 1955 with the founding of *National Review*. Its editor, William F. Buckley Jr., said the publication's mission was to "stand athwart history, yelling stop!" But history has kept rolling along, smashing every traditional institution in its path. Family, faith, capitalism, our constitutional republic—they have all been shattered by modern liberalism. In the face of this ideological juggernaut, conservatives have offered sporadic and weak resistance. Their ideas have become stale. Too many prefer power to principles. The movement has become corrupt, lazy and ineffective. Having come to Washington to confront the political rot and moral decay, conservatives have become part of the establishment. In other words, they have become part of the problem.



The mission of *Reflections Magazine* is to launch a conservative moral and intellectual revival. We will bring together the finest minds and writers to defend the eternal principles of God, country and family. We seek to forge a reinvigorated conservative movement for the 21st century—one that champions a new nationalism, rooted in a culture of life, small government, a restoration of federalism and victory over Islamist terrorism. Capitol BuildingThe time has come for a one-nation conservatism that reaches out to minorities and women, the unborn and the poor, workers and students. The movement must go beyond its traditional base or else suffer a slow, agonizing death. Our goal is unabashedly counter-revolutionary: to roll back the forces of progressivism. Since the 1960s, a destructive liberal revolution has swept across our land. Characterized by radical secular humanism, sexual permissiveness and milk-toast socialism, it is transforming America into something our Founding Fathers would not only find unrecognizable but repugnant. We stand for the real America, the historic America, the eternal America—an America based on moral traditionalism, an America of limited government, self-reliance and entrepreneurship, an America that won its independence from imperial British rule, triumphed over Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, and has shed precious blood and treasure to liberate hundreds of millions of people around the world, and an America that champions human rights and freedom, in which every individual—regardless of race, color, gender or religion—possesses innate dignity and equal value in the eyes of our creator. We ask like-minded Americans to join us in this struggle for the heart and soul of America.

Edmund Burke, the great philosopher and godfather of Western conservatism, once said: "All that's necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing." We refuse to do nothing. We will fight for what is right, true and good. This is the rock upon which we take our stand.



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Mission:

The Edmund Burke Institute for American Renewal was founded in June, 2005 in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. We are a non-partisan, non-profit, education and outreach organization which aspires to engage and mobilize the millions of African Americans, Hispanics, women and other minorities in this country who share conservative values. We will inform conservative leaders about the needs and aspirations of minorities in order to make the latter feel welcome amongst us. Also, we want minorities to appreciate fully how conservatism is congruent with their values and goals. In short, we will build a steadfast alliance between conservative leaders and minority groups. We hope to preserve all those elements in the American republic that render us a strong and vibrant nation. Simultaneously, we are open to new ideas that will allow more citizens to enjoy the blessings of freedom, prosperity and moral renewal.



How We Differ From Other Conservative Organizations:

1. We seek to update conservative thought. We want to find original ideas on how to bolster timeless principles.
2. We are attentive to the needs of women and minorities. These are not peripheral but are a primary focus of our institute. We want the conservative movement to make adjustments in order to accommodate the unique aspirations of previously marginalized groups. We also want minorities to learn how the conservative movement can benefit them.
3. We are devoted to cultural issues, not just politics. The main battle of our time is to seize the initiative in the cultural arena.
4. We hope to foster a broad alliance with those who adhere to traditional moral principles. We seek to build bridges with individuals of all faiths in order to combat assaults on human dignity.
5. We write policy initiatives, opinion articles and monographs as well as organize symposiums and conferences that appeal to our audience. Hence we do not just think and write: we take action!
6. We do not focus exclusively on one group or on one issue. There are excellent minority conservative organizations across the United States that are currently working in isolation from one another. Instead, we bring these groups together on a variety of issues in order to find common ground and, thus, to be effective in achieving political and cultural change.

Obama's military misstep

By Grace Vuoto

In the midst of two wars, the worst economic downturn since World War II and sky-high budget deficits which threaten the nation's long-term financial viability, President Barack Obama has ordered a review of the military's 1993 ban on gays serving openly in the armed forces. Why now? What is the pressing national security issue that requires this debate and justifies the turmoil it will inflict on our forces? Our leader should put all his energy into addressing the ills plaguing the daily lives of the majority of the American people. Instead, he is more interested in serving the interests of the left-wing base of his party—a fringe minority with a radical agenda.

The president has blundered once again. Mr. Obama has not yet grasped that the election of Republican Scott Brown in Massachusetts in a Democratic stronghold—to fill the seat of the deceased lion of leftist causes, Ted Kennedy—requires him to return to the centrist policies he championed on the campaign trail in 2008. Rather, the novice leader insists on placating his left-wing supporters and attempting to make an historic mark by adopting a chic policy that is relevant to only a small fraction of our citizens.

The decision to go forward with attempting to repeal the current ban is yet another example of Mr. Obama's poor judgment as commander-in-chief. Our current forces are stretched thinner than they have been at any time in the nation's history. Service members are obliged to go on multiple deployments—as many as three or four times to Iraq and Afghanistan. The psychological toll has been tremendous, resulting in approximately 300,000 of our men and women who are battling post-traumatic stress disorder. In addition, there are high incidences of traumatic brain injury and other wounds, resulting in thousands of wounded warriors that will need life-long care. The army is also facing record-high suicide rates.

Hence, the physical and psychological toll of the current wars on our veterans and on their families will reverberate for years to come. If our commander-in-chief truly cares about our service members, he will lead a national debate on these matters. Our troops are stretched thin—and they need our help badly. The last issue we need to be



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concerned with at this time is whether or not a tiny fraction of our troops would rather be openly gay instead of secretly gay. This is frivolous in contrast to the life-death matters our troops are facing on a daily basis.

Let's do the math. Our armed forces consist of approximately 1.4 million active duty members and 1.2 million members in the seven reserve components. Gay active duty members are estimated at approximately 65,000--a tiny percentage of our total forces. In addition, there have been approximately 13,500 service members who have been discharged as a result of the ban since 1993, according to the nonpartisan Center for Military Readiness. Why should we now expend much time and energy on a debate that benefits so few when there are so many in the

forces who are in such desperate and immediate need?

To compound matters, although the vast majority of the American people favor lifting the ban in the army, the vast majority of service members do not want the current policy to be changed, according to annual surveys in *The Military Times* and an online poll conducted in summer, 2009 by the Military Officer's Association of America. Even the younger generation of service members oppose reversing the current policy. According to leftist propaganda, the younger members should now be more amenable to the change. Yet, the majority remain opposed to it. It is therefore clear that the president has no regard for the opinion of our troops nor does he care whether a major policy change will make their lives even more burdensome.

The president's decision to pursue this is even more vexing when we consider that his entire national security and foreign policy agenda is imploding. His decision to reverse the policies of his predecessor President George W. Bush on the war on terror—such as attempting to close down Guantanamo Bay and to hold civilian trials on American soil for terrorists such as September 11 mastermind Kalid Sheikh Mohammed— is proving to be more troublesome than effective. His appeasement of strongmen such as Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Hu Jintao and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have not made the world safer, but have only emboldened evil

men in their evil ways. The president has not had a single foreign policy achievement. Nor have his policies prevented terrorist strikes on the homeland.

The president's poor judgment and track record of failure points to a sad but striking conclusion: If Mr. Obama thinks we ought to lift the ban on gays serving in the military, there is a very high likelihood that he does not know the full implications of his own empty rhetoric. This commander-in-chief is one that can only be humored, not obeyed, until there is a more capable leader at the helm of our armed forces.

-Dr. Grace Vuoto is the Executive Director of the Edmund Burke Institute for American Renewal.



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Duplicity, delivered

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

The Obama administration is accusing Republicans of enabling Islamic terrorism. The White House has sent out John Brennan, President Obama's chief counterterrorism adviser, to defend its mishandling of the failed Christmas Day bomber.

"Politically motivated criticism and unfounded fear-mongering only serve the goals of al Qaeda," Mr. Brennan wrote in a recent USA Today Op-Ed column. "Terrorists are not 100-foot tall. Nor do they deserve the abject fear they seek to instill."

Mr. Brennan is trying desperately to divert attention from the real issue: The administration is more concerned with giving terrorists legal rights than protecting Americans. The decisions to have Sept. 11, 2001, mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (KSM) tried in civilian court and Christmas bombing suspect Umar Farouk Abdulmutalab read his Miranda rights reveal Mr. Obama's lack of seriousness in fighting global jihadists

Instead of changing course, the White House is digging in its heels - to the point of claiming it is following the anti-terror policies of the Bush administration. For years, liberals demonized President George W. Bush as America's "Hitler," a war criminal who led a unilateralist, militaristic regime that launched an immoral war in Iraq and sanctioned torture. That was yesterday. Mr. Bush has now become the model for treating terrorists captured on U.S. soil.

Mr. Obama told Katie Couric in an interview that



"we're not handling any of these cases any different than the Bush administration handled them all through 9/11."

Mr. Obama emphasized that "190 folks" had been tried and convicted in civilian court during Mr. Bush's years in office - including shoe bomber Richard Reid. Yet Reid was captured when the post-Sept. 11, 2001, military tribunal system was still not set up. He also pleaded guilty - unlike KSM, who vows to

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turn the courtroom into a media platform for his anti-American hatred. The victims' families will be subjected to months, if not years, of emotional anguish as KSM showboats in front of the Muslim world.

Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. thinks that trying KSM several blocks from ground zero is a brilliant move. It isn't. It only invites more terrorist attacks upon New York. This is why Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg (among many others) opposes it.

Moreover, almost all of the "190 folks" tried by the Bush administration were small fish: low-level terrorist supporters who had provided material aid to the enemy. To equate those cases with that of KSM, the man responsible for the greatest mass atrocity on American soil, is not only legally untenable but morally grotesque.

Contrary to Mr. Brennan's claims, it is the White House - not its critics - who are playing politics with national security. The administration is trapped by its own radical leftist values. Mr. Obama is determined to try all terrorists in civilian courts, even though that undermines effectively waging the war on terror. Mr. Obama cannot have it both ways: Appeasing jihadists comes at the expense of keeping Americans safe. Lashing out at Republicans won't alter this reality.

The White House is engaged in a cover-up. The Justice Department mishandled the initial interrogation of Mr. Abdulmutallab. Even though he warned that "more attacks are coming" and that he was part of a wider al Qaeda plot based in Yemen to strike the U.S., the suspected underwear bomber was allowed to lawyer up after just 50 minutes of questioning by investigators.

Mr. Holder ordered that Mr. Abdulmutallab be classified as a criminal defendant and given the right to remain silent, which he immediately did. He is not, however, some violent thug. He is an enemy combatant (and a foreigner). Hence, he is not entitled - nor should he be - to U.S. constitutional protections.

The foiled Christmas bombing was more than a crime. It was an act of war against America by global jihadism. Rather than treating it as such, the administration is determined to embrace a law enforcement approach - regardless of the consequences. The result is that actionable intelligence has been lost.

White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs last month stated that 50 minutes was enough time for

a thorough interrogation. He said the administration had attained "valuable intelligence."

That begs the question: Why did the FBI need later to call in the suspected underwear bomber's parents to help persuade him to break his silence? Mr. Holder recently admitted that Mr. Abdulmutallab "has provided additional intelligence to the FBI." This means Mr. Gibbs' account was false: The initial interrogation was not comprehensive. Rather, it was incomplete - and therefore botched. Mr. Abdulmutallab should not have been read his Miranda rights.

The several weeks of silence that ensued led not only to time being wasted. Leads have turned cold. Co-conspirators have dispersed. The funding trail has dried up. Training networks have relocated. In other words, Mr. Abdulmutallab's fellow jihadists have gotten away to fight another day.

"We need no lectures about the fact that this nation is at war," Mr. Brennan said.

He is wrong. From its inception, the Obama administration has done everything to give the impression we are not at war - Guantanamo is to be closed; CIA interrogators are being investigated for possible crimes; homegrown extremism, such as the Fort Hood shooting, is downplayed; U.S.-Muslim entente is celebrated; Iran is appeased; the Iraq war is routinely vilified; and the war in Afghanistan has been transformed into nation-building. Last year, Mr. Brennan boasted that the Bush policy of "global war" was being jettisoned.

Mr. Brennan is a CIA apparatchik. He is a typical Washington careerist - spineless, duplicitous and ruthlessly ambitious. He has no idea how to defeat Islamic radicalism.

Murderous terrorists have no business being in a civilian court. There is only one place for them: a military tribunal, followed by the hangman's noose.

-Jeffrey T. Kuhner is a columnist at The Washington Times and president of the Edmund Burke Institute, a Washington think tank. He is the daily radio host of the "Kuhner Show" on WTNT 570-AM (www.talk570.com) from noon until 3 p.m.

-This article was first published in The Washington Times on February 11, 2010. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/feb/11/duplicity-delivered/>

Disavowing Third Party politics

By Joe Vigliotti

Conservatives have reason to smile.

Conservative Republican candidates Bob McDonnell in Virginia and Chris Christie in New Jersey, swept the gubernatorial races in November last year. Republican Scott Brown, once trailing his liberal opponent Martha Coakley by 30 points, won the special election for the contested vacant Massachusetts senate seat by 5 points in January. And in New York, Doug Hoffman, an out-of-district third party conservative candidate, nearly won the day against a liberal opponent. Indeed, the driving force behind the success of conservative candidates stems from the vast

support of the populist movement that has captivated America. Responding to the dangerous policies and practices of moderates, liberals, socialists and an ever-intrusive federal government, average American citizens have sounded the call to return to America's founding principles and to recapture President Ronald Reagan's values and policies.

It would be an understatement to say that Reagan and his example are inseparable from the tea party movement. Conservatives have good reason to be wary of Republicans, who, although described as the Party of Reagan, have not always adhered to his



brand of conservatism. And because of that, there is a loud cry for a conservative third party or even an independent candidate to head a de-facto third party. But this is not a recent call.

The move for independent parties has long been a fixture in American politics. It is important to note that the conservative movement championed by Barry Goldwater and William F. Buckley, a movement that took shape within the Republican Party, gained mainstream exposure through the 1960s. It was a mantle picked up and carried by Reagan through the 1970s and into the election of 1980.

When Reagan became the Republican nominee for president, liberal Republican John Anderson entered the presidential race as an Independent. Anderson garnered 6 million votes. “The day of the independent candidate—as opposed to the third-party candidate,” writes Andrew E. Busch, “had fully arrived. Anderson’s 1980 run, devoid of even the pretense of a party, paved the way for Ross Perot’s 1992 effort.” Now, independent candidates are viewed as third party candidates since they are unconnected to either major party and not perceived to be linked to establishment politics.

Both major parties have become emblematic of what is popularly known as “Washington elitism”—an establishment of disconnected politicians, so long in Washington and in the realm of power that they have fallen out of touch with their constituencies. Reagan, who had become disillusioned with the liberal and elitist turn of the Democrats, left the party in 1962 and became a Republican. Reagan now had to stop conservatives from abandoning the Republican Party as it became more liberal, all the while giving conservative Democrats a home.

Reagan was confronted by the strong possibility of a third party when he addressed the Conservative Political Action Conference in 1977. He respected the supporters of a third party, but adamantly disagreed with their objective. In his speech, Reagan confronted the issue head-on: “...I believe the political success of the principles we believe in can best be achieved in the Republican Party. I believe the Republican Party can hold and should provide the political mechanism through which the goals of the majority of Americans can be achieved.” It was a daring statement then as it is now.

Why would Reagan support the Republican Party despite its liberal bent? “For one thing,” Reagan explained, “the biggest single grouping of conservatives is to be found in that party. It makes more sense to build on that grouping than to break it up and start over.” So if there was to be no new third party, what was to happen? As Reagan put it, “Rather than a third party, we can have a new first party made up of people who share our principles.”

But the Republican Party had been—and is today—tied to establishment politics and the sense of elitism that ensnares the entire political field. How can that be overcome? “The New Republican Party I am speaking about,” said Reagan, “is going to have room for the man and the woman in the factories, for the farmer, for the cop... and the millions of Americans who may have never thought of joining our party before, but whose interests coincide with those represented by principled Republicanism... not by simply “making room” for them, but by making sure they have a say in what goes on in the party.”

The principles Reagan championed are manifested in the populist movement in the nation today: People want their voices to be heard, and they want their representatives to be held accountable. New Republican conservative candidates, said Reagan, “must be willing to communicate with every level of society, because the principles we espouse are universal and cut across traditional lines.” Listening to the people, and finding “tough, bright young men and women who are sick and tired of clichés and the pomposity and the mind-numbing economic idiocy of the liberal in Washington” would prove to be a sound method.

Make no mistake about it. The tea party movement has a home in the Republican Party. Their values and principles are self-evident and cut across the traditional lines that Reagan transcended. Conservative Republicans in Virginia, New Jersey, and now Massachusetts, are the product of the populist sentiment. The Republicans still offer the best hope of changing the tide of politics. Of all the lessons gleaned from Reagan, perhaps the most important for today is: Rally, don’t disassemble.

-Joe Vigliotti is a writer and essayist residing in Maryland. His work can be found at: www.traditiontomorrow.blogspot.com.

Big government backfires on Democrats

By Kerry W. and Peggy McCarthy

Ironically, Scott Brown's election as U.S. Republican senator for Massachusetts was made possible by a manipulation of the law that backfired on Democrats. In 2004, Massachusetts law allowed the governor to appoint a senator to serve out John Kerry's term if he was elected president. The now deceased Senator Ted Kennedy, at the time, urged that the law be changed to provide for a special election to fill the seat, removing power from

Governor Mitt Romney to appoint a Republican. Mr. Kennedy assumed he would have final approval on the Democrat nominee in such an election. With Mr. Kennedy campaigning with and for that nominee, Massachusetts voters could be counted on to "vote the right way."

Last year, when Kennedy was dying, a desperate attempt was made to reinstate the old law, giving Governor Deval Patrick the power to appoint a Democrat to Mr. Kennedy's seat. The legislature was only able to change the law enough to grant Patrick the power to seat a temporary appointee, with the special election still in place.

Democrats would like us to believe that Mr. Brown's opponent in the race, Martha Coakley, simply ran a poor campaign. Although that's true, there is reason to believe that Democrats strategized a low-key campaign to avoid firing up the opposition. Democrats did not realize that Mr. Brown's campaign promise to be the 41st vote against the health care bill would resonate so strongly with voters.

Mr. Brown's victory heralds a coming crisis for liberalism. The programs liberals propose go too far; Americans don't want them. The stimulus bill implemented by liberals is not working. The public now perceives massive government spending with socialism.

The success of socialist policies



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depends on voters' willingness to submerge self-interest for the "greater good." But as Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations*, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher...or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest." The American people are not ready to, and should not, deny their own self-interest.

Democrats, with the help of the media, took control of both houses of Congress in the 2006 election. By 2008, they had run President George W. Bush and even more Republicans out of town. At that point, if Democrats had concentrated on gaining the public's confidence, they would have continued to gain ground.

A more measured strategy than steamrolling the stimulus bill through Congress would have bolstered the sense of well-being that was returning to a country weary of strident media criticism. Democrats' bulldozing strategy incited public alarm. On top of that, the stimulus package didn't work.

The American people have begun to realize that liberal programs are, at root, redistributionist and do not lead to real progress. Money collected by the government to be used for social programs prevents citizens from using their money productively and for their own self interest. This prevents economic improvement.

Voters are upset with Republicans as well as Democrats, but for a crucially different reason. A main plank of the pre-Depression Republican Party platform was to pay down debt. Presidents Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge cut taxes and used the resulting increased revenue to pay down our national debt. President Herbert Hoover *raised* taxes to cover increased spending, hoping also to pay down the debt. His failures helped push us from stock market crash into depression. Until Ronald Reagan, Republicans were no longer tax-cutters.

Reagan's tax cuts did increase revenue, but he was unable to pay down debt as Harding and Coolidge did because he was waging and winning the Cold War while a Democrat Congress spent money on expanding domestic programs. Republicans learned the wrong lesson from Reagan's relative success. Moderates thought that by spending less recklessly than Democrats, Republicans could gain favor with the public and become the majority party.

Americans have finally become alarmed about our national debt. Republicans should return to the kinds of tax cuts that will naturally stimulate the economy—and then use that increased revenue to pay down the debt. Women and minority voters especially, struggling to hold together their families' finances, would vote for the Republican Party if we make clear our message and our intent.

Conservatives can engage in the overdue conversation on race with confidence. For Republicans, acknowledging past injustice is not an admission of guilt. Historically, Republicans are the party of President Abraham Lincoln, not of segregation and Jim Crow, the name often used to describe the segregation laws, rules, and customs which arose after Reconstruction ended in 1877 and continued until the mid-1960s. Republicans broke the Democratic filibuster against the Civil Rights Act in the '60s. Democrats behave as if black votes are for sale and can be bought by offering government handouts, but perceptive voters of all ethnicities understand that raising taxes, no matter what program the government claims the money will be used for, leads to trickle-down poverty, and that government handouts create dependence, not freedom.

Democrats are now on the defensive because voters recognize that policies such as the healthcare plan, cap and trade, and the proposed Federal budget threaten to deliver a devastating economic blow to America. The key for Republicans in attracting voters, including women and minorities, is to point out that acting in one's own self-interest is good for any society, and essential to a free one.

-Kerry W. and Peggy McCarthy are writers living in Indiana.

Reclaiming a conservative America

By Martin Bertram

Republican Senator Scott Brown's victory in Massachusetts signals new support for conservative values. A fairly conservative Republican being elected in the most liberal of states is no small feat, and it is indicative of how the American people are reacting to the Democrats' drive toward socialism. Yet America's sense of right and wrong has still not been sufficiently numbed by the progressive movement's programs and philosophies.

But the gradual tendency toward socialism and liberalism is still in tact as long as Americans remain ignorant and our educational system keeps the status quo. Voters must realize that the public institutions and the culture of our nation have been under attack for over 100 years. At this point, simply electing Republicans is not going to save us—it will only slow down our decline. But the problem isn't the Republicans.

Voters are the problem. Most Americans are generally ignorant of the true history of their nation, the Constitution and how the progressive movement has worked to subvert the Constitution and society. Americans expect far less than we should from the leaders they support and elect. The reality is that even some of the things that conservatives tend to support are blatantly unconstitutional, even though they may sound good.

For example, consider the line-item veto which would give President Barack Obama the ability to slice and dice a piece of legislation passed by Congress—essentially giving him legislative powers. It was part of the Republican's 1994 Contract with America. It sounds good if the Congress is out of control and the president believes the way we do at any given time, but this weakens Congress considerably. Congress is supposed to be the most powerful branch because it is the most accessible by the people.

Unfortunately, even conservatives have mostly gone through the same public education system which has long been the primary tool of progressive ideologues. Americans need to re-evaluate everything they believe about government and society in

concrete, absolute terms. They need to read the country's founding documents. When they do, they will discover that much of what they were led to believe is not true.

Take *Roe v. Wade*, for example. The Constitution does not give the judiciary the power to legislate. Yet, most politicians and pundits will say that *Roe v. Wade* is the law of the land, even Republicans. But in fact, the judiciary was never intended to have the power it does today. *Roe v. Wade* does not need to be overturned; Congress has the power to reign in the courts and to end the travesty of abortion. That's what the Constitution says. But if we don't know that, then we can't hold the Congress accountable to it. Pro-life advocates: forget *Roe v. Wade*, focus on Congress.

Harvard is the oldest college in America. Its original motto was, "Truth for Christ and the Church," and the school reflected those values. In the late 1800s, a progressive secular humanist named Charles Eliot became President of Harvard, and through his "reforms," Harvard became a major catalyst for the secularization of American culture, law, and even religion. In the School of Divinity, he promoted the concept that religion should not be about absolute truth or the authority of the Bible or of the reality of God, but that it was to be about the common good of mankind. Basically, he saw it as an instrument of manipulation to be used by the Progressive movement. (John Dewey, the "Father of Modern Education" would later see it the same way that the churches should be subordinate to the State and the goals of the State.)

Eliot appointed a man named Christopher Columbus Langdell to preside over Harvard's school of law. Langdell replaced the traditional study of law with his new case study system. Rather than studying the principles of the law, law students would learn through the study of past cases. This ultimately led to the transformation of American jurisprudence as we know it today, complete with judicial activism and a legal system devoid of justice or honor.

All of this began with the transformation of Har-

vard, once a college devoted to truth and godliness, located in Boston, Massachusetts—now considered the most liberal of states in America. Don't forget that Massachusetts is also the home of John Adams and Samuel Adams, men of great character who believed in God and in the rule of law.

So while Americans must do the best they can with electing the most conservative people possible, there is a deeper and more foundational work of restoration needed which can turn things around, even in Massachusetts. The answer doesn't lie in new ideas or solutions, but in the history and the timeless principles upon which our nation was built.

- Martin Bertram is the President of the Republican Assembly of Kern County, and is also the author of "Coherent Conservatism," a political primer which focuses on the inter-relation of fiscal and social conservative principles and the importance of America's Judeo-Christian foundation.

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Wreckage in Haiti

By Anthony Rainone

On January 12, 2010, Haiti suffered the worst natural disaster to hit our hemisphere since 1770. The earthquake measured 7.0 on the rictor scale, hurling a devastating blow to the country. The people of Haiti are still reeling from the aftermath of this tragedy, with 170,000 dead, 250,000 injured and over 1 million people homeless.

International humanitarian organization relief efforts were quick to respond at the onset of the quake, but were soon bottlenecked by internal disagreements and bickering between nations as to how to distribute incoming aid. As of February 1, 2010, the humanitarian situation in Haiti continues to improve slowly and steadily, but many obstacles still remain. According to conservative estimates, 75 percent of the Haitian capital, Port Au Prince, is totally destroyed and will take at least a decade to rebuild, costing billions of dollars.

The U.S. Armed Forces continue to show tremendous expertise and have approximately 20,000 troops on the ground providing much needed security and logistical support. They are also offering air lift capacity in order to move humanitarian supplies to critical areas of Haiti and providing medical support to treat the Haitian people and helping evacuate the injured for long-term care in the United States.

I can report without a doubt to the American people, that no other country in the world has won the admiration and respect of the Haitian people than America's Armed Forces. There are also nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as the American Red Cross, the International Red Cross and Catholic Relief Services, that are doing exceptional work in



the aftermath of this unprecedented human tragedy. These organizations were first on the scene and provided much-needed medical supplies and services to a dispirited people.

As an observer on the ground, I can see that there are many problems Haitians need to overcome. First, is the problem of security, as over 5,000 notorious criminals escaped an overcrowded prison after the earthquake struck in the center of Port Au Prince. The criminal gang leaders are now attempting to disrupt the flow of aid in the Cite Soleil area of the capital by intimidating an already weak and weary population. The Haitian national police are attempting to maintain order but have been crippled by personnel losses since more than 200 policemen died as a result of the earthquake. Members of the U.S. forces and the United Nations' security forces have reestablished order and have limited the influence of criminal elements in Haiti. Security will improve as the humanitarian situation stabilizes. Moreover, chronic government corruption continues to plague humanitarian stabilization and reconstruction efforts

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as Haitian leaders are slow to reassert control over government institutions. There is growing tension between the Haitian people and the government because the people feel that the government is not doing enough to help coordinate international humanitarian efforts. This could be a problem for Haitian leadership as the full extent of this humanitarian becomes much clearer over time. The earthquake will test the resolve of Haitian leaders in the long term and will require close consultation with responsible members of the international community.

Second, another sinister development occurring in Haiti is the politicizing of this disaster by the enemies of the United States such as Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia who claim that the United States is now “occupying Haiti.” This perception is absurd

ministers to help deal with the crisis in Haiti was held in Montreal, Canada at the end of January proved unsuccessful. The conference provided no new ideas for the long-term recovery and economic development of Haiti. Instead, the international community continued to propose the same, old statist solutions to quell Haiti’s social and economic ills: more state control over reconstruction efforts, international bureaucrats getting in the way of progress and a passive Haitian government allowing more of same misguided but well intentioned policies which have doomed generations of Haitians to an endless cycle of poverty.

The ruling Haitian political classes of the past, and now the present, are content with being the ward of the international community. A new thinking about

how to create and promote free enterprise and market solutions to create jobs in Haiti is what is sorely needed and long overdue. Free market capitalism is essential in order to instigate and sustaining economic growth. The generational response of charitable giving towards natural disasters is not enough.

The 75-year-old playbook of statist policies of dealing with humanitarian disasters has to be radically changed for Haiti to fully recover and thrive economically. Unless free-market solutions are implemented, Haiti will continue to stumble on the road to a disjointed re-

covery dependent on the goodwill of the international community. Haiti and its long-suffering people deserve a chance to rebuild and heal after this devastating disaster. Let’s join forces in helping make this possible.

-Anthony Rainone is currently in Haiti assisting with the relief efforts. He is an analyst for the U.S. Department of Defense.

and has gained little traction with the Haitian media and media outlets throughout the Caribbean and Latin America. The arrogant demand by President of Venezuela Hugo Chavez and his allies to determine Haiti’s rebuilding efforts is extremely dangerous and should be forcefully rejected by the international community. Chavez seeks to politicize the Haitian crisis for his own personal gain, thereby distracting people from his abysmal domestic economic performance in Venezuela. Political grandstanding needs to be put aside in order to provide relief to Haiti.

Moreover, the international meeting of foreign



Putting an end to female genital mutilation

By Susan Oliver Nelson

In February and March, countries all over the world will commemorate the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM) by holding summits and campaign calls. These strategies offer an opportunity for everyone worldwide to increase efforts to end such a shocking practice.

FGM is an irreversible, pained procedure, where a girl's external genitals are partially or completely cut away. In most cases, there is no use of anesthesia and is performed under "catastrophic hygienic circumstances"—knives, scissors, razor blades, even pieces of broken glass.

FGM is performed on girls between the ages of four and eight, but some cultures have practiced female genital mutilation as early as a couple of days after birth and as late as just before marriage.

The operation is executed in several different ways: the removal of the clitoris; removal of the clitoris and labia; and infibulations—this is where the external genitalia are removed and the opening is stitched together so only a small hole remains. There are a variety of other disturbing methods of cutting and stretching of the external genitalia—cauterization by burning of the clitoris and tissue that surrounds the opening of the vagina.

FGM is recognized as a human rights issue. It is practiced primarily in Africa. However, it also takes place in the Middle East, South-East Asia and amongst immigrants in Europe and North America. The European Parliament has estimated 500,000 girls and women living in Europe are suffering from the ramifications of FGM. It is not known just how many girls and women in the United States have undergone the FGM procedure.

An estimated 100 million girls and women worldwide have undergone FGM and millions of girls are at risk to endure the mutilating procedure each year on the African continent alone.

FGM causes serious emotional and physical health risks for young girls and women. Studies have shown FGM is linked to complications during childbirth

and could even lead to maternal death. Other known side effects are severe pain, hemorrhage, tetanus, infection, infertility, cysts and abscesses, urinary incontinence, and psychological and sexual problems. As the prevalence of FGM persists throughout the world, many women are unaware that this practice is a form of violence against women and children and can amount to torture.

In a recent interview in *Bazaar Magazine*, former supermodel and victim of FGM, Waris Dirie talks about the release of the film "Desert Flower," an adaptation of her 1998 book, "Desert Flower: The Extraordinary Journey of a Desert Nomad," based on her life story. The movie, scheduled to be released in 13 countries, including the United States by mid-2010, describes her incredible transformation from a "nomadic" life in the deserts of Somalia to becoming one of the world's most famous supermodels.

Ms. Dirie told the magazine her journey was "a dream and a nightmare at the same time." In 1997, she set aside her career and revealed her personal experience of the practice of FGM. She had suffered the procedure when she was just five-years-old.

Since the revelation, Ms. Dirie decided to end her life as a model and dedicate her life to fighting such an "archaic ritual." Through the founding of the non-profit Waris Dirie Foundation, she has been able to crusade for her mission and assist people all over the world. Ms. Dirie says she plans to show "Desert Flower" free of charge in Africa and to educate lawyers in Kenya on how to help women affected by FGM.

To help combat and bring awareness to FGM, in 1989, world leaders decided children needed a "special convention" because people under 18-years-old need special care and protection. The leaders also wanted to make sure that the world recognized that children have human rights too.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children aged 17 and under a comprehensive set of rights. The United Kingdom

signed the Convention in 1990, ratified it in 1991 and it came into effect January 1992. When a country ratifies the Convention, it agrees to do everything it can to implement it.

In America, when we think about human rights, we seldom think about fighting against FGM. But, it is happening around us and it's happening to young girls who are vulnerable and weak. It is our responsibility to help put an end to this horrific human rights violation against women. New feminism should require no less.

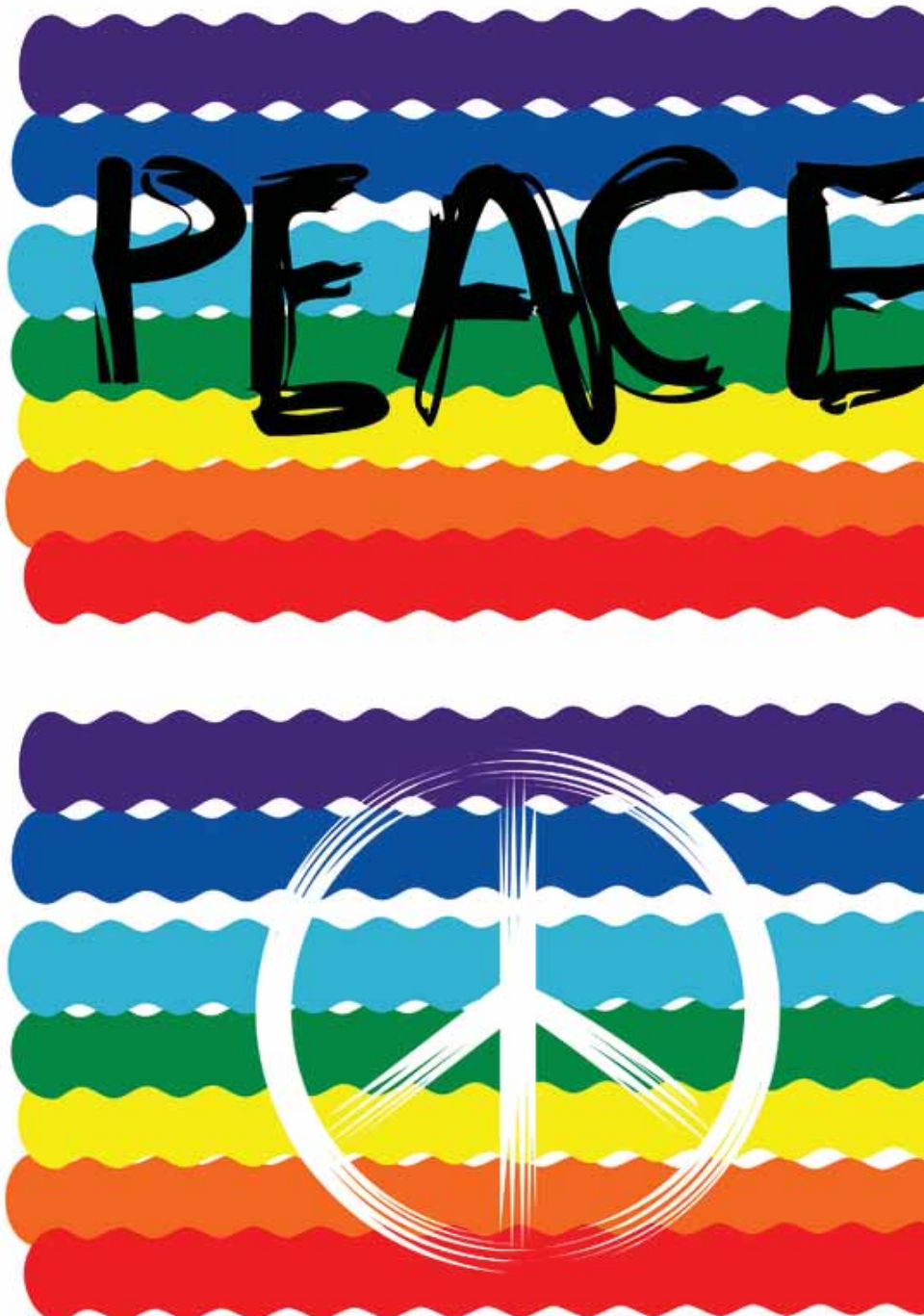
- Susan Oliver Nelson is a writer living in Washington, DC.

Noam Chomsky and anti-war ethics

By Michael Fowler

Since the sixties, Noam Chomsky has been calling the United States an imperialist nation and continues to do so, now saying U.S. actions in Iraq and Afghanistan are imperialist. The purpose of Mr. Chomsky's philosophy is to destroy the legitimacy of any and all acts of force by an ethical, lawful state. In essence, Mr. Chomsky asserts that such a state is identical to barbarians who use force for self-interest, i.e. dictators and fascists. By doing this, Mr. Chomsky is willing to put heroes such as policemen and soldiers on the same level as villains such as murderers and terrorists.

According to Mr. Chomsky's twisted reasoning, "...torture has been routine practice from the early days of the conquest of the national territory, and then beyond, as the imperial ventures of the "infant empire" -- as George Washington called the new Republic" (The Torture Memos, Chomsky, May 24, 2009). He believes that George Bush was simply following some "secret" mandate from Washington to expand the empire through the use of torture. To buttress his case, he cites the Yale historian John Lewis Gaddis, "Adams as the grand strategist who laid the foundations for the Bush Doctrine: the doctrine that 'expansion is the path to security'" (The Unipolar Moment and the Culture of Imperialism, Chomsky, December 3, 2009). Yes, John Adams (1735 - 1826) is responsible for the War on Terror, not the 19 terrorists who



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orchestrated the takeover of four commercial planes on September 11, 2001, killing thousands of innocent people. You can learn a lot at college.

Mr. Chomsky slanders Washington as a vile Machiavellian: “A prince that acquires new territories and removes the natives to give his people room will be remembered as the father of the nation (Machiavelli).’ And George Washington agreed. He wanted to be the father of the nation. His view was that ‘the gradual extension of our settlement will as certainly cause the savage as the wolf to retire, both being beasts of prey, though they differ in shape.”

(Modern-Day American Imperialism: Middle East and Beyond, Chomsky, Boston University, April 24, 2008)

Mr. Chomsky bases this statement from Letter to James Duane dated September 7, 1783. In his letter, Washington was appealing for a non-violent resolution with the Indians and to find peaceful means of living with them on a common land, not advocating war. “As the Country, is large enough to contain us all; and as we are disposed to be kind to them and to partake of their Trade...draw a veil over what is past and establish a boundary line between them and us beyond which we will endeavor to restrain our People from Hunting or Settling.” Washington’s intent to Duane was clear: peaceful means of coexistence.

His thought that directly precedes Mr. Chomsky lifted quote is this, “I am clear in my opinion, ... of being upon good terms with the Indians, and the propriety of purchasing their Lands in preference to attempting to drive them by force of arms out of their Country; which as we have already experienced is like driving the Wild Beasts of the Forest...” In other words, if you make war with the Indians, they will scatter in the country side and return to hunt you down, as they are to be respected as is the wolf.

Mr. Chomsky lacks credibility because he has to rely on fabrication of events in order to support his opinions. Fabrication is part of the leftist anti-War movement which is really the

leftist/socialist “Make America Surrender” movement.

The second part is asserting that equal actions (war and terrorism) are equal in ethics. Everyone agrees that murder is evil, and murder is caused by killing. However, not all killing is evil—certainly, accidents and self-defense stand out as two exceptions. Chomsky must assert, for his reasoning to be sound, all value judgments can be based on actions alone and not on intentions; he confuses actions and intentions. In contrast, Western ethics are quite clear in saying that a person can commit the very same action with more than one intent. Every child knows that you can step on someone’s toes with or without harmful intent, yet the action is the same.

Here is perfect example of his inability to separate actions and ethics: “...the most elementary principle of just war theory, universality. Those who cannot accept this principle should have the decency to keep silent about matters of right and wrong, or just war”(Noam Chomsky, Hegemony or Survival, 2003, pg 202). He follows this assertion with the question, “Have Cuba and Nicaragua been entitled to set off bombs in Washington, New York, and Miami in self-defense against ongoing terrorist attack?” His point is that any and all states have equal right to the use of force or no one has it, “universality.” This is a complete failure on his part to differentiate between fascist dictators and communist death-squads from those who have no other self-interested motive other than justice.

The greatest danger of Mr. Chomsky’s anti-war ethics and lies is that it fuels the anti-war movement. Moreover, it paves the way for the college student to believe that power exists without justice as a limiting factor. Thus, making it moral to quest for power for power’s own sake, which is foundational to Marxist thought. But all power must be subservient to justice and the law, especially when American national security is at stake.

-Michael Fowler is the director of Veterans for Academic Freedom, a former Force Recon Marine, instructor of Christian apologetics, author and talk-radio host.

Exposing the abortion industry's racist agenda

by Joseph R. Giganti

A pro-life ad, produced by Focus on the Family which aired during the Super Bowl, has many pro-choice and radical feminists up in arms. The ad tells the story of Pam Tebow, who, despite pressure to abort her unborn son, chose to carry him to term. That baby boy grew up to be college football phenomenon Tim Tebow—the first college sophomore to win the Heisman Trophy and the first college quarterback to both rush and pass for 20 touchdowns in a single season.

The standard script of many pro-abortion and so-called feminist organizations regarding this ad is that it is an affront to women's rights, and that such examples oversimplify the issue. Planned Parenthood—the nation's largest abortion provider—has even released a video featuring former NFL player Sean James and Olympic gold medalist Al Joyner responding to the ad even before it had aired. At one point, Mr. James states, "We're working for a day when every woman will be valued." Apparently, that does not include the thousands of little girls who will never get the chance to mature into "women of value" because their lives will be snuffed out through abortion.

In reality, what's really stoking this controversy is the abortion industry's desire to hide the truth behind their agenda: racism. Tim Tebow is the perfect foil for such bigoted fodder. He is a white, home-schooled Christian boy poised for great success in life—the left's stereotype of the pro-life movement.

It is no accident that of all the pro-abortion celebrities available, Planned Parenthood chose two black athletes, the first of which (James) is well-known for his involvement in promoting "positive role models for...black athletes," and the second of which (Joyner) was born to a teenage mother. This is intended to perpetuate the myth that Planned Parenthood and their ilk are more in tune with the needs and desires of minority cultures than pro-lifers. Ironic, since this comes from an organization that was

founded by one of the most virulent racists in history: Margaret Sanger. She was the one who wanted the organization's motto to be, "To Breed a Race of Thoroughbreds"; she was the one who bragged in her autobiography about speaking to the Klu Klux Klan because they understood the problem that "negroes" represented; and she is the one who thought that eugenics was the only logical way to perpetuate the human race.

To help demonstrate this premise, consider a very similar situation from just five years ago, when rapper Nick Cannon released his moving single, "[Can I Live?](#)" Like the Tebow ad, this song told the true and very personal story of Mr. Cannon's mother, whose own pregnancy was a textbook argument for termination according to that industry's "logic." She was only 17-years-old and a single, minority woman without the necessary means needed to raise a child. Mr. Cannon's music video shows him hugging his mother and saying, "*I love life. I love my mother for giving me life...Thanks for listening, Mama thanks for listening.*" Similar to the Tebows, her gift of love and sacrifice by choosing life was met with great reward. Not only did it give young Mr. Cannon the chance at life, but he grew up to enjoy success as a rapper, actor and now TV and radio broadcaster.

But Mr. Cannon's song/video goes much further than the Tebow ad, which Focus on the Family has said does not even contain the word "abortion." Mr. Cannon's song is a no-holds-barred study of abortion and its true nature, including images of doctors sporting scalpels; a woman laying on an abortion clinic table, holding her stomach as she peers at her unborn son on the ultrasound screen; and heart-wrenching lyrics such as, "*Hopefully you'll make the right decision, And don't go through with the knife incision...Hopping off da bus when the rain is pouring, What you want? Morning sickness or the sickness of mourning?*"

Unlike the Tebows, Mr. Cannon and his mother

were't targeted by "anticipatory response" ads like the aforementioned video containing Mr. James and Mr. Joyner. Incredibly, according to a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article from August 2, 2005, representatives from Planned Parenthood punted when asked about the "Can I Live?" video release, saying they were not familiar with Mr. Cannon's song or video despite its prevalence in the media.

Planned Parenthood has revealed its racist underbelly. Attacking the Tebows is easy because it perpetuates the stereotypes and myths specifically created by the abortion industry to cover up their minority-targeted agenda. But if the industry attacked Mr. Cannon for his video, which debuted at number one on BET, their real motives would have quickly been exposed in the crossfire. Therefore, it was much safer to give Mr. Cannon a pass.

Even though Planned Parenthood eventually put Ms. Sanger out to pasture because her loose lips threatened their agenda, they never abandoned their goal of racial genocide. For decades now, the majority of abortion clinics are in minority neighborhoods

with large black populations. So effective was this strategy that in January 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau revealed that blacks were no longer the largest minority in the United States. This distinction now belongs to the Hispanic community.

Moreover, Planned Parenthood just opened a new abortion facility in Houston, Texas—the largest of its kind in the nation. Not only does the facility dispense abortifacient contraceptives, chemical abortion drugs and offer standard surgical abortions, it also has an entire floor dedicated to late-term abortions. And the neighborhood where it resides *just happens* to have one of the largest Hispanic populations in the city.

Clearly, the spirit of Margaret Sanger lives on.

-Joseph R. Giganti is the principal of GigantiHQ and is a multimedia conservative commentator. He is the executive director of Close to Home and a board member of the John Paul II Bioethics Commission. In addition to being an in-demand speaker and broadcaster, Joe has been at the forefront of defending faith, family and freedom for almost two decades.

America's withering Christianity

By Lawrence P. Grayson

At the Super Bowl earlier this month, two proposed television commercials illustrated the on-going battle for traditional Christian values in the public square. One, a pro-life message from Focus on the Family featuring Tim Tebow, the Heisman Trophy winner for the Florida Gators, was shown by CBS. The other, an ad for ManCrunch, a gay dating service, was rejected. Is this important? Yes, because it was a victory, however small, for Christianity in a nation that is abandoning its religious heritage.

America was founded on Christian principles. It was the teachings of Christianity which produced a public consciousness that declared the natural equality of all people, with unalienable rights, innate dignity and inviolable consciences. This does not imply that the nation was founded as a theocracy. It was not. Rather, the early Americans shared



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a set of faith-based principles that were common to their numerous, but primarily, Christian denominations. These common beliefs allowed practical agreements to develop on concepts, such as freedom, the rule of law, human rights and the consent of the governed, that formed the basis of American democracy.

For most of the two centuries following its founding, America operated as a Christian society. People regularly attended religious services, churches were integral to community life and behavior was regulated by reference to Christian tenets. Although there were many exceptions, people basically pursued their ambitions, businesses conducted their activities and the nation advanced its purposes within a Christian framework. While the state was secular, it did allow religious expression in the public sphere, including in the schools which presented lessons extolling moral and virtuous behavior.

The 1950s, in many ways, was the capstone of this era, with World War II now over and the Korean War drawing to a close. The veterans had returned to civilian life. The economy was vigorous and growing. The new medium of television drew large audiences with family-oriented shows, while the National Legion of Decency was highly influential in limiting the production of morally-offensive movies. Overall, it was a time of wholesome activities, with family values reinforced in the community.

Then, early in the 1960s a series of social, military, and religious events occurred that changed American culture. Any one of these occurrences would have weakened the religious foundations of the country, but their emergence in rapid succession created a confluence that overwhelmed the existing order.

The nation had become involved in the Vietnamese struggle for independence, which escalated into a proxy war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The war was very unpopular with the American public. Civil discontent took a violent turn when, within a few years, President John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. were assassinated. Those just entering adulthood were particularly disillusioned. A small, but highly visible and vocal segment of this group, referred to as hippies, served as an unofficial vanguard for a counterculture that was much less religious. They rebelled against established institutions, adopted aspects of non-Judeo-Christian religions, experiment-

ed with psychedelic drugs, and promoted peace, love and sexual liberation.

The loosening of sexual mores infected the population as a whole. In 1960, the first oral contraceptive, referred to as “the Pill,” was brought to the public market. Sales took off exponentially. In education, religious activities that had been part of American life since the beginning of the nation, were deemed unconstitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against reading Bible passages or saying a voluntary, non-denominational prayer in school.

As these social transformations occurred, the Catholic Church was changing in unanticipated ways. In 1965, the recommendations of Vatican Council II introduced far-reaching changes in many aspects of church and liturgical affairs. The result was confusion among the laity and inconsistency in guidance by the clergy. At a time when societal trends required a strong religious response, Catholics, as a whole, did not have the knowledge or conviction to stand apart from the trends of the masses. By 1970, it was estimated that two-thirds of Catholic women in America were using contraceptives. Clearly, the Catholic Church was not in a position to fight the secular and irreligious forces shaping America.

In the last half century, the nation has continued to become more irreligious. There has been a progressive assault on the public display and acknowledgement of religion, a movement to impose secular norms on religiously-based organizations and activities, and a growth in social practices and political action that is antithetical to Christian beliefs. Marriage, the family, and even life itself have been degraded.

A radical feminism spread rapidly throughout the country in the late 1960s and early 1970s, whose effect, among others, was to devalue the roles of men and women in marriage. California passed a law that legalized no-fault divorce, paving the way for other states to follow suit. This transformed the marriage bond from a life-long covenant into a civil agreement for material security. In 2004, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts legalized homosexual marriages. Other states are doing likewise.

With the emphasis in marriage on individual satisfaction, there was no reason why pregnancy should hinder personal desires. In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that women had a constitutional

right to abortion, a procedure that has been allowed even to the partial birth of a full-term infant. Since the ruling, some 50 million children have been killed.

These changes have occurred with minimal resistance from Christians, even though they form the majority of the United States population. Too many Christians have accepted the notion that religion is a private matter, isolating their religious beliefs so that they do not impose on their behavior in the secular world.

The movement to make God irrelevant in national life must be reversed or America as we know it will cease to exist. The road to a revitalized public morality is not a return to the past, but to developing a doctrine of the modern world based on Christian principles.

While clergy and laity must speak out on public issues that violate Christian teaching, much more must be done. Far-reaching changes are called for in the institutions, laws, and activities of existing society. It will take a stupendous effort to bring about the spiritual and moral revitalization needed to order the collective temperament of the nation in accordance with a Christian understanding of life. If it is not done, however, our faith, as well as that of our children and their descendents, will be at risk. Although the task is daunting, we are not alone—God is on our side.

-Lawrence P. Grayson is a visiting scholar for the School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America.

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Obama curbs charitable giving

By Robyn Wethington

The fiscal 2011 budget reveals President Barack Obama's intent to draw \$291 billion over the next decade by reducing tax write-offs from charitable donations, according to an article in *The Daily Caller*. Reducing tax write-offs imposes a government mandated burden on donating by removing the incentive to give. This specifically affects American philanthropists who make more than \$250,000, punishing the country's most successful citizens. The Obama administration expects this sector to continue giving regardless of this new initiative that cuts into their tax write-offs.

According to the article, Robert Williams, a senior fellow at the Tax Policy Center, "The rule change would make it about 10 percent more expensive for individuals affected to donate to charity." He estimates this would correspond to "a \$10 billion drop in donations out of the \$300 billion Americans give annually."

But Tom Riley, vice president for communications at the Philanthropy Roundtable argues that "this of all times isn't the time to take actions that would discourage charitable giving. The need for non-profits hasn't been higher for a generation."

Charitable giving is essential to helping the poor. The Catholic Church is committed to alleviating poverty and helping those in need. The Republican Party also believes in helping the poor and encourages philanthropy. Democrats, on the other hand, believe government intervention is necessary to promote philanthropy. Democrats want to



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tax the rich in order to redistribute money to the poor.

Despite the Catholic Church sharing many of the same values on abortion and same-sex marriage as the Republican Party, the majority of Catholics still vote Democratic. According to an article in *Washington Monthly* November 16, 2009, “A year ago, according to exit polls, President Obama won 53% of the Catholic vote, seven points stronger than John Kerry’s total from 2004.” Also mentioned in this article is the fact that pro-choice Catholics now outnumber pro-life Catholics 47 to 42 percent. Among those who attend Mass weekly, the percentages were heavily skewed in the opposing direction with pro-lifers at 63 percent and those who are for legalizing abortion at 30 percent. Among the Catholic Americans who attend Mass less often, pro-choice again outnumbered pro-life Catholics 61 percent to 29 percent. The Democratic Party’s economic beliefs also play a role in attracting Catholic voters. Catholics may feel the Democratic Party is more sympathetic to the poor since their party platform advocates giving handouts and redistributing wealth to the poor. Yet the Democratic Party’s policies hurt the poor and discourage charitable giving. Hence, Catholics need to reconsider their party allegiances so that their voting reflects concern for the issues that are most important to them and that are being better legislatively supported.

If Catholics want to give to the needy, they should give to the Church or a charity, instead of voting in officials who believe in big government and an entitlement society. Instead of allowing the government to spread the country’s wealth, Catholics can donate their personal wealth as an expression of their freedom and faith. After all, giving toward a charitable cause you believe in, is more philanthropic giving bureaucrats the power to determine where the country’s ex-

tra money goes?

Some argue that with a lack of federal funding, charities lose money. Why? Because priority is put elsewhere, into programs such as Medicaid that are put into the entitlement category, which means, by law, Congress has to continue leaving room in the budget for them and is not allowed to cut their spending. Social security is also in this category. In fact, two-thirds of the budget consists of entitlements, which are not up for budget cuts. Therefore, when any of your electorates, for example, say they’re going to cut spending across the board, they mean in the areas they are allowed to touch—that is, one-third of the Gross Domestic Product.

It certainly won’t help to increase taxes, thereby depleting money from American pockets. Without extra money in people’s personal budgets, there is little incentive to give elsewhere. By continuing to burden working citizens with fiscal, governmental intervention, Uncle Sam encourages hoarding your money instead of giving it away to those in need.

Tax write-offs, on the other hand, are a brilliant way to provide incentives to those who choose to give. If those who by nature and faith choose to donate their money to charities are alleviated from the burden of government intervention through tax write-offs, it makes sense that they will continue to exercise their philanthropic right. As soon as the government steps in and eliminates this incentive, the country risks seeing people shy away from giving as much--if at all.

Government intervention such as Mr. Obama’s new policy of reducing tax write-offs for charitable donations will ultimately discourage people from giving. As is the rule for any good medicine and any government, “First, do no harm.”

-Robyn Wethington is an outreach coordinator for The Edmund Burke Institute. She is also a student at the University of Missouri’s School of Journalism where she is majoring in Strategic Communications with a minor in Political Science.

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