

Is it Time to Kiss Freedom Goodbye in the USA?

You can kiss freedom in America goodbye unless those who say they know and love God stand together against the forces of deception and destruction. If we don't act now, it will be too late to halt evil's intent, which is the destruction of meaningful life and freedom. This has always been Satan's goal, and presently, he appears to be winning.

Can you believe the insane decisions being made by elected leadership? Powerful leaders make decisions that look like they are promoting evil rebellion against wise and godly thinking. "Evil is now called good, and good is called evil," just as Isaiah said.

Along with other concerned leaders, we are offering the common ground on which concerned Americans can surely stand together in defense of freedom. The future of freedom will be determined with godly diversity coming together in supernatural unity to stand up for transforming truth. We must refuse to give the enemy another inch of the ground God has told us to oversee. Here are the last of the 10 Principles of Freedom Jay Richards and I expound with great clarity in the book we co-wrote, *Indivisible*.

We Are Meant to be Free and Responsible

We are created to be free. God valued our freedom so much that He even gave us the power to reject Him. And we did. This put us under the bondage of sin. But God did not leave us in our bondage. By bearing the brunt of sin, He reconciled us to Himself. Ultimate freedom is freedom in Christ. But God in His common grace also has revealed ways for societies to restrain evil and achieve some measure of freedom.

In free societies the government both protects and submits to

the rule of law. It conforms to those realities outside it, including to the roles of individual persons, families, the church and other institutions of civil society. Free societies protect private property. They allow their citizens to participate in the political process, to make basic economic choices, and to freely exercise their religious faith. These freedoms are indivisible. A regime such as the People's Republic of China may try to provide some measure of economic freedom while retaining a strong grip on politics and religion. But in the long run, political, economic and religious freedoms stand or fall together.

With freedom comes responsibility—for our choices, our children, our actions, our neighbors, our faith, for seeking the truth and for the natural environment that God has given us to steward. If we hope to preserve freedom in the 21st century, we must embrace these responsibilities.

When We're Free, We Can Create Wealth and Value

Every person is made in the image of God, and every healthy person can create value, economic and otherwise. We do so by specializing, transforming matter into resources, inventing new ideas, new technologies and better ways of organizing businesses and providing service to others. We can also create value in another way. Exchanges that are free on both sides allow us to create value for ourselves as well as for others—even when no new material has been added to the system.

To create new wealth and value depends not only on how hard we work, but also on where we are. The same hard-working person is likely to create far more wealth in an advanced, law-abiding society filled with creative entrepreneurs than in a lawless and oppressive society filled with despair. As a result, one of the best ways to predict economic growth in a country is to look at the economic freedom its citizens enjoy.

Because human beings are value creators, we should reject the

false idea that the prosperity of some must come from the poverty of others. The best anti-poverty programs allow and encourage wealth to be created rather than forcibly redistributed.

At the same time, we must oppose the creeping cronyism in which powerful businesses collude with politicians to prevent others from competing in the marketplace. Cronyism, like socialism, is the enemy of economic freedom.

Culture Comes Before Politics

The short-term matters. Politicians who violate these principles should be replaced with politicians who defend and apply them properly. If we want lasting change, however, we have to restore the rest of the culture, too. Politics shapes the culture, to be sure; but ultimately, politics is a part of the culture. People of faith can still vote, but we have been culturally marginalized, and that has had a devastating effect.

Unfortunately, in the 20th century the political realm absorbed much of the territory that once belonged to civil society. We will only be able to reform unsustainable programs if we can rekindle the cultural virtues of thrift, prudence, personal responsibility and delayed gratification, even while financial incentives pull many Americans in the opposite direction.

If we can't do that, these programs will collapse—at least in their current forms—and drag the world economy with them. We need to prepare. Either way—courageous reform or disastrous collapse—there will be a growing need for non-governmental charitable programs that can really help the elderly, the poor, the handicapped and the otherwise disadvantaged. Christians will need to play a larger role in helping the needy in our communities, and this will give us an opportunity to help rebuild culture and civil society.

Transformation From the Inside Out

Of course, the most profound cultural change will come from outward expressions of inward change—a moral and spiritual renewal of our hearts and minds, our churches, communities and cultural institutions. Beside principles and policies, we need people and prayer. Wherever the church—the body of Christ—is aligned with the Spirit and willing to suffer for truth, the kingdom of God breaks through in the here and now.

We must face the trouble now if our children are to live in peace. So let us pray, more fervently than we have ever prayed, for a historic outpouring of the Holy Spirit on us His church. Not an outpouring that merely moves us to tears, but a cascading waterfall of God's suffering and abiding love, that will lead us to act with bravery, to walk with integrity, and to stand in unity for the renewal of our culture and the restoration of our nation, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

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