

Energy Wars Discourage the Poor

Summer is here, and everyone expects to pay a little more to keep the temperature in the house bearable. But do you expect to pay eight times as much as you have in previous years? Unfortunately, that is exactly what will happen to consumers in some parts of the country unless Congress stands up to the insane regulations on coal put forth by the Environmental Protection Agency.

During the last few years there have been hundreds of families in my denomination who have had trouble keeping basic utility bills paid. In warmer cities, the impoverished elderly routinely run the risk of heat strokes and occasional deaths in the summer. Why would the EPA enact policies that would cause many Americans—already affected by the recession—to go nearly bankrupt paying their utility bills? These problems are avoidable. Poor energy policies affect the poor disproportionately.

Nearly everyone agrees that the environment is important, but most of us also agree that it is not more important than the human beings who live in it. Taking care of your house is important, but you would not stop buying food for your children so that you could replace your windows.

When looking at measures to protect our air, water and other natural resources, we must weigh the cost of those measures against the benefits we can realistically expect. The EPA's new Utility MACT (Maximum Achievable Control Technology) rule is supposed to protect us from mercury emissions, and the agency readily admits it is the most expensive regulation in the EPA's history. Let us start by looking at the projected costs and benefits.

The EPA estimates the new regulations will cost \$10 billion a year, and they estimate the total benefits of mercury emissions that would supposedly be reduced by compliance with the regulation to be between \$500,000 and \$6 million. (Other touted benefits come from reducing particulate matter emissions that are already regulated separately.)

So the EPA is already telling us that it makes sense to pay tens of billions of dollars to save hundreds of thousands of dollars. But it's even worse than that. The estimated cost of the regulation is almost certainly an understatement. For example, a study released last year found that the cost of a particular 1998 regulation known as the Cluster Rule was 34 percent higher than the EPA's original estimates.

The estimated benefits may be even smaller: Mercury emissions circulate globally, and according to the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, U.S. power plants emit less than 48 tons of mercury per year, compared to 400 tons per year from Chinese power plants (and if you want to include Mother Nature in the mix, we can also mention the 9,000 tons per year that come from volcanoes, sub-sea vents and other natural sources).

Although the Utility MACT rule is not set to take effect until 2015, we have already observed several negative developments in response to these new regulations. First, power companies confirm that the Utility MACT makes it impossible for new coal plants to be built in the United States. Current coal plants are facing closures and are already generating less power, which means higher energy costs for everyone and thousands of lost jobs.

The National Economic Research Associates estimate that the EPA's Utility MACT will cost 180,000 to 215,000 jobs over the next 2 1/2 years. Including manufacturing jobs affected by coal regulations, job losses could top 1.4 million! Although the EPA touts a few hundred jobs created by this rule, most of those jobs would be temporary manufacturing jobs, and the

total number would not come close to compensating for jobs lost. In an already struggling economy, the regulation seems almost suicidal.

As I have written for years, hikes in energy prices disproportionately hurt the poor and working class. It may irritate the wealthy to pay extra to keep their summer homes cool and their winter homes warm, but it will devastate those who already pay between 20 and 35 percent of the income just to keep the lights on. The EPA's latest assault on coal-fired power plants and coal-fueled manufacturing merely illustrates that they are happy to force poor Americans into a Stone Age lifestyle for the possibility of a miniscule improvement in air quality. The only thing standing between us and this astronomical spike in energy costs is our legislators.

We can have both clean air *and* affordable energy, but only if the EPA is willing to face the realities about the limits and costs of regulations. It's time that we call a truce in the energy war on the poor!

Bishop Harry R. Jackson Jr. *is the senior pastor of Hope Christian Church, a 3,000-member congregation in the Washington, D.C., area. He is also founder and president of High Impact Leadership Coalition, which exists to protect the moral compass of America and be an agent of healing to our nation by educating and empowering churches, community and political leaders.*

Obamacare Negatively Impacts Minorities

The Supreme Court ruled Obamacare constitutional, and I'm concerned about its effect on the poor and vulnerable. They are the ones who need quality health care the most.

The Court, of course, was not called upon to determine whether Obamacare, formally known as the **Affordable Care Act**, would actually have its intended effect. While the White House appears to have consulted many experts during Obamacare's formative months, they also hung up twice on Dr. Ben Carson as he offered his advice.

Why did the White House hang up on the world-renown African-American neurosurgeon? Because he admitted to being an Independent, not a Democrat. Dr. Carson, who is director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins, has been openly critical of the U.S. current health care system. He has also made it clear, however, that he thinks Obama's Affordable Care Act is not the answer.

Dr. Carson should understand better than almost anyone in the White House the importance of affordable access to **health care** for the poor and needy. He was born in Detroit and raised by a single mother. He overcame early struggles in his life to graduate from Yale and University of Michigan's Medical School and made medical history in 1987 when he successfully separated the Binder Twins, who were conjoined at the head.

So why doesn't Dr. Carson believe **Obamacare** will provide better outcomes for people in circumstances similar to those of his own childhood? Because countries like Canada and Great Britain have already tried similar plans for decades, and those plans are now failing their patients.

In an April interview with *World Magazine*, Dr. Carson

explained, "Great Britain and some other places with socialized medicine are looking at privatization because they're running out of money. The problem with socialized medicine is that you can't seem to keep up with costs over the course of time, so you have to ration."

In addition to running out of money, the European and Canadian health care systems have poorer results for what they spend. According to the National Center for Policy Analysis, both Europe and Canada have worse cancer survival rates than Americans do under our current system.

Furthermore, Americans are more likely to get screened, and once diagnosed we have faster access to treatment. As someone who survived esophageal cancer, I am grateful for the superior treatment I received here. And every time I entered Johns Hopkins, I saw people from all over the world—including Britain and Canada—who had come to America for higher quality healthcare.

What's more, there is growing evidence that government-controlled systems not only fail to close the health care gap between whites and minorities, but may even exacerbate racial differences in health outcomes. The Centre for Health Services Studies at the University of Kent recently released a study of racial disparities in the British health care system, which has been under government control for more than 50 years. It found that racial minorities still had the highest rates of mortality from coronary heart disease and were less likely than white patients to receive coronary revascularization according to need.

Racial minorities in Britain also have the highest rates of diabetes and diabetes-related mortality, as well as AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Patient surveys also indicated multiple problems with minority access to cancer screenings and treatment.

The Wellesley Institute of Canada recently released a paper called "Colour Coded Health Care: The Impact of Race and Racism on Canadian Health," which raised serious questions about racial disparities in Canada's system. It noted that immigrants come to Canada in generally better health than their Canadian racial counterparts, but shortly after settling there, their health declines significantly.

Studies showed a large disparity between health care providers' perception of racial equality and the actual experience of ethnic minorities in the Canadian health care system: ethnic minorities reported being discriminated against in the healthcare system, whereas the majority of family doctors studied reported that racial differences created no social tensions in their offices. Given these pathetic realities, there is no reason to expect that a government takeover of American health care will have any positive effect on the health of racial minorities in this country.

At the end of the day, Obamacare survived the Roberts Court because its attorneys argued what President Obama specifically denied before the bill was passed: Obamacare is a tax. Not only that, it is the largest tax increase on the middle class in the history of the nation. In such a fragile economy, it will bring harm to people of all races.

Blacks and Hispanics will not only lose financially because of this new policy, but the experience of other countries indicates they will receive inferior care. In other words, the president's crowning legislative achievement will hurt the people he claimed to want to help. Society as a whole will have to pay for an expensive new bureaucracy to administer this inferior care.

Leaders like Dr. Carson warned the White House about these impending problems. The administration's response was to hang up the phone. No one wanted to hear the truth. Politics as usual? No! It's politics at its worst.

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Energy Policy: ‘Change or Die!’

Several years ago I came across a well-written book that outlined a step-by-step process for personal change. The book, *Change Or Die*, actually explored the psychology of change. The author, Alan Deutschman, helped me to focus several important health changes in my personal life. I chose to “change,” not “die.”

The Obama administration is at an important crossroads—or a “change or die” moment—as well with regard to energy. The president wants to be seen as a job creator but his green policies have squandered resources and disillusioned all but the most ardent energy zealots. The president could ease the burden of the average American citizen by simply backing away from his rigid ideology concerning energy.

Ironically, his energy policies have begun to exacerbate the cash problems of our hardest-working citizens. I bear no ill will toward President Obama, and I defend him whenever I can; but there are a few areas where his policies are simply indefensible.

We have all heard the administration's cronies exhort us that, "We must not balance the budget on the backs of the poor." I most heartily agree. Neither must we attempt to save the planet by sacrificing the poor on the altar of environmental extremism. For all the administration's rhetoric concerning working-class folks, they have initiated an energy war on the poor.

For almost four years, the president's energy policies have not truly focused on conservation or saving the earth; they have been about placating the lobby of environmental radicals who view mankind as parasites on the environment—not stewards of it. As unbelievable as it sounds, these extremists actually want energy to be more expensive.

Let me be more specific. Earlier this year, the Obama administration rejected a proposal to build a pipeline between Alberta, Canada, and Texas. The "Keystone Pipeline" would have reportedly brought in about 830,000 barrels of oil a day and created tens of thousands of jobs for Americans. Although the proposal had received bipartisan support, the administration claimed it needed more time to gather and review information.

The initial application, however, was filed in 2008, and the Department of State has already conducted a three-year environmental impact review. At a time when everyone in the country needs more affordable energy and jobs, the White House rejected both. Why? Because environmental extremists care more about soil composition than people.

The Keystone decision was the latest in a long series of policy choices that prevents Americans from obtaining the affordable energy we all need, and increases our dependence on petroleum from the Middle East. This policy not only drives up fuel prices, but also further weakens our already struggling economy. Who suffers most as gasoline creeps steadily toward \$5 a gallon and heating and air conditioning costs rise? Not the folks making the decisions to keep it that way, I can

promise you that.

Meanwhile, the White House's two best ideas seem a little less than brilliant. First, it wants to combat our energy problems by investing heavily in "green" energy for the long term. Second, it wants to open the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in the short term. Even a casual observer can see that the president's green energy initiative has been financially disastrous.

From the failures of flagship companies like Solyndra, which went bankrupt despite hundreds of millions of dollars of federal aid, to the cost of each green job actually created, legislators from both sides of the aisle no longer view federally funded green energy projects as the future of economic growth.

To add insult to injury, a recent investigation by *The Wall Street Journal* discovered that most of the jobs reportedly "created" with countless dollars of stimulus money were temporary, and some are not even real! For example, \$4.3 billion went to 36 wind farms, which reported the creation of 7,200 jobs, but now employ only 300. That is a cost of more than \$14 million per permanent job!

As for tapping into the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, James L. Jones and Jason S. Grumet of the Bipartisan Policy Center weighed in through *The New York Times*, saying that this is a bad idea.

"The oil reserve," they explain, "should be preserved to address an emergency disruption in supply." They go on to state the obvious solution: "Despite the traditional election-year rancor, there is actually considerable bipartisan agreement on what needs to be done. Increasing domestic oil production is extremely important to our economy and to reducing our trade deficit."

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of Grumet and Jones'

analysis is the fact that Jones is a former Obama adviser. Affordable energy must be a vital part of putting Americans back to work. Unfortunately, the man in charge appears to be brainwashed by environmental activists.

The Declaration of Independence says we need a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people.” If we accept this foundational truth, we must demand better from our president, his administration and our legislators. It’s time to call for a real change.

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Father in Chief? Or Just Another Politician?

I have always appreciated President Obama as a family man. He and first lady Michelle have popularized several healthy family practices. For example, his practice of date night is something that thousands of congregations have taught for several decades. In some ways, he is the nation’s father in chief! He has had the opportunity to serve the U.S. as the nation’s paternal role model.

When a father stands for and lives by truth, “the blessing” of the Scriptures comes upon both the man and his family. In addition, a good father figure emulates the character of God and in special circumstances can be an instrument of healing for wounded hearts far beyond his own family.

Unfortunately, the president's politically motivated "revelation" concerning same-sex marriage has forced his staunchest supporters (black churchgoers) into a compromising position. They have to choose between their faith and the historic presidency of Barack Obama.

Entire black denominations are officially denouncing the president's stance on marriage. More practically, secular leaders wonder what could happen to the definition of the word *father*. Would the role of a father get diminished, eviscerated or ignored by homosexual marriage? Some educators question, "How does reading the book *Heather Has Two Mommies* affect a child's understanding of his or her own family? How will a child with a 'fluid' understanding of families interpret their own future role in a family? Further, where will the next generation find role models for fathering?"

For the sake of clarity, let's define the word *father*. Miriam Webster's Student Dictionary defines "father" as follows: a male parent; an ancestor; one who cares for another as a father might; a person who invents or begins something ; a priest-used especially as a title.

After reading Webster's current definitions, I concluded that fatherhood matters. It matters in three dimensions: literally, figuratively and spiritually. They are needed on many different levels in a modern society.

Please don't mistake this observation for misogyny. My affirmation of fatherhood is not meant to demean women or the traditional feminine role in a family. In fact, the average person knows that it takes both a mom and a dad to raise consistently healthy children.

I understand the president's desire to bring moral clarity to his children. I also empathize with his desire to remain relevant and contemporary. Like the Obamas, my wife and I chose to send our daughters to private school, in our case at

a considerable financial sacrifice. But President Obama's recent "evolution" on the issue of the definition of marriage highlights not only a stark difference in our view of life and truth, but in our understanding of fatherhood.

When explaining his apparent change of heart on the meaning and essence of marriage, President Obama did not delve very deeply into political philosophy. He might have offered an explanation of his changing understanding of the state's proper relationship to the individual and where homosexual behavior fits into that equation.

Instead he talked about his personal interaction with homosexuals, including parents of his daughters' friends. He alluded to being swayed by his daughters' opinions on marriage, saying to ABC's Robin Roberts, "And Malia and Sasha ... it wouldn't dawn on them that somehow their friends' parents [in same-sex relationships] would be treated differently. It doesn't make sense to them and frankly, that's the kind of thing that prompts a change of perspective. You know, not wanting to somehow explain to your child why somebody should be treated differently, when it comes to the eyes of the law."

Of course, no one is saying that homosexuals should not be treated with dignity and respect. Retaining the age-old definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman is not bigotry. Redefining the institution of marriage to offer legal and public approval of homosexual behavior is a different matter entirely.

I am happy to give the president the benefit of the doubt and assume that he didn't reverse his opinion on this foundational issue simply to avoid an uncomfortable conversation with his daughters. But his answer reveals that he has a very different understanding of his role as a father than I have.

Fathers should serve as the moral leaders in their home. They should model and instruct their offspring on the difference

between right and wrong, and healthy and unhealthy choices. The very fact that, according to the president, Sasha and Malia could not understand what was different about two homosexual men raising a child versus a married mother and father raising a child, points to a rather significant failure in their moral instruction.

Whatever a family's beliefs about marriage and sexuality, they are matters about which parents must clearly teach their children, not send them into the world to figure it out on their own.

In this week after Father's Day, let's affirm the role of fathers everywhere! Let us also challenge both the president and the Department of Justice to enforce the Defense of Marriage Act. If you would like to add your name to a letter to the president, please visit .

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What Money Can't Buy

The scene in North Carolina was a familiar one: Traditional marriage supporters were outspent two to one and were subjected to smear campaigns that painted them as bigots for merely upholding their moral convictions. Yet despite irresponsible and deceptive media coverage, North Carolina voted overwhelmingly to affirm the traditional definition of marriage, 61 percent to 39 percent.

Once again, black voters—many of whom are Democrats and voted for President Obama in 2008—proved pivotal in passing the

amendment to the state constitution, which defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman. NBC News noted that areas like Hertford County, which is 60 percent black, supported Amendment One with 70 percent of its vote. All this was despite a concerted effort by Gay, Lesbian, Transgendered and Bisexual (LGBT) activists to sway black opinion and the compromise of a handful of high-profile black pastors on the issue.

The victory for traditional marriage enraged LGBT activists, whose money and insults were unable to buy public approval of their lifestyle choices in North Carolina. Then on May 9, President Barack Obama sat down with ABC News' Robin Roberts and stated, "I've just concluded that for me personally it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married." And so Obama revealed to the nation what many of us worried was in his heart for quite a while: He does not believe that marriage is the fundamental unit of society, existing primarily to raise and nurture children. Instead he sees it as a legal arrangement that exists for the emotional gratification of adults.

Within hours of the interview, fundraising letters went out on behalf of President Obama's reelection campaign, highlighting the courage of his statement. The pro-homosexual marriage crowd worked hard to overshadow the press. None of this should surprise us too much. Remember that last July, Obama declared his belief that the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) should be repealed.

DOMA, signed into law by Bill Clinton, affirmed the rights of states to refuse to recognize gay marriages performed in other states. Shortly after Obama's statement on same-sex marriage, Sen. Harry Reid expressed enthusiasm for the idea of repealing DOMA. According to Politico, he also voiced his expectation that the Democratic Party's national platform will be revised to include a stance in support of gay marriage.

So LGBT activists have learned that money and bullying tactics can buy you a few black leaders—some pastors even—but they cannot buy you the conscience of black America. I can already hear leftists wringing their hands, declaring that the real needs of the black community are economic, not the protection of traditional values.

Next, an army of black “civil rights” leaders came forth supporting same-sex marriage, culminating with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Despite the multi-million dollar campaigns for homosexual marriage, the net result is that grass-roots black and Hispanic Christians are not going along with “politics” as usual. The lesson here is that LGBT activists can buy a few black leaders—some pastors even—but they cannot buy the conscience of black and brown America.

Many leaders in our country are beginning to believe that restoring the family and defending the institution of marriage could be the first steps to a social reclamation of marriage. More specifically, studies show that families consisting of married parents actually reduce a child’s chances of living below the poverty line by 80 percent.

During the 1990s, redefining marriage to include same-sex couples sparked a well-documented explosion in out-of-wedlock births in Scandinavian countries. Many wise people have noted that words that mean everything mean nothing; the more broadly marriage is defined, the less powerful it is to bind families together. And the weaker family bonds become, the more children suffer.

Countless leaders suspect that the president made his announcement in May in order to placate activists disappointed by the marriage amendment passed in North Carolina. He also hoped that the distractions of Memorial Day, graduations, family vacations and a host of other things would give Americans of all races a “convenient amnesia” by November.

His plan won't work! Why? There are several factors to which his advisers may not have given enough attention. First, his open affirmation of the redefinition of marriage confirms to anyone apathetic about the issue that there is a real threat to traditional marriage; I truly hope this will add fuel to the fire in states like Maryland, where we have fought to get the issue on the ballot in November.

Second, while it is true that many blacks will support the president regardless of his position on marriage, the entire black community does not need to become disillusioned with President Obama for him to be in trouble in the general election. Those of us who were paying attention will remember that President Bush won Florida and Ohio in 2004 because of a 7 to 11 percent shift in the black vote.

Blacks and Latinos have suffered more under President Obama's economic policies than almost anyone else, and they are among the most vocal opponents of his "evolving" views on the sacred institution of marriage. If Republicans are smart, they will make both economic growth and protecting marriage a central part of their agenda this November.

As far as next steps are concerned visit my website, , for more information.

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A New Coalition Emerges to

Protect Marriage

✘ Last week (May 23 and 24), 175 Christian leaders from around the country gathered for a 24-hour marriage summit in the Washington, D.C., metro area. The small group represented nearly 100,000 individual churches and several denominations. The purpose of the summit was to strategize how we would respond to President Obama's endorsement of same-sex marriage.

The group, which included pastors, community activists and denominational leaders, decided to send out a group letter to the president and to develop a pro-biblical marriage resource that could be used around the country.

The summit culminated with a press conference in which black, Hispanic, white and Asian leaders stood shoulder-to-shoulder. We wanted to let the nation know that Christian leaders will not be silent on the issue of same-sex marriage. We also wanted to ask the president and the legislators of both parties to convey to us their specific strategies.

Why I Condemn Obama's Support of Same-Sex Marriage

✘ The president's decision to endorse same-sex marriage is a great disappointment for many people. His statement—which he announced Wednesday—is of great concern to those who still believe in traditional marriage.

These people fall into two major categories—those whose belief systems are informed by their spiritual background and those who have been convinced that redefining marriage will be a horrible social experiment that will further weaken America's declining structure.

Many in the faith community have suspected for some time that the president's announcement was coming. It seems as though the administration feels that this moment will bolster the same-sex marriage movement from the [crushing defeat](#) it experienced in North Carolina.

Where Did Black Parents Go Right?

✘ I remember sitting at the dinner table with my parents at 8 years old. During that season, the “no elbows on the table” rule was

in full force. In addition, my mother constantly chided me for using slang as opposed to proper English. Those three to four years seemed like hell on earth. Nonetheless, years later, I could trace my success in school to my family dinner table and a few great teachers.

My parents always said, "For a black man to do half as well, he must be twice as good!" For them, education was almost a "sacred privilege," which had been denied my ancestors because of the black and Native American social status. Today, I am shocked by the almost unfathomable swing from my black community's sense of excellence and purpose to an entitlement mentality.

Not long ago, both *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* reported a growing national trend: Black students are suspended and expelled from school at two to five times the rate of white students. Both articles highlighted the unintended bias of teachers and administrators, zero-tolerance school discipline policies and school leadership styles as possible causes for this development—and undoubtedly they are contributing factors.

But I wonder whether forcing teachers to sit through another mandatory sensitivity seminar or lobbying to relax school discipline policies will improve the long-term prospects of black students in America?

Trayvon Martin Case Not Emmett Till Revisited

- ✘ As we mourn Trayvon Martin's death, we should remember another black teenager killed just four years ago.

On March 2, 2008, high school senior Jamiel Shaw was gunned down in Los Angeles. According to police, Shaw was walking home when two men he had never met jumped out of a car and one shot him. A talented football player, Shaw had scholarship offers from Stanford University and Rutgers. The man who shot him was Petro Espinoza, an illegal immigrant and member of a gang with a history of extensive violence against African-Americans. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "Espinoza had been released from jail 28 hours before the shooting, after serving time for an earlier [violent] offense."

Why did the nation not mourn Jamiel the way we are mourning Trayvon?

Was it because the media knew immediately that Shaw's killers were

Latino, not white?

Contraception Mandates, Population Control

✘ I often am asked questions by the media on choices the government makes about our society. It is an anomaly to me to see the drift in government to control in micro-detail certain aspects of our society, and yet determine to be hands-off on other key issues. Recently the American public was given an edict that affects many religious nonprofit organizations.

The debate over the new Health and Human Services regulations, which require all employers to pay 100 percent of the cost of contraception including abortion-inducing chemicals, has been rightly cast as an intrusion on religious liberty. Opponents of such regulations are no more advocating a ban on contraceptives than vegetarian restaurants are advocating a ban on meat. They are simply saying that companies shouldn't have to pay for services to which they object for moral reasons.

But black Americans in particular would be wise to pay close attention, since the age old contraception battle has special historical significance to them. For more than a century, "reproductive services" have been special code words for the constant, silent effort of the powerful to control black breeding. And this control has often come in the form of a "helping hand."