

The Homefront Vanguard

From the homestead, to the hometown, for the homeland.

A community manuscript providing the rationale and roadmap for a statewide grassroots domestic collaborative per each county under the auspices of The ChrisCorps Commission.

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Homefront Vanguard

Introduction

The law of increasing entropy (the second law of thermodynamics) tells us that all things, over time, will deteriorate. It says the universe is always moving towards a greater state of disorder, or entropy. Cars rust, our bodies break down with age, and civilizations eventually fall into a state of decline. This is inevitable and cannot be halted or reversed unless a new source of energy is infused.

When a person, community or nation degenerates, apart from a new source of work or energy transfer, it generally does so precipitously. The *Homefront Vanguard* has been formed to contribute to that new source of energy, doing whatever work is needed to help reverse the marked deterioration of our local and national society. In short, the mission of the *Homefront Vanguard* is to protect, preserve and perpetuate the homefront.

The word “vanguard” has a twofold designation: (1) a group of people leading the way in new developments or ideas, and (2) the foremost part of an advancing army. This *Homefront Vanguard*, as an arm of the *ChrisCorps Operation*, will seek to encapsulate and reflect both aspects. Because we’re in a war of ideas, It will embody a small advancing army that leads the way in new developments and better ideas.

Sometimes, however, these “new” ideas will end up being nothing more than the resurfaced old ideas of days gone by and past civilizations. Because there is nothing new under the sun, there is much wisdom to be found in the great minds and ideas of antiquity.

For example, to say that the American homefront (from our hometowns to our homeland) *begins at home* is certainly not a new concept, but it has been a vanishing one in our contemporary world as guiding principles go. Nevertheless, it is no less true; in fact, it is absolutely true, which means it is true for all people in all places at all times.

That of course means that whether it's the local or national community – one's hometown or homeland – it really does all begin back at the homestead. So that is where the *Homefront Vanguard* will begin, and that is where the balance of our work must be done.

Homestead, Hometown, Homeland

If the cornerstone of society is the institution of the family (and it most certainly is), then protecting the rights of liberty and preserving the rule of law is, ultimately, all about protecting and preserving the family.

Civic governance and civil engagement is a *community-centered* activity, whether it's local, state or federal. Since the familial community is a child's first taste of community life, how it cares about and interacts with its hometown and homeland (or not) is very much influenced by its home life experience. Therefore, it goes without saying that because it remains a child's most primitive form of civic life – because the American homefront begins at home – so must we.

Any discussion on civic life that does not begin with a discussion on the condition of the American home misses the boat and will be dealing mainly with symptoms. Societal ills are family ills; an apathetic citizenry reflects a similar situation at home. An angry citizenry reflects a toxic home experience, and a largely uninformed citizenry smacks of homes that are either too busy, too stressed or too self-absorbed to look outside.

The *Homefront Vanguard*, therefore, fervently believes in the institution of the family, viewing it as central to civic life. Moreover, it is fully convinced that every form of community (civic, scholastic or ecclesiastic) is colored and informed by the familial context of a person's homestead.

Accordingly, the *Homefront Vanguard* is dedicated to strengthening the homeland by fortifying our hometowns, which begins and ends with the homestead. Prudently caring for our towns and cities means making government work for our families rather than the other way around.

In short, we guard and preserve the homefront when we perpetuate the homeland, through the hometown, for the homestead. And that is best done civically in two ways: **(1) preserving the rule of law and (2) protecting the rights of liberty.**

Rule of Law

Concerning the former (rule of law), we affirm as sacrosanct our brilliant and beloved United States Constitution. There's never been a document like it, and none has lasted longer. Its genius is unmatched anywhere in the world and by any other standard in human history, and it has served repeatedly as the paragon of all national charters to emulate.

The reason is because of the priority it gives and the balance it strikes between the *rule of law* and the *rights of liberty*. Law without liberty is bondage, but so is liberty without law. The former produces a totalitarian state, the latter social anarchy. Hence, there are only two options: either freedom from the rule of law (anarchy) or liberty under the rule of law (democracy).

This intimates the inexorable link between law and governance, because you can't have one without the other. In fact, the three great functions of government are utterly law-oriented and law-driven: (1) the making of laws, (2) the application of laws, and (3) the enforcement of laws.

But not only is the rule of law the guardian of liberty, without it there can be no sense of real justice either. This truth reverberates from Rousseau to

the highest court in the land. The former (Rousseau) stated repeatedly that men owe justice and liberty to the law and to the law alone.

He said, "Constitutional government in which men are citizens is one under which each individual obeys himself when he obeys the law, and so remains quite free." A familiar phrase on the Supreme Court building in Washington D.C. conveyed the same idea: "Equal justice under law."

Above all, though, it all culminates in the connection between law and peace. In America, because of our Constitution, the dual mandate of every government entity (local, state or federal) is to enforce the law and keep the peace. Apart from both, there can be no real justice or true liberty.

In John Locke's words, "The end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge, freedom. Where there is no law, there is no freedom. For liberty is to be free from restraint and violence from others, which cannot be where there is no law."

He's saying there are really only two options: the way of the civilized and the way of the uncivilized, the respectful and the disrespectful, the humane and the inhumane, the democratic and the dictatorial. As the great Italian political philosopher Machiavelli explained it, "There are two ways of contesting: the one by law, the other by force. The first method is proper to men, the second to beasts."

And both have their logical and inevitable consequences, as Locke demonstrated: "... when we manage our contests or differences by law, the thing we call 'peace' reigns. But when we have to manage our differences or our contesting by force, then we have war."

He said, "Where the one settling things by law ends, the other settling them

by force begins. The reign of law is the reign of peace; the absence of law is war.”

The timeless words of Abraham Lincoln from his famous Lyceum Address in 1838, reflect his own indelible reverence for the law:

“Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular, the laws of the country; and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and Laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor;--let every man remember that to violate the law, is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the character of his own, and his children's liberty.

“Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap. Let it be taught in schools and seminaries and in colleges; let it be written in Primers, spelling books and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice.”

Lincoln understood the interminable link between the rule of law and a healthy government, between the marriage of law and justice, between the inseparable dynamics of law and peace, and ultimately between the complementary nature of law and liberty — and the Great Emancipator was passionate about reinforcing that link. For the preservation of each, we should be as well.

Because if we are to stand in the great tradition of Lincoln, who himself stood in the great tradition of Aristotle, Aquinas, John Locke and our Founding Fathers, we must believe as they did, that the law is not for the good of those in power, but for those not in power – that is, for the common good.

As Locke said, “with the consent of the governed” (a democracy); as Aquinas said, “by their representatives” (a republic).

Which brings us back to the balance between law and liberty. Clarity on both is crucial, given the interminable distortions and perversions of both that are forever being perpetrated and manipulated by the uninformed, the cynical, the opportunists or the adversaries of this American republic.

For it almost goes without saying in these present days, that America as a country and Americans as a people, are in dire need of a more mature understanding of the doctrine of freedom as articulated by our history, our Founding Fathers and our Constitution, not the ever-shifting whims of a fickle culture. The former is solid rock, the latter is sinking sand.

Rights of Liberty

There is a philosophy or worldview (even a theology) behind the idea of liberty, and while it is simple, it is not simplistic. Though it is straight-forward, it is also very nuanced, packed with substance and depth.

For example, superficially-educated Americans are notorious for confusing and conflating the three distinct kinds of freedom: social, psychological and spiritual.

Social freedom involves the actions between fellow citizens in terms of society and the state (i.e., political, civic or economic freedom). This is the kind of freedom at risk when one human being enslaves another or when government takes over private businesses or over-regulates them – same with religious persecution, racial bigotry, “cancel culture” or violent protests. Social freedom is exercised horizontally, in relation to others.

Psychological freedom has to do with the human free-will related to our daily personal choices. The individual decision to do this or that based on self-determination rather on one’s background, dad’s vocation, geography,

economic status, ethnic identity or religious tradition. Psychological freedom is exercised internally, in relation to oneself.

And thirdly, *spiritual freedom* (or moral freedom) is what our founding fathers called “liberty of conscience.” It is also what theologians speak of concerning the freedom of sin or the freedom *from* sin. It includes the inherent self-destructive choices humankind is free to make as well as the lies it may come to believe, which not only promote self-deception but also hold them captive to a host of moral and spiritual mind blinds. This kind of freedom is exercised vertically, in relation to one’s God.

It is important to clarify, therefore, that within the context of this initiative (the *Homefront Vanguard*), we will be referring to social or civic freedom (though it is true that social, psychological and spiritual freedom can bleed into and be affected by each other at different times and to varying degrees). Nonetheless, notable confusion and inevitable conflicts arise when one kind of freedom is conflated with the other two.

That said, we turn our focus here to civic (societal) freedom, and we begin with a pair of inter-related queries and conundrums: (1) what is freedom? and (2) who is free?

Is freedom acting as you wish, doing whatever you please? If it is, then that would have to apply to everyone, would it not? If everyone in your hometown is doing exactly what they want, are you free? Are they?

These questions probe the essence and boundaries of freedom, and as they do, they differentiate between *freedom and force* as well as between the *self* and the *other*.

Freedom and force ... freedom is acting according to one’s will, force (or

coercion) is acting against one's will. When a person is forced, he or she is not acting but is being acted upon. If a man is being physically pushed or pulled against his will, he is not initiating the movement himself but being moved (coerced) by someone else.

Self and other ... self-determination is the essence of freedom, not to be confused with selfishness, self-absorption or "every man for himself." The former is desirable, the latter is not.

Freedom comes from the self, force from the other. Mortimer Adler describes it well: "When what I do is caused, or if you will, is forced upon me by the other, when I am under the power of the other, I am not free. But when what I do, what I think, how I become, flows entirely from myself, I am free."

Which brings us to the second conundrum, *who is free?* The short answer is, the self-governed are free. In William Penn's words, "The most natural and human government is that of consent. For such government binds us freely when men hold their liberty by true obedience to laws of their own making."

That is to say, we are free when the laws that we submit to are the same laws we made, the laws created with our consent. We are only truly free when we are self-governed. That is what a constitutional, republican form of government means – having a participatory say as a fellow citizen in the making of our laws.

"In other words," said Adler, "when men live under a republic and a constitutional government, and have the status, the rights, and the privileges of citizenship, they are free even when they obey the law, because under these conditions, when men live under a body of laws to which they have given their consent and in the making of which they have had some voice, they act according to their own will, their own will by their

consent, with their own participating voice, when they obey the law. This shows us a conception of freedom as self-government, not freedom from government but freedom through having a voice in government and through one's own voluntary consent to government."

Immanuel Kant was one of the forebears of this view: "Freedom is independence of the compulsory will of another. And so it is the citizen in a republic who has constitutional freedom because he obeys no other law than that to which he has given his consent or approval."

That means people who live under the tyranny of a despotic leader are not free, obviously, because they are subject to the random rules and personal whims of another individual to which they have not given consent and with whom they have had no voice.

But as John Locke said, "Freedom consists in not being subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary will of another man." So if this is true, far from restricting freedom, rule of law always has the propensity of strengthening and reinforcing it, because it serves as freedom's very cornerstone.

License

This leads to an important clarifying distinction between liberty and license. Because law is the foundation of liberty, it can be said with confidence that just laws never restrict liberty – only unjust laws do that.

Consistent with that notion, therefore, is the certitude that when a person disregards, ignores, or rebels against the law, he is not free because he has crossed the line into license. A licentious action makes one less free, not more.

If law is the basis upon which liberty is built, then to disrespect the law is to indulge in license, not liberty. License is the very opposite of liberty. Or as Adler says, “Freedom is action which serves a man’s own good and license according to this theory defeats his good.”

The antithetical view is that law always flies in the face of liberty, regardless of whether it is just or unjust. According to this perspective, a just law obstructs or restricts a person’s liberty just as much as an unjust law does. The logical conclusion to this line of thinking, then, is that there is no difference between liberty and license. To be truly free, goes the reasoning, is to not be bound by any law, whether just or unjust.

Bentham’s classic query represents this view best and reflects the place to which many Americans have devolved: “Is not the liberty to do evil, liberty? If not, what is it?”

Answer: license ... and from that, bondage.

So constitutional freedom – liberty under law – is a profound and powerful idea, and “ideas have consequences.” One of those consequences is the speed with which it spreads. As George Washington once observed: *“Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth.”*

But a converse and adverse consequence is equally efficient, because liberty is fragile and can be quickly extinguished. As President Reagan warned us, *“Freedom is something that cannot be passed on genetically.”* And *“it is never more than one generation away from extinction.”* Therefore, *“every generation has to learn how to protect and defend it.”* Why? Because *“once freedom is gone, it is gone for a long, long time.”*

Are “We The People” Free?

So in our present day, how do things stack up? Are “we the people” free? Is freedom in good shape or is it at risk? You be the judge ...

- Are the people free if 40-50% of them don't vote?
- Are the people free if they are riddled with and paralyzed by layers of cultural "mind blinds," because up to half of the body politic can no longer discern what is objective truth or reality?
- Are the people free if they can't see through the lies and the blatant contradictions of relativism and postmodernist doctrine?
- Are the people free if their youth community has the highest teenage suicide rate in the nation?
- Are the people free if their schools are no longer the safest places in their community, but in fact are so stressful for kids, that the suicide rates actually go up when school is in session?
- Are the people free if their state and local educational systems are so addicted to and co-dependent on federal funds that the very thought of breaking free causes a cataclysmic meltdown?
- Are the people free if their religious freedoms are being restricted, restrained or impinged upon, whether in our schools or in society?
- Are the people free if their young people are so lost in the dark hole of social media, they either can't crawl out or don't want to?
- Are the people free if they're glibly accepting or blithely accommodating the constructionists' new view of human sexuality?
- Are the people free if they have no power, no recourse or no desire to stop the spending of \$20,000 a year to educate a child?

- Are the people free if their pastors are not addressing the issues of this reconstructed view of sexuality from the pulpit, and therefore failing to provide their people with a rock-solid apologetic for the biblical view of human sexuality?
- Are the people free if their federal government is 37 trillion dollars in debt?
- Are the people free if their laws do not protect and defend the lives of the most innocent and defenseless amongst us?
- Are the people free if even one of the country's political parties, when in charge of the federal government, not only fails to secure our borders, failing to protect its people, but passive-aggressively advocates for open borders?
- Are the people free if the majority of the people are uninformed voters (low information voters)?
- Are the people free if the elections are being tilted, one way or the other, by those low information voters?
- Are the people free if the elections are manipulated, whether on a massive scale or even a little bit, in any part of the country?
- Are the people free if their homes and their schools are becoming some of the most toxic places on earth.
- Are the people free if they're not the ones prompting private citizens to run for office? (Translated: We the People should not want anyone to represent us, who wants to be elected so badly, or covets the
- position so desperately – has such a lust of power – that they will say or do anything to get into or stay in office)?

- Are the people free if they cannot see through calculated politicians who manipulate them with their cleverly-crafted words, both by what they say and by what they *don't* say?

Rhetorical Shell Games

Candid conversations are hard to find in some political circles because (some contend) the less Americans understand about a given law or policy, the less likely they are to object. It's easier to confuse an audience with smoke and mirrors than it is to debate them.

Confusing language (a particularly insidious strategy) is a tool used by big government actors to pull a veil over any spurious legislation. Its many forms range from technical jargon to the complete redefinition of words.

- Recession is no longer defined as "two consecutive quarters of negative GDP growth."
- Homelessness now is called "residentially challenged."
- Tax increase? A "mandatory expansion of citizen-imposed charges."

The American people have a right to know what their government is doing, absent of bad-faith gibberish. The truth sets us free, so we must demand politicians shoot it straight and tell us the truth.

Therefore, in this present chapter of the American story, by the definition and standards of American history, the Constitution and our Founding Fathers, the question begs an answer, are we truly free? Or have many of the citizenry come to confuse and conflate liberty with license? Because as Walter Cronkite said decades ago, *"There is no such thing as a little freedom. Either you are all free, or you are not free."*

Freedom must be well-defined and understood before it can be fully appreciated and vigorously defended. In fact, a mature understanding of freedom is its first line of defense. Apart from that, it will be easily twisted,

manipulated and perverted by those who either don't fully understand it themselves, or ultimately don't care. The latter are the ones to beware of because they will do anything to get into power and anything to stay there. They often become "the enemy within," and therefore, can be the greatest threat to freedom.

Freedom of Conscience

But a deeper understanding of freedom must begin with the architects themselves and the foundational principles with which they began. We're speaking of course of the founders and the granddaddy freedom of them all ... *freedom of conscience*.

It is news to many that religious, economic or civic freedom are not the roots of our personal liberties, they are the fruits. The root of freedom is what our forebears called *the freedom of conscience*. That was the heart and soul of the other core American liberties and what energized our great revolution.

The liberty of conscience was viewed as a sacred right in colonial days. When the Constitution was being drafted, in fact, the notion of the freedom of conscience knew no opposition. Moreover, violation of this core freedom was considered a direct "offense against God, not against man." No wonder, then, that John Stuart Milton wrote, "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."

Above all liberties? Yes, that was the perspective of the times, which is why freedom of conscience was considered an implicit right, and therefore, the foundation of the First Amendment. As Thomas Jefferson held, "No provision in our Constitution ought to be dearer to man than that which protects the rights of conscience against the enterprises of the civil authority."

The early drafts of the First Amendment were laced with conversations about this pivotal right. The very first proposal, in fact, issued by James Madison, was written to read as follows: “The civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, [n]or shall any national religion be established, nor shall the full and equal rights of conscience be in any manner, nor on any pretext, infringed.”

A subsequent draft proposed by Fisher Ames affirmed the same emphasis: “Congress shall make no law establishing religion, or to prevent the free exercise thereof, or to infringe the rights of conscience.” A little background might be helpful on how the freedom of conscience came to be viewed as the basis for all other freedoms:

The Reformation of the Church began in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Roman Catholic Church. The Reformation was significant because it was the beginning of the idea that religion can occur outside of a church and within an individual. Martin Luther realized that his salvation depended on his faith alone and did not depend on works or doing “good things” for the church. He realized he had an individual connection with God outside of the church and the main reason for this connection was his conscience. In fact, conscience was absolutely integral to Luther’s theology, declaring it to be the “bearer of man's relation with God,” and the “religious root of man.” This was when the liberation of conscience in the West was birthed.

In the 17th century, Roger Williams built on Luther’s belief. Williams maintained that conscience was not only a gift of God given to all people but a natural, inherent right, and he sought to protect the liberty of conscience through the right of religious freedom. (This emerging connection must not be lost because this is where the crucial link between both liberties was forged.)

Williams’ convictions about protecting the liberty of conscience to promote equality and a better society were quite original at the time and (primarily)

comprised the religious realm. Subsequent thinkers like John Locke would continue to develop the idea.

Locke in fact argued that conscience makes moral judgments that “require Reasoning and Discourse, and some Exercise of the Mind, to discover the certainty of their Truth.” For Locke, conscience makes judgments based on the knowledge one already has, which can be acquired through religion or reason alone.

Locke affirmed freedom and reason as the natural rights of every human being, and therefore, civil society should not be paternalistic in nature. His contention was that individuals should be able to express, argue, and choose what form of government they would submit to. He also believed that the government should only deal with “earthly interests” and leave the “spiritual matters” up to religion.

Locke viewed “religion,” or the “salvation of souls,” as an internal matter that could only be altered by the willing consent of an individual, and therefore, viewed the enforcement of religion as impossible. John Locke’s most famous disciple was Thomas Jefferson.

Like Locke, much of Jefferson’s political theory stemmed from the idea of liberating the conscience of the individual. In 1787 he wrote, “We should . . . follow the oracle of conscience, and say nothing about what no man can understand, nor therefore believe.”

Jefferson also believed conscience was natural, rational, and vital for the development of morals. He wrote that man “was endowed with a sense of right and wrong This sense is as much a part of his nature, as the sense of hearing, seeing, feeling; it is the true foundation of morality”

He believed in fundamental moral truths that could be found in all religions such as “acting honestly towards all, benevolently to those who fall within

our way, respecting sacredly their rights, bodily and mental, and cherishing especially their freedom of conscience, as we value our own.” Moreover, Jefferson believed morals and a sense of public virtue were critical “to orderly government.”

James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution,” who was greatly influenced by Jefferson, also advocated earnestly for the liberty of conscience. In 1785, Madison wrote his famous Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments in which he stated, “The Religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate. This right is in its nature an unalienable right.” He also wrote that “the opinions of men, depending only on the evidence contemplated by their own minds cannot follow the dictates of other men.”

Madison ultimately sought to protect the liberty of conscience by limiting the government’s powers through the Constitution. He was highly reluctant about the need for an enumeration of rights in the Constitution because he could not imagine the government established by the Constitution ever gaining enough power to infringe on natural rights. However, after much pressure, Madison did end up drafting the “Bill of Rights,” including the First Amendment.

The discussions surrounding the drafting of the First Amendment demonstrates the place liberty of conscience held in the founders’ minds. In a letter from Madison to Jefferson written in 1788, Madison wrote “there is great reason to fear that a positive declaration of some of the most essential rights could not be obtained in the requisite latitude. I am sure that the rights of conscience in particular, if submitted to public definition, would be narrowed much more than they are likely ever to be by an assumed power.”

Madison feared that listing natural rights, such as conscience, would

eventually end up only limiting them. For example, a major concern in declaring the “free exercise of religion” as a right was the protection of those who did not exercise any “religion.” One congressman stated that he “hoped . . . [t]he amendment would be made in such a way as to secure the rights of conscience, and a free exercise of religion, but not to patronize those who professed no religion at all.”

However, Madison ultimately decided not to specify the freedom of conscience and instead verbalized religious liberty and the freedom of speech in the First Amendment when it was ratified in 1791. No one knows how or why this decision came about, but history reveals the decision was for the protection of the liberty of conscience.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech...”

Those first twenty-two words contained in the First Amendment protect the freedom of religion and the freedom of speech. Because both are front and center, one can reasonably draw parallel conclusions: (1) the freedoms of religion and speech are central and foundational, and (2) they have a connection.

Without understanding the previously stated context, the connection between free speech and free religion may be somewhat difficult to ascertain. With the clarified context, however, the *freedom-of-conscience* connection becomes immediately apparent.

Brian D. Schroeder Jr. (Esquire) writes, “The connection between the freedoms of speech and religion emerge when history speaks,” and he believes this connection becomes clearer with the basic laws of logic. Moreover, he contends that only when one fully understands what “conscience” is will one begin to appreciate how it binds together and reinforces the freedoms of speech and religion.

Schroeder goes on to say, “John Locke described it as an internal moral judge that may be influenced by one’s moral communities and beliefs, whether religious or not.”

Accordingly, Schroeder continued, “The Founder’s consistently described conscience as a path to God, morality, or Enlightenment. It was viewed as a gift from God, a natural light, or an inalienable aspect of being human. Conscience was seen as a distinctly rational process involving the exercise of human reason, judgment, and understanding by virtually all religious sects.”

Webster’s dictionary defines conscience as “the sense or consciousness of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one’s own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling of obligation to do right or be good.”

Essentially, the freedom of conscience is the freedom of thought or the freedom to believe according to one’s conscience. Because the early colonists (Pilgrims, Puritans, Anabaptist, etc.) had experienced a violation of conscience via established religion in Europe, the founders spoke extensively about it in the early days of the American colonies.

On the one hand, the freedom of religion protects a free conscience by prohibiting the state from forcing religion on its citizens and allowing citizens to exercise the religion of their convictions. On the other hand, the freedom of speech protects the liberty of conscience by allowing all ideas, thoughts, and opinions to be expressed, whether sacred or secular.

That is why the freedoms of religion and speech are so fundamentally informed by and contained in the freedom of conscience. It is also why freedom of conscience is so protected by the freedoms of religion and speech, as well as the other First Amendment freedoms.

Freedom of Religion

Our most beloved and revered Founding Father, George Washington, wrote the following words regarding religious freedom to a Hebrew congregation in Newport, Rhode Island in 1790:

“The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy: a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection, should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support

.
Then, referencing Scripture, he said “... May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. May the father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in his own due time and way everlastingly happy.”

Through these words, Washington affirmed religious liberty as the rare treasure that it was on the world scene, because as author Glenn Ellmers points out, it was something that “took almost 2,000 years for the Christian West to put into practice.” As the very centerpiece of the American Founding, it became one of the greatest civic achievements in the history of mankind.

And Washington clearly understood how this “natural right” was grounded in the “liberty of conscience,” the vital lynchpin of all American freedoms.

Fast forward to the troubling displays of antisemitism that we have witnessed

on some of our college campuses in present-day America as well as the aggressive attacks on the Christian community by elements of our own government, and we are truly dismayed that this treasured gift is now in jeopardy in our country. Moreover, given the less-than-subtle hostilities of the ruling class of a highly brazen secular society, we have ample reason to be alarmed.

It may give us a heightened pause to realize (on the front end) how hard it was and how long it took to purchase this precious freedom, and (on the back end) how easily and quickly we can lose it.

Concerning the former, we have to understand the pre-Christian world. Before Christianity took root in the first century, all religions were political. As Glenn Ellmers explains in his book, *The Soul of Politics*, all nations in the ancient world were closed societies where all civil and religious commitments were one and the same. The clergy were public officials (and vice-versa); human law was God's law (and vice-versa). Religious pluralism was not tolerated; in fact, it was non-existent.

It was not until the twelfth century in England that the daylight of religious liberty would dawn. When St. Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury (England's top religious leader) would not recognize Henry II's authority over the church, the two men (though close friends) reached an impasse. Their conflict highlighted the tension of whether the church and King could operate independently of each other or not.

At first, based on ancient tradition, Henry II refused to separate the political and religious spheres. Because he believed his authority came directly from the Almighty, divine worship and civic citizenship were viewed to be two sides of the same coin, and therefore, should never be put asunder. Civic law was divine law, because the idea was that human law was issued by God himself.

Ultimately, however, they resolved this fission by separating the king's sphere

of authority from the church's sphere. The king would be responsible for all political matters while the church would govern all things ecclesiastical.

In the interest of harmony and peace, their own respective independence from the other was mutually recognized and respected. And in that compromise, "the sacred fire of liberty" was lit.

The Sacred Fire of Liberty

Then St. Thomas Aquinas came along (about a century later) and built on Henry II and Becket's great compromise. By understanding and unpacking the differences philosophically between the realms of the church and the state, he began setting the stage for the full enactment of religious liberty during the American founding.

That stage was further set in 476 AD, when the Western Roman Empire fell, a first-ever situation emerged in Europe that presented several new conundrums: *the division of civil and religious authority* (for the first time in the history of Western Civilization), *the dilemma of the divine right of kings* (causing huge succession problems and resultant civil wars), and the primacy of *doctrinal content and matters of conscience* (what your theological beliefs were).

This unprecedented quandary was the result of the growth and mindset of Christianity, which was the first non-political religion in the West. Being a follower of Jesus Christ had nothing to do with your political affiliations, but solely with your faith. The upside of this new development was the universal accessibility of the gospel; the downside was the difficulties it presented for the civic arena.

This is where the genius of the founders came in. They resolved these civic difficulties by establishing a credible moral and political base for their new

nation and its republican model of governance. Incredibly, they succeeded in making the law sacrosanct while shedding the baggage of religious intolerance which was the norm in Europe.

How did they do that? Through those immortal words forever ensconced in the Declaration of Independence: “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God.” For the first time in world history, the founders did something no one else had ever done as they were giving birth to a new nation. They synthesized human reason with divine revelation and established the rock-solid intellectual and theological foundation for religious liberty in America as well as civic authority, simultaneously infusing human laws with transcendent authority.

Coherently, the “laws of nature” correspond with reason, “nature’s God” with revelation. Together, this new political theology affirmed the rational and revealed character of God as well as His corresponding natural moral order, both of which are objective, permanent and unchanging. Moreover, they are effectively comprehended through our own rational capabilities, which is why, for example, Aristotle’s thoughts in his *Nicomachean Ethics* coincide so closely with the moral system of the Judeo-Christian Bible.

So by providing a common ground for morality, they resolved the tension between all things worship and all things citizenship. As Ellmers stated, “Because the morality of the Bible and the morality of reason are compatible, one can be both a pious believer *and* a good citizen, while avoiding the contentious sectarian disputes that tore Europe apart.” [Glenn Ellmers, *Imprimis*, November 2024 | Volume 53, Issue 11]

Ellmers continues: “This common ground of morality makes it possible to delineate in a clear way the political and religious realms The Declaration’s teaching about the laws of nature and nature’s God establishes a theology of governance, a non-sectarian ground of legitimacy that makes the laws “sacred” without getting the government involved in theological disputes ...”

Finally, because truth is parallel, the founders knew that “the laws of nature

and nature's God" would also resolve the problem of religious persecution by which history and Europe were plagued. If the state and the church embrace a moral code that dovetails with both reason and revelation, each is then free to breathe without suffocating the other – the state doesn't have to chase down religious heretics and the church can't require religious tests for political candidates.

Suffice it to say, the birth of religious freedom in the West, and from there to America, was a long and painful process, requiring unmatched political genius, profound personal wisdom and a deep spiritual commitment. What the founders accomplished in making this freedom become our country's long-term legacy was nothing short of remarkable. In fact, given the arduous journey it took to bring it to fruition, it would be no hyperbole at all to call it the greatest political feat of all time.

But the prospects of losing this hard-fought freedom would not be an uphill battle like earning it was. In fact, it would be a slippery slope and could happen overnight (read: Nazi Germany of yesteryear and the recent "cancel culture" in our own country). As President Ronald Reagan reminded us over and over again, "Freedom is only one generation away from extinction." This is so, of course, because of those two ever-present complementary forces of nature: that pesky law of increasing entropy and the inherently flawed nature of humankind. Both give way to all kinds of nefarious eventualities – some calculated and intentional, some inadvertent and unintentional.

Sectarianism and Secularism

For example, over the last umpteen decades, two notions have been misunderstood, misinterpreted or flat-out manipulated to purge our government, society and schools of any vestige of faith or religion: (1) the notion of sectarianism, and (2) the "separation of church and state" doctrine.

Concerning the former – “sectarianism” – it has been misinterpreted as anything related to religion, God or matters of faith.

Concerning the latter – “separation of church and state” -- most Americans think this Jeffersonian phrasing comes directly from the Constitution itself.

Let’s take the word sectarian first ...

To be sectarian is to be a member of a sect or denomination. What our Founding Fathers meant by sectarianism was “denominationalism,” primarily in the form of a state church. The first part of the first amendment of course clarifies this: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion ... “ (i.e., establishing a denominational state church). Our mother country England had a state church (the Church of England), and it was notorious for violating freedom of conscience. The founders were determined not to repeat that mistake.

As confirmed by their writings, their speeches, their diaries and other corresponding historic documents, the Founding Fathers were clearly opposed to two things: (1) sectarianism, and (2) secularism. In terms of sectarianism, they were clearly opposed to the government adopting a state church; simultaneously, in terms of secularism, they were clearly *not* opposed to religious faith informing our laws or being integrated into public life. A secular society to the founders was unthinkable.

Evidence for this is overwhelming, but here’s just a slice: On October 11, 1798, John Adams spoke to a group of officers from the Massachusetts Militia, and said the following:

“We have no government armed with the power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition and

revenge ... would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

The founders not only were opposed to the formation of a secular society, they knew it would be the death knell of our nation.

Separation of Church and State

How about the “separation of church and state” clause? While most people think that wording is actually in the Constitution, it is not. It was a phrase coined by Thomas Jefferson in a letter that he wrote in 1802 to the Danbury Baptists of Danbury, Connecticut. They were complaining that their own religious liberty was being infringed on by Connecticut’s official state religion (Calvinist Protestantism). In his letter, Jefferson was obviously agreeing with the Danbury Baptists, reiterating and reinforcing the First Amendment. (Eventually in 1818, the state of Connecticut did away with its official state religion.)

Jefferson was asserting the First Amendment as protection for religious liberty. He was not at all suggesting the government be free of God or faith, but that churches be free of government.

So much so was this the case, that on Feb. 10, 1947, the U.S. Supreme Court, citing Jefferson’s views, defined the reach of “separation of church and state” under the First Amendment. Justice Hugo Black, writing for a 5-4 majority in *Everson v. Board of Education*, held that “neither a state nor the federal government can set up a church.” To do so was *sectarian*.

That was the context of Jefferson’s “separation of church and state” clause. To twist its meaning and intent to justify the move towards a totally secular

society and the secularized public school system is either really dishonest or grossly ignorant of founding principles.

Whatever the case, it illustrates the power of groupthink as a contagion that clouds truth and reality. Consequently, the majority of Americans now believe the secular and the sacred should be kept completely separate in the public square and in the public schools.

No doubt, some have been intentionally reckless with the use of these words, others have been unintentionally so. Either way, it has been a hapless and cavalier understanding of the original intent of the founders. The First Amendment should be our playbook, not the once obscure words wrested by secular-minded activists hell-bent on transforming our schools and our society from God-fearing to godless.

Such historical malpractice has produced a litany of blaring contradictions in our society. Here are just a few:

- The Ten Commandments can be posted on the East Wall of the Supreme Court, but not in our schools.
- The Senate, when in session, begins each day with a prayer by the Senate chaplain, but we can't do the same in our schools.
- When I was sworn in as the Wyoming State Superintendent, Gov. Gordon himself voluntarily led the ceremony in a public prayer – but we can't do so at graduation ceremonies?
- On our American coins we read the words, "In God We Trust."
- In our Pledge of Allegiance are the words, "One nation under God ..."

Classical Liberals vs. Progressive Liberals

The question of the hour is the following: *how does a person become a contemporary "liberal," (now known as a progressive)?*

It's no small conundrum and quite a remarkable stretch for people who are relatively intelligent and semi-rational to arrive at conclusions that are utterly irrational, adopting worldviews that are incoherent and unintelligible.

How does that happen? Is it a philosophical impediment or a psychological dynamic? Is it a cognitive breakdown or something more on the spiritual level? It's a fair question, and one not a few are asking!

What is the anatomy of a contemporary liberal? "Contemporary" here helps clarify what kind of a liberal we're talking about, because the modern-day liberal is quite different from the classical liberal of yesteryear. Both forms, therefore, should not be confused or conflated to be one and the same (though most of the time they are).

The contemporary liberal is fundamentally "progressive" in nature while the classical liberal is fundamentally "conservative." The former is all about change for change's sake; the latter believes in preserving the true, the good and the beautiful, and transforming that which does not coincide. Progressive liberals want to change everything, classical liberals (conservatives) believe there are some things that should never change.

Classical liberals believe in rule of law; progressive liberals only believe in those laws that jive with their agenda and narrative. Classical liberals know the difference between liberty and license; progressive liberals do not and do not care. Classical liberals believe in absolute truth, that there are some things in life that are absolutely and always true, for all people, in all places, at all times. On the contrary, progressive liberals believe truth is utterly subjective and entirely in the eyes of the beholder.

Classical liberals believe in freedom *of* religion, progressive liberals believe in freedom *from* religion. Classical liberals are tough on crime, progressive

liberals are soft. Classical liberals believe human nature is fundamentally flawed; progressive liberals believe humans are basically good.

Our Founding Fathers were classical liberals. Modern-day conservatives are classical liberals. Both believed in the liberal arts (liberating arts) of education, for example, which was the content of classical education. Classical liberals are free market people, progressive liberals prefer a socialist economy controlled by the government.

A classical liberal believed in freedom of conscience, religion, and speech. A progressive liberal, typically, has become oppositional to religious liberty – in fact, religion itself. Moreover, today's progressive liberal (exceptions notwithstanding) lean towards shutting down free speech on college campuses and has been the main driver in erecting a cancel culture.

So where did this new breed of cat come from? How does a person morph into this distorted version of American liberalism? The word "liberal" itself is generally a good term, even a very American term. The founders used it a lot in contrast to the monarchists of the day.

For example, with finances or giving, the word "liberal" implies generosity. In the marketplace of ideas, it means being open to hearing differing or contrary viewpoints. In education, it means broadening a person's general knowledge base. And in the field of law, in terms of legal interpretations, it means to be broadly construed or understood, not strictly literal or exact.

But the political and social/cultural scene is where the word has been wrenched of its traditional meaning and co-opted to cover a new nefarious mixture of Marxist socialism, relativist ideology and a postmodern worldview. This is where the new "progressive liberal" resides, which begs the question, how does anyone become attracted to this creepy version?

The theories are many and the reasons, no doubt, are nuanced and multi-layered, but to break it down, here are the most common ones:

- (1) Some progressive liberals were simply raised that way. Not a few modern-day liberal progressives become such because their parents passed it on to them. At best, they're "default liberals" and have never really questioned their views or thought them through beyond the inane sound bites of the media and pop culture.
- (2) For other modern-day "liberals" (usually the young people), they go there because it's trendy; they think it's cool to be a liberal and want desperately to be accepted, so they cave to peer pressure like an adolescent in high school would – which means this kind of "liberal" is (basically) immature at heart and very insecure. This describes most "liberal" college students and Hollywood celebrities. While they may be smart and talented, they're emotionally needy and insecure.
- (3) Another common one is that some "liberals" become such because they sincerely believe it is more compassionate to be such. This is where Churchill's pithy maxim comes from: "If you're not a liberal when you're young, you don't have a heart; if you're not a conservative when you're old, you don't have a brain."

Compassion for these kind of "liberals" is seen as being tolerant of everyone (except those with whom you disagree), condoning any lifestyle, trying not to offend anyone, letting anyone come across the border, providing cashless bail for homicide offenders, passing out needles to drug addicts and condoms to teenagers.

This brand of "liberalism" is interminably weak and soft, forever enabling people in their dysfunction and self-destruction, prompted by their dehumanizing view of "compassion."

- (4) For others still, this twisted form of liberalism is rooted in a guised spirit of rebellion and latent anger, a wholesale rejection of the divine order of things – hence, *they* will define when a baby is a baby and *they* will determine if it can be born or not (as it suits their timing, lifestyle, etc.) They reject any higher authority and the notion of transcendent truth. Their godfathers are Marx, Freud, Darwin, Nietzsche and Dewey.
- (5) For another significant swath of neo-liberals, it was nurtured by the education they received. With the commanding heights of our public education system owned by progressives, their worldview got baked into every level of the education system, so it came to many by osmosis. It was in the air they breathed and the water they drank.

Since the formal discipline of logic (the rules of thinking) was nixed from the curriculum decades ago, our students were not taught how to think – only what to think. If it's common sense, it doesn't make sense to them. Only that which makes NO sense to most makes sense to a progressive.

They really think such concepts as intersectionality, critical race theory and non-binary sexuality are “deep”. So the rest of us who don't find it deep but stupid, are not (they think) as enlightened as they are. (When you're caught in a mind blind, you truly think everyone who disagrees with you is in one.)

So the net effect of this syndrome is that “liberals” of this contemporary order come to believe all sorts of contradictory things. For example, burning the American flag is free speech but removing a pride flag merits jail time ... or ... extinguishing the life of a baby in the womb is a mother's choice, but removing an eagle's egg from its nest will get you a hefty fine or imprisonment ... or ... they fight

passionately for women's rights on the one hand, yet can't define what a woman is on the other.

- (6) The last group (and the smallest) in this lot have become "liberals" out of conviction – they are hard-core relativists, atheists and socialists. These are the dangerous ones because they're fully persuaded and fully committed, as they shut their eyes and plug their ears, yelling "La-la-la-la-la! ... don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up!" (This group gathers by the droves in such conclaves as mainstream media, academia, the big cities and the Donkey Party. Conversely, you'll be hard-pressed to find them in small businesses, small towns, on farms or ranches, or in the Elephant Party.)

This confusion about what a liberal really is and the newfangled imposter that has emerged in its place is at the heart of a lot of our societal craziness. Moreover, this contrived and disingenuous brand is unmitigated poison and has done much damage to our social fabric.

Leftists are anything but liberal in the historic sense, because they have confused and conflated liberty with license. Moreover, they have deftly co-opted the label as cover for their radically misguided agenda which, in the fruit it produces, is actually anti-liberty, therefore, anti-liberal.

The Role and Purpose of the Schoolhouse

As this relates to the public education of our youth, if we believe the local community schoolhouse is both an extension of and support for the home as well as an incubator for and bridge to society, then that would mean a strong two-fold orientation at the very least: (One) the schoolhouse should work closely with the home, serve under its authority, and be fully accountable to it – not compete with it, conflict with it or replace it; and (Two) the schoolhouse is to prepare young people for the society they'll be

entering, which is not synonymous with becoming a vehicle of social reform or social engineering.

Consider the second one, the schoolhouse as an incubator for and bridge to society, especially as it relates to religious freedom ...

If one of the pillars of the American society in which we live has always been religious freedom (and it has), and if one of the pillars of that society is still religious freedom (and it is) – and the schoolhouse is supposed to prepare young people to go out into that society that teaches and practices religious freedom (which it is) – then it would stand to reason that the schoolhouse itself should teach and practice religious freedom as a reflection of and preparation for the very society which teaches and practices the same.

After traveling across America in 1840, French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville wrote these now immortal words: “I sought for the key to America’s greatness and genius in her harbors ...in her fertile fields and boundless forests; in her rich mines and vast world commerce; in her public school system and institutions of learning. I sought for it in her matchless Constitution. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.”

From Strongholds to Strangleholds

Shackles go hand in hand with loss of sight, and loss of sight is linked to a difficult life, with corresponding forms and degrees of bondage. Whatever binds us (puts us in bondage) blinds us (destroys clarity and focus), which makes a healthy vision for society impossible – and where there is no vision the people perish.

Moreover, whatever blinds us binds us. When we lose our sight, we lose our

insight, which in time will put wisdom on the endangered species list. This is the very essence of a “mind blind.”

When we can no longer discern what is true and what is false – what is right and wrong, good and bad – we descend into all forms of pathology and all kinds of strongholds, which begin as mere footholds, but end up as freedom-threatening strangleholds.

This is what our country has been descending into for the last seven decades. The bitter pill to swallow is that it has been put on the fast-track by our own American public school system in four core ways: a progressive worldview, the addiction to federal funds, the establishment stranglehold, and fear paralysis.

1. The Progressive Worldview

There has been an unmitigated collision of two conflicting worldviews and value systems that has been unfolding in this country for many decades. We could say it all started in the 1960s with the sexual revolution, but actually the seed-thoughts were planted many years before that, even many decades.

In the midst of all of this, we are always faced with the choice of dealing with this conflict either up-front and head-on, or quietly, under-the-radar, passive-aggressively – or not at all. The latter (denial or avoidance) should not be an option. So deal with it we must.

Of all the narrative versions that humankind wrestles with at this time in history, at the very core, they can be boiled down (essentially) to just two. Those two are diametrically opposed in their most fundamental presuppositions and never shall the twain meet – therefore, they will always clash.

The one says there is a transcendent authority, the other says we are that transcendent authority. The one says truth is absolute (meaning there are some things in life that are absolutely and always true for all people in all places at all times). The other says truth is relative, and therefore we each decide for ourselves what is true (which means we each decide for ourselves what is good and bad, and what is right and wrong).

So at the core, you have an unmistakable and unavoidable clash because the two narratives disagree on the very nature of truth itself.

The one holds to a “historic” perspective rooted primarily in a sacred belief system, while the other embraces a “postmodernist” perspective rooted primarily in a secular belief system. The former has been espoused by traditionalists, conservatives and orthodox religion while the latter has been espoused by progressives, relativists and humanists.

And because of the inherent clash between the two in their most basic assumptions about life, they cannot neutrally co-exist. One narrative will move to the front, which by definition means the other recedes to the back, or the other narrative will become the dominant worldview of society while its antithesis is relegated to the sidelines.

The one worldview preaches tolerance, yet is anything but. The other worldview is accused of being intolerant, and yet it paved the way for religious freedom, freedom of speech and a democratic society. The one view has always espoused open and free exchange, while the other view is shutting down opposing voices, views and values.

And for over a hundred years, it is the more hard-core elements of “the other view” that is determined to become the predominant worldview of our society, using government, the media and our public schools as the prime vehicle to get there, even if it goes against the wishes of the majority of American parents – and it generally does.

The key players and purveyors of this worldview are very savvy, and they know all too well what stands in their way. They know they can’t ultimately succeed in becoming society’s dominant and accepted ideal unless they get the other belief system out of the way, the first step of which is to relegate it to the sidelines, and from there to the ash heap. Again, they’ll do this primarily through our schools..

On the one hand, the very nature of a pluralistic society demands that these two worldviews co-exist; on the other hand, one of the deceptions of postmodernist thinking is that all ideas are equally valid. They are not, and anyone who has

lived life with eyes wide open and feet grounded firmly in reality knows that all ideas are NOT equally valid.

But they do all have consequences, and we ignore, avoid, deny or try to escape those consequences to our own detriment and demise. Because out of every worldview comes a value system, and when you have two that conflict and contradict at their very core, you can't embrace both.

For example, if one belief system (we'll call it "X") values hard work, and its opposing belief system (we'll call it "Y") values laziness, you can't espouse both "X" and "Y" – you can't teach both as admirable or acceptable. If one medical philosophy says your diet should consist of high carbs and low fats, and the other one says low carbs and high fats, you can't practice both as viable – they're the exact opposites.

So we're left to choose one over the other, and hopefully, we'll choose the one most consistent with intellectual integrity, sustained by the fundamental laws of logic, informed by our faith, and supported by hard science and the best research, not the one supported by the popular culture, conventional wisdom or pseudo-science.

If one value system objects to library books that teach our young about group sex, oral sex, same sex and anal sex in the most graphic manners imaginable, and the other value system thinks these books are perfectly appropriate (and actually helpful for some kids), you have an irreconcilable clash of worldviews. A healthy moral compass and basic common sense should tell us where to go from there.

If one view says gender is fluid and the other says it's binary, they're not both right. Either one is right and the other is wrong, or they're both wrong. But they can't both be right.

A society built on the rock solid foundation of transcendent truth is a society that understands the nature of truth, that it is absolute or it's not truth. The nature of water is H₂O. If it's not two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen, it's not water.

Abraham Lincoln was once asked how many legs a dog has if you call his tail a leg. Lincoln said, "Four. Saying that a tail is a leg doesn't make it a leg."

Lincoln understood the game, and was not willing to play. Neither should we be. Reconstructing reality does not change it. Redefining truth as something subjective and personal does not make it so.

Understanding the nature of truth begins first with facts, because "facts are a stubborn thing." From there it graduates to reason based on logic, because logic encompasses the very "rules of thinking." And it concludes with wisdom, because wisdom always leads to "the good, the true and the beautiful."

So to protect the *Homefront*, we must have a true north, a moral compass, from which we get our value system, and intellectual integrity demands we hold to it by making it both our lens and our filter.

2. Addiction to Federal Funds

When serving as State Superintendent of Public Instruction, we took a stand against the USDA Title IX school lunch issue, an issue pushed by the feds to coerce State Departments of Education and School districts to re-interpret "sexual discrimination" to include sexual orientation and gender ideology. In the end, 46 out of 48 Wyoming school districts caved to the federal government so as to not lose that federal money, even though the state of Wyoming had the money in their own coffers to pay for their own school lunches.

Think of it, we could have broken free of the entire woke agenda if we broke free of federal funds. There are many nationally-known education institutions (elementary, middle school, high school and college) that don't take a dime from the federal government, and therefore, can protect the integrity of their philosophy and academic freedom by remaining completely independent.

In this country, over the decades, we Americans have developed a "crack cocaine" addiction to federal funds of mammoth proportions. The very thought of breaking free causes seismic convulsions for our school and state leaders.

Our public schools were once known as “community” schools, but over time have morphed into “government” schools, because they’re bought and paid for by the government, and therefore, controlled by the government. We take so much money from the federal governments that they now own our schools. They truly have become “government reservations,” as John Taylor Gatto calls them.

The first step to taking back our public schools is to break the dependence on federal funds. If our leaders are not willing to do that (which the establishment crowd is not), then vote with your feet and find a school that receives no government funding. Period. It’s that simple.

3. The Establishment Stranglehold

We can best restore our political and social institutions through a strong, but limited, government, and this is only achievable through local control when we govern ourselves in civic-related matters that are closest to the people they affect. Alexis de Tocqueville once correctly observed that, in America, every community is the best judge of those matters that concern itself.

But we now live in a nation where 23 million people work in the administrative state with strong motivation from the universities (who reap the benefits) and influence from the corporations that it regulates and subsidizes.

Moreover, most Americans are unaware that the education bureaucracy of the US Department of Education actually outnumbers the teachers it controls. Similarly, most of the electorate is oblivious to the fact that the administrative state occupies half of the American economy.

From paralyzing regulations to hostile lawfare, make no mistake about it, a bloated state and federal bureaucracy make the administrative state the inherent enemy not only of the people, but of our Constitutional republic. It is the very antithesis of a representative government.

One need look no further than the socialism of most European countries or

the communism of China or North Korea, where the administrative state supersedes elected legislatures. Churchill described them best: “No longer servants and no longer civil.”

For our own country, since the 1930’s (thanks to FDR and his progressive policies), we have witnessed a major private-to-public shift in resources. Back then, the US government only got 12% of our national GDP – it now handles over 50%, trending decisively towards centralization.

Though now hard to believe, one hundred years ago our federal government gave 60% of the money it raised to the people – local American counties and communities. Now it releases only 20%! This dubious transfer of assets from the people to the government should be an outrage, but most of the people don’t even know that Uncle Sam has been picking their pockets for decades. America used to be a bottom-up grassroots nation, but centralization and the progressives’ administrative state intentionally, incrementally, changed that. Our own leaders have become our biggest looters.

In the first one hundred years of America’s young existence, our government owned all our western lands. But in 1862, for any hard-working, adventurous American, Lincoln gave 10% of the land to the people, to own and work, through the Homestead Act. That was the spirit of America and Lincoln.

So why the transition when it is so inherently un-American, and so incredibly subverts the constitutional doctrine of “the consent of the governed”? It was driven entirely by the progressive vision of governance and carefully framed as harmless, common-sense modifications. But peel back the layers and it was about little more than a vulgar lust for power and need to control, because progressive intellectuals truly and deeply believe they know best and are smarter than the people.

Nevertheless, the biblical law of sowing and reaping cannot be subverted and the deficiencies of a regulatory state have been duly exposed for the corrupt enterprise that it has become. Its utter disdain for “We the People” has become apparent through its obscene over-reach of attempting to replace

parents (and punish them in court if they object), and its violation of free speech through its draconian “cancel culture”.

4. **Fear Paralysis**

So what is it that blinds us? In a nutshell, it has always been and will always be *the lies*, either the ones we tell or the ones we are told. Dishonesty, deception and self-deceit is not only debilitating, it's dangerous, because it results in forms of oppression. But when we see the truth, when we know the truth, the truth always puts us on the path to freedom. “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free,” Jesus said. Not your truth, not my truth, but ***the*** truth.

Many of our civic leaders are paralyzed by fear – fear of losing the election, fear of lawsuits, fear of being unpopular, fear of conflict, fear of appearing radical, fear of losing their jobs, their salaries, their pensions. Consequently, they are afraid to challenge the establishment, push back against leftist ideology, take on the teacher's unions, break with federal funds and exercise religious freedom.

But just as fear is contagious, so is courage. And all it takes is for one or two people in leadership to start exercising courage, and the rest will catch the wave.

Challenge and Commitment

Accepting the challenge, making the commitment

The Homefront Challenge

*To break free from the **familial, spiritual, educational** and **political** mind blinds that presently ensnare and will eventually enslave “We the People.”*

Challenge #1: Protecting Our Homesteads

Challenge #2: Preserving Our Hometowns

Challenge #3: Perpetuating Our Homeland

The Homefront Commitment

The Homefront Commitment represents an **aggressive, comprehensive, proactive, united** and **unrelenting** dedication to guard the homefront.

1. **Aggressive** (i.e., direct, hitting hard with a soft touch; unafraid and unapologetic about speaking the truth) – not obnoxious or hostile.
2. **Comprehensive** (i.e., covering all the bases from every angle) – The strategic side: (1) “wave & layers,” (2) “saturation” (3) “en masse” methodologies; the funding side: donor development.
3. **Proactive** (i.e., define the conversation, stay three steps ahead) – to do this, we have to anticipate obstacles and counter arguments.
4. **United** (i.e., all on the same page, all working together) – to do this, every ego must be checked at the door and territorialism extinguished.
5. **Unrelenting** (i.e., persistent, tenacious, unstoppable).-- this will require a long-term and tireless effort, marked by determination, grit and passion; plan for the long haul; a marathon, not a sprint.

The Three Fronts

1st Front – **The Homestead** (Strengthening Our Familial Community)

Protection Guard – Home Alone: reducing isolation and increasing presence at home through relationships, practical help, counseling, mentoring and family community events.

Preservation Guard – School Daze: countering more schooling with better education through alternative parent-driven, faith-based instructional models.

Perpetuation Guard – The Fatherless & the Widows: promulgating the foster care of widows and orphans by the faith community through both formal and informal adoption options.

[Three separate guard posts working together in a concurrent fashion]

2nd Front – **The Hometown** (Caring for our Local Community)

Protection Guard – Community Communiques: focuses on the three homestead guards via the vehicles of radio/podcast programs and newspaper/magazine articles.

Preservation Guard – Think Tanks: providing municipal and educational policy correctives and practical alternatives to the city council/school board via research, advocacy and accountability.

Perpetuation Guard – Freedom Forums: guided by the three homeland guards via civic training in local churches and town hall meetings on biblical citizenship and political statesmanship.

[Three separate guard positions working together in a coordinated fashion]

3rd Front – **The Homeland** (Defending Our National Community)

Protection Guard – “Peace Through Strength”: our domestic tranquility is ensured via the common defense of secure borders, tough-on-crime laws, safe schools, and a strong military.

Preservation Guard – “E Pluribus Unum”: our democratic unity is rooted in our American ideals, national institutions and republican Constitution, not in identity politics or a state religion.

Perpetuation Guard – “In God We Trust”: our historic legacy of religious liberty, grounded in freedom of conscience, secures the blessings of liberty and establishes justice for all.

[Three separate guard principles working together in a complementary fashion]

Home Alone

Reducing isolation and increasing presence at home through relationships, practical help, counseling, mentoring and family community events.

School Daze

*Countering “more schooling” with better education
through alternative parent-driven, faith-based instructional models.*

The Fatherless & the Widows

*Promulgating the foster care of widows and orphans
by the faith community through both formal and informal adoption options.*

Community Communiques

Focuses on the three homestead guards (1st front) via townhall meetings, radio/podcast programs and newspaper/magazine articles.

(1) **TownHall Meetings** – Saturday morning or evening

- *Protection Guard – Home Alone:* reducing isolation & increasing presence at home through relationships, practical help, counseling, mentoring & family community events.
- *Preservation Guard – School Daze:* countering more schooling with better education through alternative parent-driven, faith-based instructional models.
- *Perpetuation Guard – The Fatherless & the Widows:* promulgating the foster care of widows & orphans by the faith community through formal & informal adoption options.

[Three separate guard posts working together in a concurrent fashion]

(2) **Radio/Podcast Programs** – daily or weekly

- *Protection Guard – Home Alone:* reducing isolation & increasing presence at home through relationships, practical help, counseling, mentoring & family community events.
- *Preservation Guard – School Daze:* countering more schooling with better education through alternative parent-driven, faith-based instructional models.
- *Perpetuation Guard – The Fatherless & the Widows:* promulgating the foster care of widows & orphans by the faith community through formal & informal adoption options.

[Three separate guard posts working together in a concurrent fashion]

(3) **Newspaper/Magazine Articles** – weekly, bi-weekly or monthly

- *Protection Guard – Home Alone:* reducing isolation & increasing presence at home through relationships, practical help, counseling, mentoring & family community events.
- *Preservation Guard – School Daze:* countering more schooling with better education through alternative parent-driven, faith-based instructional models.
- *Perpetuation Guard – The Fatherless & the Widows:* promulgating the foster care of widows & orphans by the faith community through formal & informal adoption options.

[Three separate guard posts working together in a concurrent fashion]

Think Tanks

Providing municipal/educational policy correctives and practical alternatives to the city council/school board via research, advocacy and accountability.

Municipal/City Council (research, advocacy and accountability)

- Policy Correctives

- Practical Alternatives

Educational/School Board (research, advocacy and accountability)

- Policy Correctives

- Practical Alternatives

Freedom Forums

Guided by the three homeland guards (see below) for civic and religious freedom on biblical citizenship (in the local churches) and constitutional statesmanship (at the local town halls).

- **Protection Guard – “Peace Through Strength”**: our domestic tranquility is ensured via the common defense of secure borders, tough-on-crime laws, safe schools, and a strong military.
- **Preservation Guard – “E Pluribus Unum”**: our democratic unity is rooted in our American ideals, national institutions and republican Constitution, not in identity politics or a state religion.
- **Perpetuation Guard – “In God We Trust”**: our historic legacy of religious freedom, grounded in freedom of conscience, secures the blessings of liberty and establishes justice for all.

[Three separate guard principles working together in a complementary fashion]

“Peace Through Strength”

Our domestic tranquility is ensured via the common defense of secure borders, tough-on-crime laws, safe schools, and a strong military.

“E Pluribus Unum”

Our democratic unity is rooted in our American ideals, national institutions and republican Constitution, not in identity politics or a state religion.

“In God We Trust”

Our historic legacy of religious freedom, grounded in freedom of conscience, secures the blessings of liberty and establishes justice for all.

The Homefront Convocation

As the “main event,” this large-group meeting regularly (once a month or quarter), in a different county each month, for three years. When a date is secured, the planning and networking for each county’s Homefront Convocations should begin two months before the main event, so as to allow enough time for promoting and organizing the event.

Saturday Morning

- 9:00 – Breakfast/Opening
- 9:15 - 10:00 – **Part 1: Sounding the Alarm** (The Homefront Call)
- 10:15 - 11:00 – **Part 2: Rallying the Troops** (The Homefront Challenge)
- 11:15 - 12:00 – **Part 3 – Freeing the People** (The Homefront Commitment)

L*U*N*C*H B*R*E*A*K

Saturday Afternoon

- 1:00 – Overview/Q & A: *The ChrisCorps Operation*
- 2:00– Overview/Q & A: *The School of Thought Campaign*
- 3:00 – Overview/Q & A: *The Homefront Vanguard*
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- 4:00 – Closing