

ACTONINSTITUTE

Summer 2012 | Volume 22 | Number 3

Religion & Liberty

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Angola Prison:

A Place of Encouragement

An Interview with Burl Cain

A Journal of Religion, Economics, and Culture

Editor's Note



Angola Prison will probably always carry a mystique because it's wrapped around a violent and brutal history. For many outsiders, visiting Angola might seem like a step back to some distant past or time. It certainly evokes an imagery and language of the deepest South. But in touring Angola, one constantly becomes aware of all the newness and rebirth that surrounds what should seem hopeless. The front entrance to the massive prison grounds has a sign from Philippians 3:13, "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead."

Burl Cain is the longest serving warden in the Louisiana prison's history. He's

been an instrumental force in offering new ways to think about prison reform and moral rehabilitation. He cares about his inmates. That will be clear from this interview. Cain knows that the prison system in America is broken but he doesn't believe that inmates have to remain broken. The stories of redemption inside Angola should offer hope to us all.

"The Perfectibility Thesis – Still the Great Political Divide" by Wesley Gant is an essay about where we have been and where we are culturally, ideologically, and politically. "The perfectibility Thesis" is the great divide among political philosophers of all persuasions. If mankind is malleable and progress is merely a promise to embrace, such a responsibility must become the aim and purpose of government. But the price is nothing short of the abolition of individual sovereignty," declares Gant.

Dylan Pahman offers a thoughtful review of *Just Politics* by Ronald J. Sider. I review *Grant's Final Victory*, a great story of courage in American history. Grant

battled financial ruin and raced against death to publish his memoirs. His work has been heralded as one of the greatest chronicles of war even written.

The "In the Liberal Tradition" figure is Calvin Coolidge. The 30th president of the United States of America actually cut taxes, spending, and downsized the federal government. A must read is his greatest work: "On the Occasion of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence." It gives clear insight into the depth of his thought about the American experiment and timeless values and virtues.

Rev. Robert Sirico talks about some of the different meanings of freedom in "Freedom and Chaos." The essay is an excerpt from *Defending the Free Market*. It's a powerful and poignant piece that clears up the confusion in society about freedom and helps to point us to the virtuous, prudent, and the good.

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Cover: Angola inmates inside auto shop. Photographer: Erin Oswalt

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Angola Prison: A Place of Encouragement

An Interview with Burl Cain

Burl Cain is the longest serving warden of Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola), a position he has held since 1995. He formerly worked as a warden at the Dixon Correctional Institute in Jackson, Louisiana. He is well known for his work at transforming prison culture and promoting moral rehabilitation. Warden Cain serves on the board of Prison Fellowship. He recently spoke with managing editor Ray Nothstine.

R&L: *What do people outside of Angola need to know about the prison?*

Warden Burl Cain: I think Angola proved a lot of things that even Scripture says that does not need proving, like II Chronicles 7:14, "If my people who are called by my name would turn their face to Me, I will heal their land." And that's what happened here, because this prison's culture has changed, not because I'm a smart warden or because of the authority here. It changed solely because these inmates were praying to God to heal their land, and He did.

If you turn to a moral worldview, you'll be okay. But if we turn away from our religious heritage and we keep separation of church and state to the point that is a wider gap than our forefathers intended, you're going to keep having immoral acts and immoral things happen. The seminary program implemented by New Orleans Baptist Seminary has changed the prison culture.

There are 6,100 inmates here and more

coming. This is a gigantic prison. Right now it's only murder, rape, armed robbery and habitual felons. If your sentence is less than 50 years, we don't keep you here. We're going to change that in the future because these people have so changed, these lifers, that know they're going to become teachers for the short termers, so that they can make it on the street and save tax dollars by not having to hire so many teachers in literacy and vocational skills and so forth. This place has become a place of encouragement.

I was impressed with the life skills people can learn. It's clear the educational opportunities here are pretty advanced for a state prison.

The four teachers of the generator and diesel school are today in Plaquemines Parish that experienced flooding from Hurricane Isaac. They're working with the sheriff in the community repairing all their air boats and all their generators, and saving tremendous tax dollars.

So you have four lifers living in Plaquemines Parish, working and fixing things on the Bayou and getting those generators up and running. The largest one they worked on so far is a 250 Kilowatts, which is large enough to run a pretty small town. So that shows some of the leadership of the people here who do have the life sentence. And what's sad is, prison should be a place for predators and not dying old men. These guys who are healed should have a mechanism to be released, or at least go before a board. Louisiana sentencing laws are too harsh. But again, victims trump. Victims are first.

You are a warden of a prison that has historically been known as one of the more violent prisons and you've seen that change under your



Angola Inmate and chaplain Jerome Derricks.

watch. But how do you change the perception? And I imagine some of it has to do with talking to the media and getting your story with the Rodeo out, but how do you change that perception in terms of Angola's reputation?

continued on pg 10



Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

The Perfectibility Thesis – Still the Great Political Divide

By Wesley Gant

Three hundred years after Plato and Aristotle wrestled with the idea and constitution of the just regime, God incarnate arrived on Earth and added very close to nothing. Christ did tell us to “render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s,” and we can certainly glean principles from New Testament teaching. However, Christ made no attempts to establish a righteous political system, nor did he leave instructions to history on this seemingly important matter.

The God of the Old Testament appears no more enthusiastic about investing political lordship in human beings. Upon the Israelite’s demand for a king “such as all the other nations have,” the Lord instructed Samuel to “warn them solemnly, and let them know what the king who will reign

“ The easy answer, and a far too frequent one, is to apply to law an ethos of human teleology: as the end purpose of man dictates, so shall he be governed.”

over them will claim as his rights” (1 Samuel 8:9). Sobering words indeed.

The problem of Christianity and politics is as old as both. Yet, political power appears as permanent and necessary as community itself. The easy answer, and a far too frequent one, is to apply to law an ethos of human teleology: as the end purpose of man dictates, so shall he be governed. What benefit is the political community if its laws do not pursue what is good, true and beautiful? Even the pagan philosophers of Athens understood that justice cannot not merely be the “advantage of the stronger.”

Indeed, the reasoning appears simple enough. Coercive force can only manifest in one of two forms: abuse or justice. If the former, it is not law but slavery, and if the latter, it must guide men ever toward perfection of soul and body. Christians in particular recognize that we are fallen creatures, but we are also made in God’s image, endowed with greater purpose. We yearn for that untainted existence, Christ alone as our model.

However, such aspirations, righteous as they are for the individual, confront different rules when applied through the instruments of political power. Christians must be particularly careful never to interpret man’s innate moral sense and ultimate restoration as evidence of temporal perfectibility. Kings, constitutions, institutions and other secular devices cannot perfect what only God can perfect. In putting our faith in them, we deny human nature, nullify the cross and take salvation in our own hands.

Even as we are witnesses to the arrival of the Kingdom in Christ, we must also recognize that it is not yet in its fullness. The consequences are dire for those who fail to make this distinction and attempt to create Heaven on earth. A young William F. Buckley is known to have popularized the late political theorist Eric Voegelin’s phraseology: “Don’t immanentize the eschaton!” Buckley and his Young Americans for Freedom were fighting Communist idealism, but the temptation far precedes Mao or Marx.

An Anabaptist revolt in 1534 deposed the political and religious leaders of Münster, Germany. Swiftly declaring it the “New Jerusalem,” the reformers sought to establish a true Christian community, released from secular authorities, crooked church practices, and divisive materialism of private property. As the city laid in siege for the next year and a half, God’s law was to rule and His provisions were to be shared collectively—communism was strictly imposed.

It did not take long for human nature to find leaven in unrestrained power. As Greg Forster writes in *The Contested Public Square*:

Many of the more wealthy citizens had themselves exempted from this requirement. The radicals thus gained a reputation for both wealth-destroying extremism and flagrant hypocrisy. [...] When the siege tightened and things looked grim, the city’s new leader, Jan of Leiden, responded by

appointing himself the new messianic king of the world and minting currency with his image on it.

The Munster Rebellion was a failed experiment in Christian utopianism that ended in pride, poverty, and death. After the city's fall, its leaders were captured, tortured, executed. As a warning and a reminder, their remains were displayed in steel cages, which hang to this day from the steeple of St. Lambert's Church.

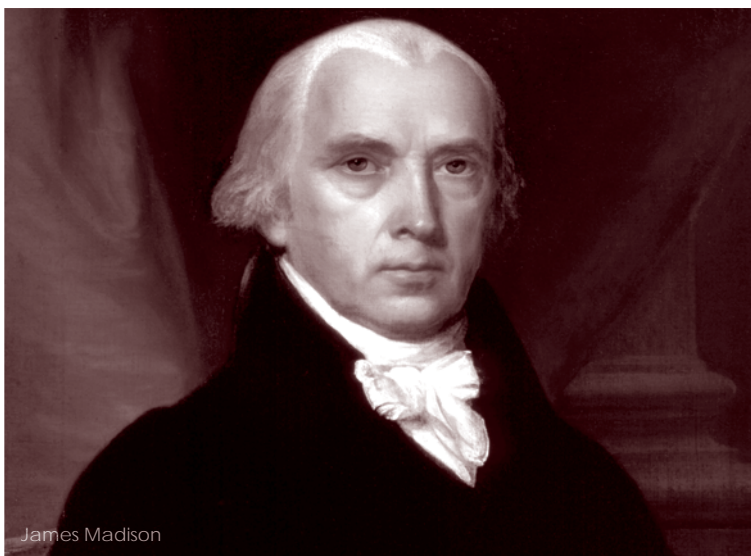
The Enlightenment's liberal movement taught the West to respect freedom of conscience and build communities on common natural rights, leaving religious and moral culture outside the proper bounds of political authority. But faith in science and human reason brought with it new dangers to replace the old. Man began to convince himself that his very nature could at last be tamed and molded. Philosophers and social scientists argued that proper socialization could systematically eradicate self-interest. Greed, inequality, gender roles and moral judgments are mere artifacts of social construction. A "progressive" agenda therefore promised a final stage in human evolution: eternal peace and equality. In practice, it brought centralized power and mass genocide.

The twentieth century proved that, in the words of Thomas Sowell, "some of the biggest cases of mistaken identity, are among intellectuals who have trouble remembering that they are not God."

The modern liberal/progressive experiment—insofar as it glorifies radical individualism and moral relativism—lacks a foundation of truth on which moral claims and natural rights can be conceived. Many nations have thus implemented an oxymoronic liberal authoritarianism,

echoing Rousseau's ideal democracy in which citizens are "forced to be free." Modernity has left us searching once again for a formulation of government under which humans thrive in both freedom and virtue.

In so doing, the Church must reject a false dichotomy between egoist individualism and statist collectivism. Rather, the pursuit of restored community must be coupled with a theologically sound skepticism of human political power. Indeed, the former is not possible with-



out the latter. Perhaps no force is better apt to destroy families, divide communities and deepen poverty than maligned political authority.

In his 1944 essay "Equality," C.S. Lewis used this line of argument in laying out the case for democracy, writing *"Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows. Aristotle said that some people were only fit to be slaves. I do not contradict him. But I reject slavery because I see no men fit to be masters."*

To the chagrin of many college professors who cheer for the progressive man and his ever-enlightened reason, our democratic values are not rooted in elevating human ideals, but in the stubborn limits of human virtue. James Madison, arguing for a U.S. Constitution that

would retard and restrain political power, wrote "what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary."

The perfectibility thesis is the great divide among political philosophers of all persuasions. If mankind is malleable and progress is merely a promise to embrace, such a responsibility must become the aim and purpose of government. But the price is nothing short of the abolition of individual sovereignty.

Our moral sense, which God ordained for good, will always urge us to project upon society the virtues which we are individually incapable of exhibiting in their fullness. It is far easier to stand for a cause and to cast a vote than to live out the same expectations we place upon that vague and faceless "collective." As politicians appeal to these

instincts, a free people must exercise cautious discernment in separating promises from possibilities, lest we wake up in suspended cages.

As we limit the scope of man's political jurisdiction to the essential duties of prudent government, we enable society to achieve true progress in markets, communities, families and churches.

Each of these withers and decays under the auspices of the woefully well-intentioned philosopher king.

Wesley Gant works for Houston Baptist University and is a regular contributor to AEI's Values & Capitalism.



The Scandal of *Just Politics*

Review by Dylan Pahman

Review of Ronald J. Sider's *Just Politics: A Guide to Christian Engagement* (ISI 978-1587433269. Paperback, 272 pages; \$19.99.

In *Just Politics: A Guide for Christian Engagement*, Ronald J. Sider offers an updated edition of his 2008 book, *The Scandal of Evangelical Politics*. Ray Nothstine reviewed that book in *Religion & Liberty* (18.1) at the time, writing,

Ultimately, Sider's methodological construct is a valuable source material for evangelically minded Christians. The book's call for a "Biblically balanced political agenda" over and against narrow understandings committed solely to single issues is a worthy calling. The understanding that political involvement or action will never build a utopia and the additional emphasis of the need for limited state power is highly beneficial.

Just Politics can be characterized in the same way. Sider's clear style and biblically-informed, right-of-center conclusions have much to commend them, but there is a serious problem that overshadows its merits. While the book may be "valuable source material," it hardly constitutes "A Guide for Christian Engagement," as its subtitle would imply. Indeed, Sider writes in his preface that "many Christians, especially evangelical Christians, have not thought very carefully about how to do politics in a wise, biblically grounded way. This book seeks to develop an approach, a methodology, for doing that."

Unfortunately, the book does not successfully deliver such a methodology.

Just Politics may be a guide in the same sense that a field guide to birds can rightly be called a guide, but it does not succeed at being "a methodology"—like, for example, the scientific method—as is its

"Why not, in addition to surveying the relevant biblical terms and material, use also the lens of natural law..."



St. Augustine Statue on Charles Bridge.

stated goal. Or more to the point, unlike the Roman Catholic framework of subsidiarity, solidarity, and natural law or the neo-Calvinist framework of sphere sovereignty, the antithesis, and common grace, Sider's framework (Part 3 of the book and the vast majority, nearly 140 pages) resembles more the things one would hang upon a framework than a framework itself. At best the true framework of the book is 1) to carefully interpret the Bible, which Sider admirably endeavors to do, 2) to briefly offer a cursory and often inadequate survey of a particular issue throughout all of Western history since biblical times, and then 3) to examine our present day context in that light with the help of recent empirical studies.

Unfortunately, while in one sense this is a methodology, it is no different a methodology than many evangelicals have used in the past. The whole point of the book is to bring evangelical political engagement up to the level of the "systematic reflection on political life that has been done for decades by Catholics and mainline Protestants." Yet, though Sider avoids the pitfall of isolating and narrowly focusing on only a few issues, such as abortion and same-sex marriage, he still basically takes an approach that, contrary to his stated intention, feels far too much like proof texting in the end.

This is especially disappointing since Sider begins by noting and assessing the contributions of many sophisticated writers all

throughout Christian history—Augustine’s two cities paradigm from *City of God*, natural law in Aquinas, Luther’s two kingdoms, and so on. The reader is given the impression that while Sider does not accept these views uncritically, he acknowledges their merits and will employ what is beneficial in them throughout the rest of the book. Yet after the end of Chapter 2, most of these writers and their valuable contributions to Christian political thought come up missing. When they are mentioned, they typically receive only superficial acknowledgment before moving on to contemporary issues and writers—nothing comparable to Sider’s careful, though at some points questionable, biblical analysis.

Indeed, all throughout the book, Sider’s neglect of the historic contributions of Christian tradition—which, of course, need not be accepted uncritically—leads to a lack of clear principles, a lack of a true guide or framework that could foster evangelical Christian engagement in politics. Why not, in addition to surveying the relevant biblical terms and material, use also the lens of natural law (itself a biblical concept, as Sider admits, which is the basis of natural justice—a consistent, Christian teaching from the patristic to the medieval to the modern era, even including many Protestant writers? Or instead of simply acknowledging that church, state, family, etc. all have social responsibilities, why not explore more carefully the distinct roles of the different spheres of society in accordance with Augustine’s two cities, Luther’s two kingdoms, subsidiarity, sphere sovereignty, or some other, distinctly biblical and evangelical principle? Doing so would have brought evangelical political engagement up to the level of the “systematic reflection on political life that has been done for decades by Catholics and mainline Protestants.” But at the end of the day, despite the author’s best intentions and admirable efforts, the only clear political philosophy that *Just Politics* offers is “according to Ron Sider the Bible says X, therefore Y.” And that, sadly, is a scandal.

Double-Edged Sword: *The Power of the Word*

Daniel 3:12

But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.

The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego provides a clear illustration against the overreach of the state in religious affairs. The three faithful Jews refused to bow down and worship King Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold. The King’s religious test allowed for three Jews to step out in boldness and proclaim faith in the one true God. Acts 5:29 implores us to “obey God rather than men.” The three were thrown into a fiery furnace but the Lord protected and saved them and they were uplifted and honored for their devotion and actions.

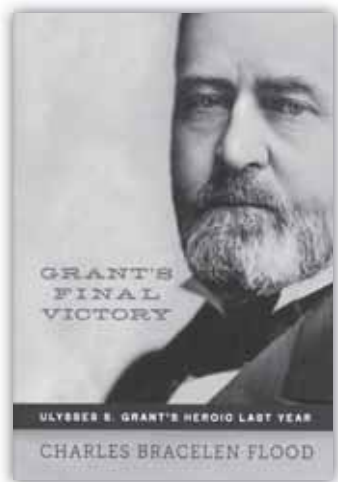
Religious liberty is commonly referred to as “our first freedom.” James Madison thought it so important he called “conscience the most sacred of all property.”

Those that have attended Acton events this year have been further educated on the current threat to religious liberty, especially with the implementation of the HHS Mandate in 2012. The mandate requires employers to provide contraceptives to be included in their health plans. Protestants and Catholics alike have joined together to protest and file lawsuits against the measure.

The Church today requires more boldness to speak out against infringements upon religious liberty. Unfortunately, too many pulpits are all too quiet on Sunday mornings when it comes to the infringement upon our first freedom. Threats to religious liberty may not be as glaring or obvious as false gods or idols that we see in the book of Daniel, thus giving the threat perhaps greater danger in our time. “The Church is the conscience of the State,” said Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is a grave danger when the Church is forced to retreat from public decision-making and the life and habits of a country. The story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego is a reminder of the persecution we face now and future persecution. Daniel 3 is also a powerful reminder of the reward and honor of remaining faithful and testifying openly to our beliefs and conscience.

The Psalmist declares,

“For you, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined; You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs; You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but you brought us out to rich fulfillment” (Psalms 66:10-12).



The Last Victory of General Grant

Review by Ray Nothstine

Review of Charles Bracelen Flood's *Grant's Final Victory: Ulysses S. Grant's Heroic Last Year* (Da Capo Press, October 2012) ISBN: 978-0306821516. Hardcover, 320 pages; \$27.50.

This country suffers no shortage of heroic tales. For the Union soldier who served under Ulysses S. Grant, there certainly was no greater leader. Often referred to by detractors as “a butcher” for the wake of Union dead left after his victories, he took the fight to the Confederacy. After the Wilderness campaign in 1864, where 17,000 Union soldiers died in just a few days, Grant, unlike all the Union generals before him, refused to lick the Federal wounds and retreat across the Rapidan River to resupply and reorganize. Instead, Grant famously turned his massive columns not North, but South towards the heart of the Confederacy; towards Richmond. Those that have studied the Civil War are familiar with the iconic story, as war whoops, hat waving, and wild cheering echoed across the forest. There was no doubt that The Army of the Potomac, which had suffered a barrage of whippings by General Robert E. Lee and the Confederacy, was under new leadership.

It was moments like this, and not Grant's largely unspectacular two terms as president, where one can understand why his funeral procession was seven miles long. *Grant's Final Victory* by Charles Bracelen Flood is not a book about his time as commander of the Union or president, but the fascinating and heroic tale of his

race against time to publish his memoirs and save his family from financial ruin.

In 1884, Grant was embroiled in one of the first famous Ponzi schemes on Wall Street, and his son's partner at Grant & Ward, an investing firm, bankrupted the company and fled. Grant and his entire family was wiped out. Grant wrote his niece, “Financially the Grant family is ruined for the present, and by the most stupendous frauds ever perpetrated.” He was personally embarrassed having lent his name and prestige to the company. Doubtless many assumed it was on firm footing with the hero of the Union watching over it. In reality, Grant had little knowledge of the day-to-day operations of the firm.

Soon after the scandal, Grant was diagnosed with terminal mouth and throat cancer. He was said to partake in an average of 20 – 25 cigars a day. He rushed to write his personal memoirs of the Civil War. Before

his financial destruction, he was on record as having little desire to write his own account of the war. Grant eventually settled on an agreement with his friend Mark Twain that would give his



Ulysses S. Grant

widow Julia 75 percent of the profit of the book sales.

As he toiled away with his pen, sometimes writing as many as 25 – 50 pages a day, *The New York Times* and publications across the country offered daily updates on Grant's condition. His suffering was immense. His throat had to be constantly swabbed with cocaine to relieve the pain. As the illness progressed, it literally began to suffocate him and he would often wake at night in a panic, trying to gasp for air. Just swallowing was especially agonizing.

Grant received an abundance of personal letters and well wishes from North and South. He felt his illness was helping to further heal the sectional divide and noted as much. The author notes Grant was especially touched by a letter by A.M. Arnold from Rockbridge Baths, Virginia. Arnold wrote:

I hope that you will allow one, who, when but a boy, laid down his arms at Appomattox and gave his allegiance to the Union, to express his warmest sympathy for you in your hour of affliction. Dear General, I have watched your movements from the hour you gave me my horse and sword and told me to go home and "assist in making a crop" – I have been proud to see the nation do you honor . . . May the God who overlooked you in battle and who has brought you this far give you grace to meet whatever He has in store for you. And may He restore you to health & friends is the fervent prayer of one who at 15 years of age entered the lists against you and accepted the magnanimous terms you accorded us at Appomattox.

Grant had his share of well wishers in the South because of the respect he showed for General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox and the brave men of the Army of Northern Virginia. Grant also later intervened on Lee's behalf when President Andrew Johnson and others in the federal government wanted to arrest Lee and have him tried and hung for treason.

Grant, a lifelong Methodist, was not par-

ticularly known for devoutness. Nearing death he spent more time with his Methodist pastor and was baptized for the first time in his life. Flood suggests that Grant may have at times kept his pastor at arm's distance because he thought the clergyman might have been using him so the minister could cement his own notoriety as Grant's pastor. Grant refused public communion near his death, writing his pastor:

I would only be too happy to do so if I felt myself fully worthy. I have a feeling in regard to taking the sacrament [sic] that no worse sin can be committed than to take it unworthily. I would prefer therefore not to take it, but to have the funeral services performed when I am gone.

As Grant declined, he was moved to a cabin in upstate New York where the climate better suited his illness and suffering throat. He sat on the porch working feverishly to complete his memoirs. Former generals and military men paid their last respects, and Grant mostly communicated through notes by now. Well wishers often walked by his cabin and if they were fortunate Grant would tip his cap to them or raise a hand. One minister upon seeing Grant writing on his porch while suffering in such agony expressed that the image was "the finest sermon at which he had ever been present."

Grant died three days after completing his memoirs in 1885. He dedicated the publication to the "American soldier and sailor." When it was suggested that maybe he should change the dedication so that it read "the Union soldier and sailor," he declined. The healing of the nation was always on Grant's mind and at the conclusion, his optimism shined as he stated his belief that the healing would continue. As Grant peacefully departed this life, his son stopped the clock at 8:08. The hand of the clock still remains fixed on that time in the cottage where Grant passed away. The cottage in Wilton, NY is heavily visited today and is

an enduring symbol of Grant's courageous life and death.

The well wishes poured in for one of the most beloved leaders in American history. Church bells across the country chimed 63 times, one for each year of Grant's life. The former Confederate General James P. Longstreet called him "the soul of honor," adding that Grant "was the highest type of manhood America has produced."

While his funeral was epic affair of state, it clashed with the humility that Grant would cast in his memoirs. Often memoirs of great generals or statesmen are puffed up affairs,

"Often memoirs of great generals or statesmen are puffed up affairs, but Grant's work would be forever known as a chronicle that praised the men around him, with the attention focused not on himself but the battles and conflict."

but Grant's work would be forever known as a chronicle that praised the men around him, with the attention focused not on himself but the battles and conflict. The chronicles avoided flowery speech and was straightforward and honest, much like many of the fellow Midwesterners Grant led. Twain called his work "the best of any general's since Caesar."

Flood has written a powerful story and helps the reader to see why Grant was so loved even through faults and poor choices. It could be easily said that no American in the 19th Century was more admired than Grant and did more to save the country.

It's amazing because I've been here almost 18 years, and we were all talking about it just yesterday. I've just about given up. I cannot change our reputation because it still makes people shudder, "Angola." *Life* magazine called it the bloodiest prison in America. And we can't shirk the reputa-

"Life magazine called it the bloodiest prison in America. And we can't shirk the reputation because the people who come here are so violent. People don't realize how much they can change."

tion because the people who come here are so violent. People don't realize how much they can change.

And that's why we really built the Rodeo up and have so many tours in this riverboat tour. When they stop here in Baton Rouge or St. Francisville, they get in a bus and they come here, because I'm trying to get people to see that this place is not like they thought, and that people can truly change.

I think part of that is probably just the name, Angola.

It brings up emotion to people and it's a unique name. It's in the swamp. You know? And they've seen that prison movie with Paul Newman, "Cool Hand Luke." And they think of this as being that prison. People ask, was that movie filmed here? They think it was filmed here.

You've said that this shouldn't be a place for dying old men that have been rehabilitated. Are there hundreds of inmates here that you would feel comfortable releasing and have no

problem with that?

I would. There's probably hundreds. Not thousands, but hundreds, that could probably go and would never come back. Today the parole board came and so we recommended one for parole and held off on four others. So that was one out of five. In Louisiana we sit on the parole board as a nonvoting member, and so I'm sure today when the parole board leaves, that one will probably get to go and the others won't go. We are the safety net to ensure that the wrong ones don't get out.

Our oversight was designed so that we



Inmate in the Angola auto body shop.

would have the legislature more comfortable with being a little more liberal with their sentencing laws, so that you just don't panic and lock everybody up. See, the prison business caused stiff sentencing because they failed at rehabilitating. Because the folks who run prisons forgot that

the word corrections means to correct deviant behavior. Well, they just lock and feed and incarcerate, and they do traditional prison, so they get traditional outcomes. But we're very non-traditional, so we get non-traditional outcomes more than anybody else in the country. This is probably the safest prison in America today, yet it has the potential to be the most violent because of the type of sentences of the inmates who are living here.

Now here's the good news. The good news is in places like Texas—and they were here just visiting recently—they're changing their prison system to be exactly like this prison. And so Southwest Baptist Seminary has started an educational program into some of those prisons last year. And they're going to have 1,000 in the seminary within 10 years. And then they're going to send out field ministers. They're going to be sending those to all 111 prisons in Texas. Now, once Texas does it, then we're going to see other states do what we do here. But they have to do it exactly like we did it, because some have tried but they don't truly embrace it and so therefore it doesn't work.

If we can cut the violence, we cut the cost. We also made it safer for us to be guarding these inmates, and so that's a big deal. When they're released from prison, they're less apt to rob and steal and rape and pilfer because they're moral people. So therefore, we broke the cycle. So if we cut our recidivism rate from 50 to 25 percent, then look how many people aren't victims of violent crime. Therefore, there's no justifiable reason not to do what we did. We just have to prove it, and that proof is starting now through research grants through Baylor University. So there you have it. That's what's going to happen. You're going to see these seminaries spring up in prison systems throughout the country. You only need one in each state, and it feeds the rest of the prisons. We saw the violence reduced 43 percent in Dixon Correctional Institute in six months once the two field ministers got there.

But the prison officials have to stop being

traditional. And that means being too aggressive toward inmates, and start having the attitude of correcting deviant behavior rather than just lock and feed. And that's where you run into problems with under funded jails or prisons because they don't have the resources to really do the moral rehabilitation. And some systems are afraid to let one inmate teach another because they think they'll create gangs.

But even Miss America can walk anywhere in this prison with no whistles and cat calls, and she's an attractive lady. And that's essential because that means the culture has changed here. You're much safer here than you probably are in New Orleans tonight.

Acton's always had a very close relationship with Chuck Colson. I just want you to comment on your thoughts on Chuck Colson and his legacy. He recently passed away and the inspiration for this interview really grew out of the work Colson has done.

I'll tell you what I think about him. I am on the Prison Fellowship board. I was just inducted on the board in May of 2012. That tells you what I think of Prison Fellowship, because Prison Fellowship is going to play a tremendous role in us establishing the seminaries in other states. Because they have the political clout to open the doors to get the seminary in different prison systems. You have to start with legislators and governors to compel the Department of Corrections to do the seminary because, again, most prison people are hooked up into traditional ways because they think it works. So Colson's reach and influence

is certainly deep and he is the reason so much of this is possible.

But prisons still have those high recidivism rates. They try to do re-entry and so forth, and that's fine, but if you teach people skills and trades without the moral component, you just made a smarter criminal.

You have to change the person. It's simple. People have heard me say it many times. A criminal is a selfish person who takes what he wants. He doesn't care about your feelings. He's indifferent. He just takes what he wants. Moral people do not do that. So if we can get them to become moral people, then we can cure our prison problem. But it's like fish. You can't catch

once they become rooted in another faith, then they believe in the hereafter. Most religions believe in life after death. So if you believe in life after death, then it's not hopeless here.

Yeah, your desire for God has got to kind of be greater than your desire to be free, in a sense, from a worldly perspective.

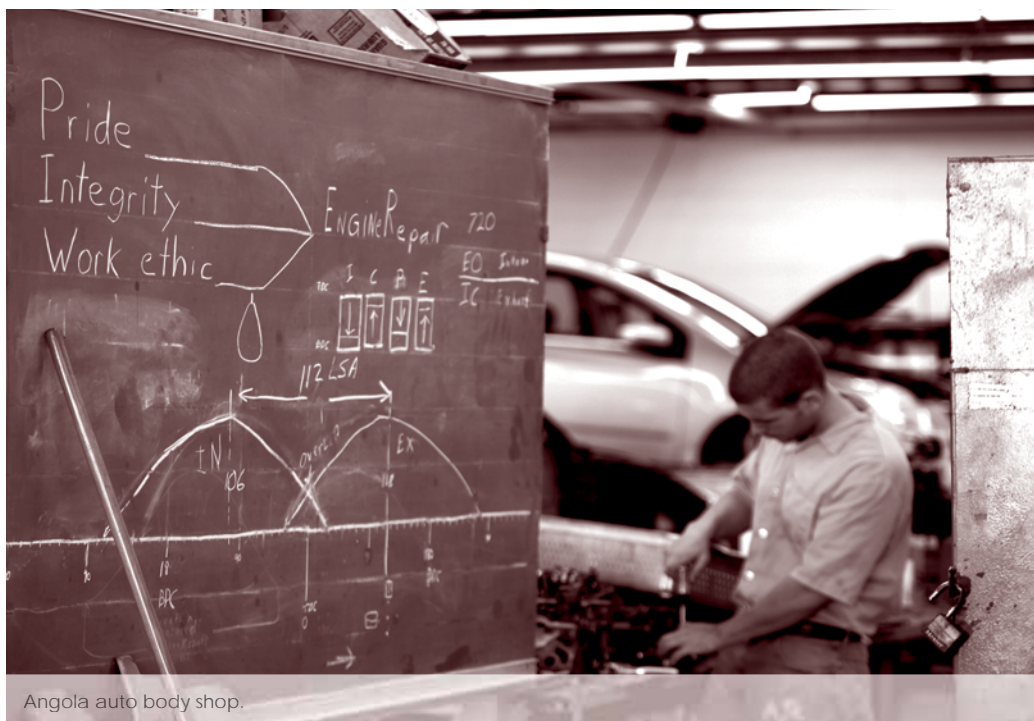
That's right. It does. I've got an inmate in here and he says, "I don't want to get out. I'm here. I'm going to be free in heaven. I want to stay here and do God's work in prison." And he's a horrible murderer. He doesn't even want to get out. He just said, "I'm here. This is a good spot for me to do God's work. I mean, why would I want to go somewhere else? There's plenty of work right here. It's my mission field." So when you get inmates that start thinking like that and talking that, you really overcome hopelessness. And he gives hope to many others.

Now certainly they want to go free. And the other thing we say is, you want to be prepared. You

want to be prepared that if you do go free, that you can stay free, that you don't hurt anyone again. This whole thing is so simple. It is incredible that we miss it. All I'm talking about it just pure common sense when it comes to moral rehabilitation and too many miss it.

You have a lot of critics, ACLU, other organizations, lawsuits.

They like me. I get along really well with the ACLU. I really like them because they're protecting my rights and I understand them and they understand me. I



Angola auto body shop.

them all, so you've just got to catch what you can.

A lot of folks that come to Angola, maybe they're buying in but hopelessness might take over, especially if they realize they've got no chance to get out. What are the best ways of managing that?

You just hit the nail on the head because overcoming hopelessness is crucial. The lack of hope is our greatest enemy in here. In our case, once they become moral, or once they become Christian, or

continued on pg 12

don't cross the line. I do not mix church and state.

And I keep that separate. The churches and ministries we work with don't want to mix them. The seminary doesn't want you to mix them because they would lose their tax exempt status. They do not want any state resources. So that's not a problem for us.

Behind bars we have to have all religions. And that's what we do. So we get along. I don't cross those lines. And they like me for that.

You've been warden here since 1995. How has being the warden changed your own spirituality and your own walk with the Lord?

It wasn't being the warden that changed me very much. I was a warden at another prison for 13 years before that. I've been a warden now since 1981.



Angola inmates work outside the auto shop.

So as a senior warden longer than anybody in the whole country, the thing that changed me was an inmate execution, and particularly when I realized that we're dealing really and truly with life and death. You can say it, but until you look there and do it, and that guy is lying there dead, and then you think why you did it, you killed this person, someone is in the grave. The Secretary of Corrections, James LeBlanc, feels the same way because he was there with me. He was a witness as a co-warden at the time. We realized then that our job was to correct deviant behavior and prevent people from being victims of people who are in our care, because then we fail.

So we judge our failure - meaning that the inmate was released and murdered somebody. So we failed. We took that really serious and we said we've done this long enough that we really do know how to rehabilitate people. We really know how to make it work. We're going to start doing it. And so that drove us to really get out to the moral rehabilitation and the change. LeBlanc was a warden of the first prison that I mentioned earlier that we sent the missionaries to. He didn't really believe they worked, but he took a chance that it would work. I knew it would work because I had them here, but he didn't have them. So once they got there, these two lifers went to this medium security prison, the chaplain was afraid because he thought we were going to replace him. But they became the best chaplain orderlies he ever had because they were well educated and smart, and they love God, and they started Bible studies. They started preaching in the pulpit and it worked great.

What's interesting to me is we have people who come here that want to do prison ministry all the time, but they really could do a lot better if they did prison ministry more in their own community. But they won't go out in the

community and get groups together and have religious study programs. They want to come up here and get this captive group because it's easier, and study with them. And at this prison, we don't really need to do that anymore because we have our own preachers.

We're thinking a lot on the same lines because I spoke to that earlier. Our whole concept of missions is that we go to a society and train that society to take care of themselves and then we step back.

So now you've got these inmates that have this four-year seminary degree and you have people that come and try to do prison ministry with them and teach them

about the Bible, but they know more about the Bible than the guy trying to teach him. You know? So then we try to divert them to other places without hurting their feelings. And we like them to come, but we wish they would come and sit in church with them and listen to the inmate preach. There's a number of inmate preachers that are just knock down great preachers.

What areas of Angola could still be improved and enhanced to really expand on some of the things you're doing here in terms of reaching people?

Well, I think it's like we're doing with Texas. And they bring over different preachers and church people and so forth, to come see what's going to be the outcome in Texas, and they're amazed. And so I think that we exist now so that we can perpetuate the faith through what we are because the great commission prevails even for Angola.

We have an inmate preacher who is a dynamic preacher, loves God, really doing it right and he gets out of jail. Some would say you don't want the prisoner to go back where he came from, because he'll be corrupted again. But in this case, we want him to go back where he came from because he's incorruptible. He will change a community where he came from. We talk about all this violence that we have in communities, that we don't even want to go to into those places, but we need to be sending these kinds of guys in prison who came from there back and change that community.

How are we going to change a culture? How are we going to fix a community? How are we going to do it? We're preparing the people in this prison to go back to that community and change it. The problem is, the politicians have got to figure out and realize that and let's let them out of jail when they're rehabilitated. Just don't punish them for the sake of punishing them and to get justice because we're mad at them. Let's let them get rehabilitated, correct the deviant behavior and then let's get them back out into the community to change a community and prevent more victims of violent crime. ■■■

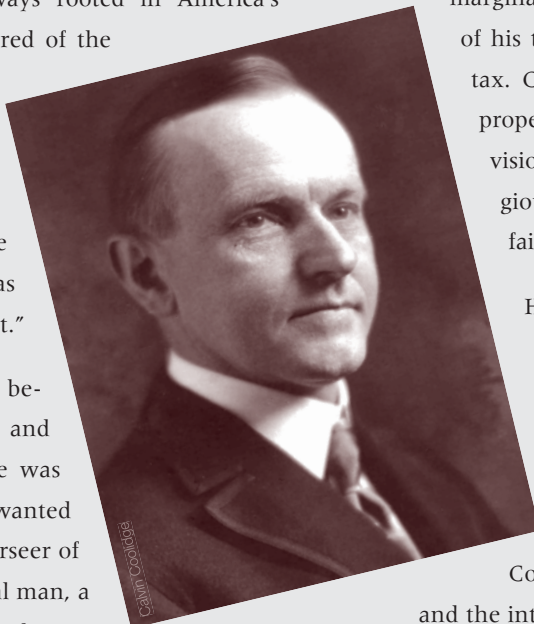
Calvin Coolidge [1872 – 1933]

"It is only when men begin to worship that they begin to grow."

Calvin Coolidge was deeply committed to limiting the power of the state. But his desire to check the expansion of the federal government was always rooted in America's founding principles. He declared of the founders, "They were a people who came under the influence of a great spiritual development and acquired a great moral power." Coolidge has often been referred to as "the last Jeffersonian president."

Coolidge was sandwiched in between the rise of Wilsonian and New Deal progressivism. He was deeply critical of those that wanted to harness the state as an overseer of the community and individual man, a project that had too often in the past led to tyranny. He warned Americans about the risk inherent in progressive, big government schemes: "Their ideas are not more modern, but more ancient, than those of the Revolutionary fathers." He was a conservative who actually reduced the size and scope of the federal government during his presidency. Tyrannical leaders that preached the supremacy of the state like Joseph Stalin and Benito Mussolini came to power alongside Coolidge.

A lawyer and career politician, Coolidge served as a state legislator, lieutenant governor and governor of Massachusetts. He was elected Vice President, on a ticket with Warren G. Harding, and in 1923 following Harding's sudden death, was sworn in as the 30th President of the United States. Coolidge assumed office in an unforgettable manner. His father, a notary public, administered the oath to Coolidge by a gas lamp in Plymouth Notch, Vermont, in 1923 at 2:47



a.m. The image reminded Americans of his humble and rural origins.

Coolidge immediately sought to lower taxes; he cut the top marginal rate from 65 percent to 20 percent. At the end of his term, 98 percent of Americans paid no income tax. Coolidge cut government, promoted federalism, property rights, and most importantly he articulated a vision for an America that promoted work and religious faith. He linked it to America's past, calling faith "the foundation of our independence."

He took his position as civic educator seriously, writing all of his speeches, including the brilliant address "the Occasion of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence." In that 1926 speech he declared, "The things of the spirit come first."

Coolidge was lambasted by political opponents and the intellectual class as a "tool of big business," but he was deeply critical of materialism and profit for merely profit's sake. While he is famously quoted as saying, "The chief business of the American people is business," he is not as well known for another line in that same address where he said, "Of course the accumulation of wealth cannot be justified as the chief end of existence." He warned Americans against sinking into "pagan materialism." Over his entire career, he argued that economic policies and taxation were indeed moral matters.

He did part ways with contemporary free-market devotees with his support of high tariffs, which was popular among Republicans of that era. But his ideas of common sense conservatism are needed again today. He always sought to remind Americans that government ultimately had few answers for their problems and was fond of saying, "The people cannot look to legislation generally for success."



Freedom and Chaos

Freedom is a word that can mean dramatically different things to different people in different settings. The kind of freedom that leads to human flourishing—and that is sustainable over time—is freedom in a much richer sense than what many people mean by freedom today.

Let me take the point even further. True freedom is actually the opposite of what has been called “freedom” at some times and some places. One example from the previous century illustrates what I mean.

The Constitution guaranteed freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion. I’m not talking about the U.S. Constitution, although the same could be said of it. I’m talking about the Soviet Constitution of 1924. And after that constitution took effect, political dissidents were brutally suppressed; priests, ministers, and rabbis were deported to the Gulag; houses of worship were shuttered; and the press was hammered into line with an iron fist. Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev did all of this even while the text of the nation’s constitution proclaimed a paradise of liberty. In the minds of those men, freedom wasn’t about the God-given rights of individuals that must be respected by governments. It was about free scope for the will of the proletariat—for whom they were the only legitimate representatives, of course.

This kind of confusion about freedom didn’t end with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Visit almost any major university in America and you’ll find individuals praising freedom while admiring ruthless totalitarians, usually without the least sense of irony or awareness of the contradiction. And often the totalitarians being praised are the ones who, while busily stamping out freedom, are reassuring everyone that they’re stamping in order to free the people, stamping in pursuit of “national liberty and equality,” stamping for “the pacific co-existence and fraternal collaboration of peoples.”

Why does all of this matter? When liberty and freedom can mean so many different things—sometimes diametrically opposing things—we are no longer free to have a meaningful

conversation about political freedom, at least not until we talk about what exactly we mean when we use these terms.

To some, freedom means nothing more than the license to do whatever they want, when they want—as when a wild teenager longs to be “free of all these stupid rules.” To others, freedom means the liberty to worship God freely according to the dictates of their conscience, or the right to govern themselves through duly elected representatives. President Franklin Roosevelt talked about freedom in terms of government-supplied security and even welfare—freedom from want, freedom from fear, and so forth. But the Founders who wrote the U.S. Constitution thought about liberty as limiting what government was allowed to do, and their understanding of freedom was tied up in the old notion of freedom in Christ, which is why they repeatedly emphasized that the constitutional republic they had formed was, as John Adams put it, “made only for a moral and religious people” and “wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

Freedom has a wide variety of meanings—some people think of it as the ability to do what they know they ought to do, even when it is not attractive at the moment, as when a lonely husband remains faithful to his wife while on a business trip, or a recovered alcoholic has achieved enough self-control to live a life of sobriety. For still others, it means what the great twentieth century Dominican theologian Servais Pinckaers called “freedom for excellence,” as when a pianist strives to master a demanding piece by Rachmaninoff and is finally able to play it with ease and fluidity.

So let’s look at what freedom is and can be. This need not be a terribly abstract and philosophical examination. We can use our common sense and elementary logic. The best of philosophy is looking simply but seriously at things as they really are. Let’s begin with what we know, each of us, about ourselves.

I think it can be easily observed that there is something innate in the human heart that responds positively to the idea of liberty—no doubt in more than one sense of the word. People have pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to its defense. Over the course of the last century, countless men and women risked their lives to flee from totalitarian

domination into a realm of freedom. People—perhaps even some we have known personally—swam shark-infested waters, climbed electrified fences, catapulted over barriers, dug their way through tunnels, and outran guard dogs and border guards—all to escape bondage and reach a place where they could breathe free. To be aware of what human beings have sacrificed for freedom is to understand that freedom is not a garnish on life but one of the central quests of the human experience. The human heart has a natural orientation toward liberty. We are built this way, regardless of our religion or ethnicity; indeed, all men are endowed with liberty and a deep desire for it.

What is it about freedom that makes it so irresistible a goal—and yet still so complex an idea that we can become confused about what it is? Alexis de Tocqueville—perhaps the greatest observer of the uniqueness of America—can help us get a grasp on it. “Freedom is, in truth, a sacred thing,” he insists. “There is only one thing else that better deserves the name: that is virtue.” And then he asks, “What is virtue if not the free choice of what is good?”

The yearning for freedom is built into our bones. Of course, human beings are corporeal like other animals. We are bodies, subject to the laws of physics, chemistry, and biology. But unlike other animals, the human person has the additional capacity to transcend himself. Even non-believers can observe this aspect of human personhood, for example when a person falls in love and discovers more of himself or herself, even while giving that self away to the other. We also experience this transcendent aspect of the human person in the exaltation we feel in beautiful music, great art, or poetry.

*This article is drawn from Rev. Robert A. Sirico’s new book, *Defending the Free Market: The Moral Case for a Free Economy*. (Regnery, May 2012).*

How has the Acton Institute broadened its outreach on social media websites?

One of the main keys for a successful social media strategy is having timely, professional, and relevant content to share. Almost everyone today is bombarded by content from virtually everywhere. At Acton, we face fierce competition from a wide variety of news and opinion sites vying for the attention of the busy. We want readers of Acton’s print and digital content, and video productions, to know that investing their time in our resources is valuable for them and it’s beneficial for their intellectual and moral growth.

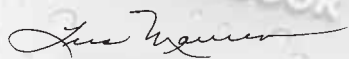
Acton has a unique and rich message to share with the world and we are working hard at broadening our social media reach every day. We know that our content can help shape and influence a free and virtuous society. We reach popular opinion makers but also the faithful individuals active in their businesses, and in their churches and synagogues.

Acton has made a commitment to invest more resources in the Acton Powerblog, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The blog delivers about 30 percent of total annual web traffic and allows readers to engage with editors and other commenters. Now more staff than ever write for the blog and it has helped increase total Acton.org web traffic – up about 25 percent in 2012.

Acton has crafted popular video shorts like the piece on the Health & Human Services (HHS) Mandate in order to push back and educate against the threats to religious liberty. We can help direct and shape opinion and offer expert analysis on many economic and religious issues. Below are some important highlights and statistics for 2012:

- Over 3,000 new followers on Twitter in 2012. Currently growing at over 40 new followers a week.
- Acton.org surpassed the one million new visitors mark in December.
- 398,000 video views on YouTube
- Over 275,000 Facebook “likes;” average post surpasses 1,600 views.
- New Book Shop site with more efficient check-out and user friendly search features.

When I travel to conferences and meetings, I receive a lot of compliments and praise for our use of “new media.” While there is plenty we can do and invest in to keep us on the cutting edge, I believe a lot of our success is the fact that our content is strong and the Acton ideas are sound. This fact places us in the best position to expand and effectively harness the use of all new media.



Kris Alan Mauren
Executive Director

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—CHUCK COLSON, founder of Prison Fellowship® and the Colson Center for Christian Worldview

Socialism has been discredited. The totalitarian states of the twentieth century have collapsed. And we beneficiaries of the globalized world economy are grateful that we enjoy plentiful food, clothing, shelter—and cheap electronics. But can any moral person really be *for* capitalism? Consumerism is an appalling spectacle, with Americans glutting themselves on all kinds of excess, while people in the developing world starve. The rich seem to be hogging far more than their share of the world's resources. Free markets may be efficient, but are they fair? Aren't there some things—life-saving health care, for example—that we can't afford to leave to the vicissitudes of the market? Now, in *Defending the Free Market: The Moral Case for a Free Economy*, Father Robert Sirico—a Catholic priest, former leftist associate of Jane Fonda, and now a longtime champion of the free market—answers all these objections.

