

GRIM REALITY?

Last week we ended our commentary: "Looking out at the world scene . . . we MUST know that something terrible is coming our way." Sounds pretty grim to me. Really? Is it that grim?

Yes and no. Think about what just happened, or didn't happen, to California, when the recall of a truly awful, arrogant, tyrannous, evil governor failed. We had hopes that the voters of California had had enough of business closures, church shutdowns, and mask mandates, not to mention high taxes, high cost of housing and housing shortages, terrible roads, wild fires due to bad forest management run by environmental wackos, crime out of control, homeless encampments taking over entire city areas, useless schools run by power mad teachers' unions, and on and on. (That last is not the case in Lucerne Valley, and we are very lucky.)

Sad to say, between stupid voters, imported foreign voters, and 2020 election-style fraud, the governor theoretically won a near landslide to keep his platform from which to impose his unconstitutional, liberty-violating mandates. Now that he has no recall hanging over his head, look out. The hammer is about to fall.

If that doesn't qualify as "something terrible", I don't know what does. And it's only one of many things assailing Americans currently. Who knew that when we heard of this virus in early 2020, all of this shtuff would come to pass? And who understands why this has all happened so quickly?

In an [American Thinker](#) article (is there any other?), writer Andrew Coy wrote this on September 15, in an article entitled "Because They Are Evil":

There are a great many things coming from Biden, Fauci, the CDC, the State Department, the military, the Justice Department, and basically the Deep State that make no sense. From Biden and the Deep State, we are getting executive orders, mandates, guidelines, decisions, policies, and edicts that just do not make any sort of intellectual sense. It is not just a difference of opinion.

It is not just different politics or a different point of view. Decisions, guidelines, policies, and proposed laws are coming out of Washington D.C., Biden, and the Deep State that one just can't figure out in an intellectual, factual, common-sense sort of way. The only way to explain what is coming from the placeholder at the White House and the Deep State elites is that they are just evil. They are doing what they're doing because they are evil. No other answer makes sense.

Here are a few of the 22 questions Mr. Coy asked:

- *Why would Biden declare that all Americans must be vaccinated but illegal immigrants crossing our border illegally do not have to be vaccinated...? Because he is evil.*
- *Why would the Biden administration declare a national vaccine mandate for all Americans, but exempt all of Congress, all the congressional aides, the postal service, the federal justice system, and the Supreme Court...? Because they are evil.*
- *Why would the Biden administration fight so hard against Texas and its pro-life law that protects babies inside the womb whose heart is already beating, but at the same time they federally protect the embryos and eggs of lizards, alligators, and snakes...? Because they are evil.*
- *Why would Nancy Pelosi put on a "Stalinist Show Trial" concerning the events of January 6, when she ignored the violent and deadly riots all summer long in Portland, Seattle, Minneapolis, Chicago, Atlanta, and Los Angeles...? Because she is evil.*
- *Why does Fauci continue to demand vaccinations for all, even including all K-12 students, when he knows the individuals that have had COVID are better naturally immunized than if they "take the jab"...? Because he is evil.*
- *Why would General Mark Milley evacuate all the soldiers first from Afghanistan and leave Bagram Air Base unattended, before he got out all the American citizens and all the Afghani interpreters...? Because he is evil.*

- *Why is General Milley driving many patriot soldiers (conservatives/Christians/constitutionalists) out of the military...? Because he is evil.*

Yes, yes, and YES! Evil is upon us in ways we have never seen before! Most of the world's populace over the centuries have had to live

and suffer the consequences of heavy-handed governments like this. But we have not, due to the brilliance of our Founding Fathers who sought to establish a nation based on God's laws, after the pattern of ancient Israel. Our nation was to be a new Israel, a new light of God's Spirit, His Justice, and His Truth in a dark world. For almost 250 years, that vision has made this nation exceptional, which has been twisted to mean we are arrogant supremacists toward the rest of the world. What it truly means is that our foundation on God's Word and Truth is an exception to the rule of governments past, that they exist for the benefit of those governing, usually without regard for its people's welfare, often trampling on their rights and their desires for a better life. Our nation was set up to exist by, for, and of the people, not the rulers.

So what is the "no" to the question posed, "Is it that grim?" The "no" is that it's not that grim if we are not of this world and if we real-

ize that our true home is located somewhere else. Ray Bentley of Maranatha Chapel in San Diego wrote this of true reality:

The lie is that abuse, wars, pain,



and suffering is our only reality. We can't ignore evil. We must wage a spiritual war as we serve and love others to relieve pain and suffering. But this is not the reality God intends for His children. When Jesus walked the earth, people were amazed by the miracles He performed. The supernatural world had broken into their lives. Miracles were regarded then, and now, as a temporary suspension of reality. But the opposite is true.

The miracles of Jesus were moments of reality breaking through into the unreal world. . .

*. . . When we enter into a relationship of trust with the Lord, we step back into the real world. We allow reality to be manifested by what will seem like miracles to others, but which we come to recognize as "normal" in the kingdom of God. "Seek first the kingdom of God," Jesus said (Matthew 6:33). "Your kingdom come. Your will be done," He prayed (Matthew 6:10). **First the kingdom. Reality. Then God's will, where His blessings will be poured out upon you.***

And so, no, things are not that grim, if we live in relationship with God, in His reality. Yes, there will be grim and painful moments in this earthly life, but keeping our eyes on Him, we know that the reality of our end will be eternal life with Him. That's not grim at all!

Linda Gommel



LIFE LESSONS IN FIREWOOD

By Will Dabbs. From the Web.

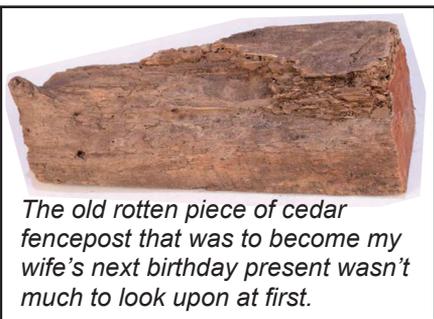
It was one of those preternaturally cold January days in the Deep South — about ten degrees out. The kids were inside doing school, and there was something or other I needed to do in the workshop. I bundled up and trundled out into the frigid weather.

My workshop is a nice metal building maybe 60 meters or so from the house. I have a wood stove I built from an old oil drum that I use to heat it in the winter. I stack my wood scraps on the floor next to the stove all year long and burn them for heat. By springtime the shop is tidier, and I haven't frozen to death. This particular winter had already been so cold that my scrap pile was about gone. I got a little blaze going with some sawdust and a capful of motor oil and began poking around for firewood.

Half buried in the dirt outside the shop I found an old rotten piece of 4x4 lumber. We had only been in the house a couple of years, so construction detritus was still not unusual. I wrenched the rotten beam free and brought it into the shop.

I put the piece of worm-eaten wood through my chop saw and

cut it into roughly one-foot chunks suitable for burning. As I opened up the stove to toss in the first piece I caught a glimpse of the freshly-cut end. Instead of the fallow yellow I might expect from a piece of weathered pressure-treated pine



The old rotten piece of cedar fencepost that was to become my wife's next birthday present wasn't much to look upon at first.

I saw a deep and sultry red color. Hefting the scrap up into the light I could tell that it was actually seasoned cedar.

The end result is a combination of some fairly unrefined raw material and a little love.

Cedar ages exceptionally well in the dirt. That's why it has so frequently been used for fencing. There had been another homestead on our farm a century or so ago, but nothing remains beyond some unusually resilient shrubs and the errant shard of broken china. I gave my cedar scrap a once over with a wire brush to remove the dirt and non-viable bits. What was left was unexpectedly solid given its profound age. That's when I had an epiphany.

I trekked back up to the house for some proper firewood from the household stash and turned my attention to my new discovery. I put the piece of aged cedar through my table saw and ripped it into thin sheets. I cut them to even rectangular lengths and then beveled the edges into 45-degree angles. I glued the pieces and clamped them while they dried. I built up a floor and crafted a lid with edges shaped on my router table.

Once I had the basic box fitted, glued, and set, I ran the whole thing across my sanding wheel. I then used my bench sander to polish the exterior to a high sheen. Several coats of high-gloss polyurethane later, I beheld my wife's next birthday present.

That's when it hit me.

That rotten old piece of wood was me. On my own I'm ugly, decayed, and irredeemable to my core. I'm unpleasant to look upon and suitable only to be thrown into the fire and burned. I can't change myself or improve my lot. I am utterly helpless. Then I'm found by the carpenter.

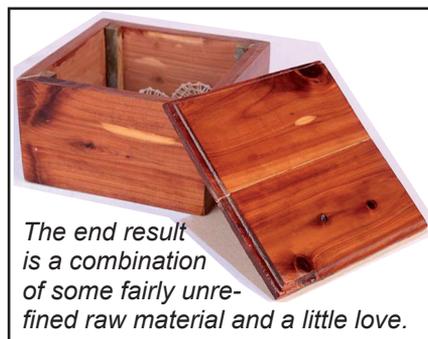
He doesn't see me as others do. The carpenter sees past the rot and the dirt to appreciate my potential. He doesn't see what I am. He sees what I might become.

The transformation is painful. It involves cutting and sanding. I have to be clamped into a shape that might not seem natural at first. However, the end result is better than anything I might have been on my own.

The final product is a hybrid of sorts, a combination of my raw material and the carpenter's transformational skill. I am far from perfect. In fact, I am full of tiny flaws, many of which are known only to the one who crafted me, but now I am useful. I have a purpose. I am actually kind of attractive to look upon.

What God does to a human

soul is much like what I did to that old rotten piece of cedar fencepost. My wife's jewelry box didn't cost me a nickel's worth of materials, but I spent hours



The end result is a combination of some fairly unrefined raw material and a little love.

in the workshop crafting it. Now it looks pretty and exudes that intoxicating cedar smell. That's the gospel of Christ embedded in an old piece of firewood.