

Eye on the World

Sept. 22 and 29, 2018

This compilation of material for “Eye on the World” is presented as a service to the Churches of God. The views stated in the material are those of the writers or sources quoted by the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Church of God Big Sandy. The following articles were posted at churchofgodbigandy.com for the weekends of Sept. 22 and 29, 2018.

Compiled by Dave Havir

Luke 21:34-36—“But take heed to yourselves, lest your souls be weighed down with self-indulgence, and drunkenness, or the anxieties of this life, and that day come on you suddenly, like a falling trap; for it will come on all dwellers on the face of the whole earth. But beware of slumbering; and every moment pray that you may be fully strengthened to escape from all these coming evils, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of Man” (Weymouth New Testament).



Looking back to 2016, an article by Thomas Sowell titled “The Left and the Masses” was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Oct. 19, 2016. Following is the article.

The greatest moral claim of the political left is that they are for the masses in general and the poor in particular. That is also their greatest fraud. It even fools many leftists themselves.

One of the most recent efforts of the left is the spread of laws and policies that forbid employers from asking job applicants whether they have been arrested or imprisoned. This is said to be to help ex-cons get a job after they have served their time, and ex-cons are often either poor or black, or both.

First of all, many of the left’s policies to help blacks are disproportionately aimed at helping those blacks who have done the wrong thing—and whose victims are disproportionately those blacks who have been trying to do the right thing.

In the case of this ban on asking job applicants whether they have criminal backgrounds, the only criterion seems to be whether it sounds good or makes the left feel good about themselves.

Hard evidence as to what actual consequences to expect beforehand, or hard evidence as to its actual consequences afterwards, seems to have had very little role in this political crusade.

An empirical study some years ago examined the hiring practices of companies that did a background check on all the employees they hired. It found that such companies hired more blacks than companies which did not follow that unusual practice.

Why? This goes back to decision-making by human beings in general, with many kinds of decisions in general. Since we seldom have all the facts, we are often forced to rely on generalizing when making our decisions.

Many employers, aware of higher rates of imprisonment among blacks, are less likely to hire blacks whose individual backgrounds are unknown to them. But those particular employers who investigate everyone's background before hiring them do not have to rely on such generalizations.

The fact that these latter kinds of employers hired more blacks suggests that racial animosity is not the key factor, since blacks are still blacks, whether they have a criminal past or not. But the political left is so heavily invested in blaming racism that mere facts are unlikely to change their minds.

Just as those on the left were not moved by hard evidence before they promoted laws and policies that forbade employers to ask about job applicants' criminal records, so they have remained unmoved by more recent studies showing that the hiring of blacks has been reduced in the wake of such laws and policies.

Moreover, the left is so invested in the idea that they are helping the disadvantaged that they seldom bother to check the actual consequences of what they are doing, whether that is something as specific as banning questions about criminal behavior or something as general as promoting the welfare state.

In the vision of the left, the welfare state is supposed to be a step forward, in the direction of "social justice."

Tons of painful evidence, from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, that the welfare state has in fact been a step backward toward barbarism—among low-income whites in England and ghetto blacks in the United States—does not make a dent in the beliefs of the left.

The left's infatuation with minimum wage laws has likewise been impervious to factual evidence that the spread and escalation of minimum wages have been followed by far higher rates of unemployment among young blacks, to levels some multiple of what they were before—and to a racial gap in unemployment among the young that is likewise some multiple of what it was before.

Those who doubt this need only turn to the data on page 42 of "Race and Economics" by Walter Williams, or to the diagram on page 98 of "The Unheavenly City," written by Edward Banfield back in 1968. The facts have been available for a long time.

Surely the intelligentsia of the left have access to empirical evidence and the wit to understand such evidence. But the real question is whether they have the stomach to face the prospect that their crusades have hurt the very people they claim to be helping.

Examining hard evidence would mean gambling a whole vision of the world—and of their own role in that world—on a single throw of the dice, which is what looking at hard evidence amounts to.

The path of least resistance is to continue going through life feeling good about themselves, while leaving havoc in their wake.



Looking back to 2016, an article by Thomas Sowell titled “The Left and the Masses: Part II” was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Oct. 20, 2016. Following is the article.

It is never easy to tell what people’s motives are. But, when the political left proclaims their devotion to improving the lives of others in general, and of the poor in particular, we can at least get some clues from the way they go about it.

One of the first things the left does is take away the right of other people to make their own choices.

For example, under current California law, Hispanic school children cannot be taught in Spanish if their parents want them taught in English. Like parents in other immigrant groups before them, Hispanic parents tend to want their children to learn English, so that those children will have more opportunities when they become adults in an English-speaking country.

But the left in general, and Hispanic activists in particular, have fought against leaving Hispanic parents with that choice. At the heart of the left’s vision of the world—and of themselves—is that they know better what is good for other people.

This means that the left sees itself as having both a right and a duty to take away other people’s options.

This issue was fought out 18 years ago, in a California referendum on so-called “bilingual education,” which in practice meant largely teaching Hispanic school children in Spanish.

All the forces of political correctness, including the media and the educational establishment, argued in favor of teaching those children in Spanish, even when their parents wanted them taught in English.

Despite a barrage of propaganda from the media and other organs of the left, a majority of California voters sided with Hispanic parents, and passed a law forbidding schools from imposing Spanish on children whose parents wanted them taught in English.

But the left never gives up on their pet notions. This year there is a new proposition on the California ballot—Proposition 58, very misleadingly phrased—that would take that choice away from parents, and let schools impose teaching in Spanish to Hispanic children, whether the parents want it or not.

The Spanish language issue in the schools is just one example of the left's vision, which applies to many other issues.

There is the same dogged resistance on the left to allowing black parents to choose to have their children educated in charter schools that are part of the public school system, but are not subject to all the bureaucratic rules that lead to such bad results in other public schools.

Many years ago, in a debate on William F. Buckley's program "Firing Line," I was told by a left-wing lawyer that black parents without a good education themselves could not make wise choices for their children's education.

But hard evidence says otherwise. There are whole chains of charter schools, such as the KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) schools and the Success Academy schools, where ghetto kids have academic achievements equal to those of children in affluent suburbs—and sometimes higher achievements.

Many of these charter schools are located in the very same buildings in ghetto neighborhoods where children in the regular public schools are failing miserably. Black parents who enroll their children in charter schools have apparently made better choices than the know-it-alls on the left.

Meanwhile, black children by the tens of thousands in New York alone are on waiting lists for charter schools because politicians, beholden to teachers' unions for money and votes, fight against the expansion of charter schools.

Not all charter schools are successful. But at least unsuccessful charter schools can be shut down, while other failing public schools keep right on failing.

When it comes to crime and violence, the political left, including much of the media, are having a great time demonizing the police. Blacks are the biggest victims of the sharp upturn in murders that has followed.

But, yet again, hard evidence carries very little weight when the left is feeling good about themselves, while leaving havoc in their wake.

The absurdity to which this kind of media frenzy about the police can lead is shown by the fact that a black policeman in Charlotte, North Carolina, shooting a black suspect who had a gun, has been blown up into a racial issue across the nation.

Have we become so gullible that we are so easily manipulated and stampeded?



Looking back to 2016, an article by Thomas Sowell titled "The Left and the Masses: Part III" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Oct. 21, 2016. Following is the article.

Claiming the role of champions of the masses is something the political left has been doing ever since there has been a political left—which is to say, ever

since the late 18th century, when people with such views sat on the left side of the French National Assembly.

Like so much that is claimed by the left, their compassion for the masses has seldom been subjected to any factual test. Both their words and their deeds reveal their low opinion of the people they claim to be championing.

- When Barack Obama referred to ordinary working people as people who are “bitter,” and who “cling to guns or religion,” that was not just a peculiarity of Obama. He was part of a centuries-long tradition on the left.

- No one so epitomized the 18th century left as Jean Jacques Rousseau, who likened the masses to “a stupid, pusillanimous invalid.”

- In the 19th century, Karl Marx said, “The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing”—in other words, millions of human beings mattered only if they carried out his vision.

- Fabian socialist George Bernard Shaw included the working class among the “detestable” people who “have no right to live.” He added: “I should despair if I did not know that they will all die presently, and that there is no need on earth why they should be replaced by people like themselves.”

- It sounds very much like Hillary Clinton’s view of the “deplorables” who support her opponent, or Bill Clinton’s characterization of the same people as “standard rednecks.”

What role is there for the masses in the vision of the left?

One role is to provide a moral basis for the left to claim power, as defenders of the downtrodden. No secular doctrine has so swept across the world so swiftly, and with such widespread political impact as Marxism in the 20th century. Its central premise is that the workers are poor because their employers have exploited them.

That was not a hypothesis to be tested but an axiom to be accepted as sacred dogma. Nowhere in the three volumes of Marx’s classic “Capital” was there the slightest attempt to test that belief empirically.

It would not be difficult to put the Marxian exploitation thesis to a test. If capitalists’ exploitation of the workers is what makes them poor, then in countries run by Marxists, the workers should have a higher standard of living than in countries with a capitalist economic system.

But among the many Communist countries that emerged around the world in the 20th century, there has not been a single one where the workers’ standard of living has been as high as that of working people in the United States.

The political left in general has been able to claim that they have more compassion for the less fortunate, and to depict their opponents as lacking in compassion for others. For none of these assertions have they felt a need to offer hard evidence.

Such evidence as exists contradicts those assertions. An empirical study titled “Who Really Cares” by Arthur C. Brooks found that conservatives donate a

higher percentage of their incomes to philanthropic causes, as well as more hours of their time as volunteers, and they donate far more blood.

Another study showed that President Ronald Reagan donated a higher percentage of his income to philanthropic causes than such liberal icons as President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Senator Ted Kennedy.

What may be more remarkable than these findings is that the left was able to get away with asserting the opposite for years, without evidence being asked for or given.

What is also remarkable is the extent to which the left's preservation of their own self-flattering vision is defended at virtually all costs—with both facts and thoughts to the contrary being dismissed, rather than answered, using such words and phrases as "stereotypes," "blaming the victim" or "racism."

People with a different vision of the world are not answered but characterized—as people needing to have their consciousness raised or as people who "just don't get it."

The near-monopoly of the left in academia allows such evasions to pass muster. But it cheats students out of practice in confronting opposing views on innumerable subjects, which they will have to do after they leave the insulated confines of academia.



Looking back to 2016, an article by Thomas Sowell titled "What Now?" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Nov. 15, 2016. Following is the article.

The good news is that we dodged a bullet in this election. The bad news is that we don't know how many other bullets are coming, or from what direction.

A Hillary Clinton victory would have meant a third consecutive administration dedicated to dismantling the institutions that have kept America free, and imposing instead the social vision of the smug elites. That could have been the ultimate catastrophe—not just for our time, but for generations yet unborn.

In one sense, Donald Trump's victory was a unique American event. But, in a larger sense, it represents the biggest backlash among many elsewhere, against smug elites in Western nations, where increasing numbers of ordinary people are showing their anger at where those elites are leading their countries.

There, as here, mindlessly flinging the doors open to peoples from societies whose fundamental values clash with those of the countries they enter, has been a hallmark of arrogant blindness and disregard of negative consequences suffered by ordinary people—consequences from which the elites themselves are insulated.

Nor is this the only issue on which the blindness of elites has set the stage

for a political backlash. The anti-law enforcement fetish among the insulated elites has even more tragically sacrificed the safety of the general public. This too has been common on both sides of the Atlantic.

Riots in London, Manchester and other cities in England in 2011 were incredibly similar to 2014 riots in Ferguson, Missouri, 2015 riots in Baltimore and similar riots in other American cities.

The fact that the rioters in England were mostly white, while those in America were mostly black, gives the lie to the facile excuse that such riots are due to racial oppression, rather than being a result of appeasing mobs and restricting the police.

Nor is the election of Donald Trump likely to lead the elites to having second thoughts about the prevailing dogmas of their groupthink.

On the morning after Mr. Trump's upset victory over Mrs. Clinton, a news-woman at CNN mentioned the disappointment of some women that "the glass ceiling" was not shattered as expected.

What an insult to everyone's intelligence is that catch phrase, "glass ceiling."

What does "glass" mean, if not that you cannot see the ceiling, but somehow you just know that it is there? And how do you know? Because it has been repeated so often.

It is like the fable of the emperor's new clothes, but a fable for adults.

Demagogues like Hillary Clinton can point to the fact that women as a group do not receive as much income as men as a group.

But, factual studies over the past 40 years have shown repeatedly that, when you compare women who work as many hours a year as men, and as many continuous years in the same occupations as men, the income differences shrink to the vanishing point, and sometimes even reverse.

But how many politicians or media people care about facts, when the facts go against their preconceptions?

Donald Trump's unexpected victory should send a lot of people back to the drawing board to rethink their assumptions about many things. That includes not only the political left but also the Republican establishment. But don't count on it.

The Republican establishment has been called many things, but introspective is not one of them. One thing they might reconsider is their assumption that they alone know just what kind of presidential candidate is needed to win elections.

But the two most surprisingly successful Republican candidates of the past half century—Ronald Reagan and now Donald Trump—bore no resemblance to the candidates who epitomized the Republican establishment's model, such as Bob Dole, John McCain and Mitt Romney.

Among others who could also use some rethinking is Donald Trump himself.

When he acted like a petulant adolescent, he may have gotten the adulation of his core constituents. But it was only toward the end, when he began to act like a responsible adult seeking the highest office in the land, that he began to overtake Hillary Clinton.

Donald Trump is a wild card. We don't know whether he was play-acting when he carried on like a juvenile lout or when he played the role of a mature adult.

But he and the country could both benefit from some serious introspection on his part.



Looking back to 2016, an article by Thomas Sowell titled "Random Thoughts, Looking Back" was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Dec. 27, 2016. Following is the article.

Any honest man, looking back on a very long life, must admit—even if only to himself—being a relic of a bygone era. Having lived long enough to have seen both "the greatest generation" that fought World War II and the gratingest generation that we see all around us today, makes being a relic of the past more of a boast than an admission.

Not everything in the past was admirable. Poet W.H. Auden called the 1930s "a low dishonest decade." So were the 1960s, which launched many of the trends we are experiencing so painfully today. Some of the fashionable notions of the 1930s reappeared in the 1960s, often using the very same discredited words and producing the same disastrous consequences.

The old are not really smarter than the young, in terms of sheer brainpower. It is just that we have already made the kinds of mistakes that the young are about to make, and we have already suffered the consequences that the young are going to suffer, if they disregard the record of the past.

If you want to understand the fatal dangers facing America today, read "The Gathering Storm" by Winston Churchill. The book is not about America, the Middle East or nuclear missiles. But it shows Europe's attitudes and delusions—aimed at peace in the years before the Second World War—which instead ended up bringing on that most terrible war in all of human history.

Black adults, during the years when I was growing up in Harlem, had far less education than black adults today—but far more common sense. In an age of artificial intelligence, too many of our schools and colleges are producing artificial stupidity, among both blacks and whites.

The first time I traveled across the Atlantic Ocean, as the plane flew into the skies over London I was struck by the thought that, in these skies, a thousand British fighter pilots fought off Hitler's air force and saved both Britain and Western civilization.

But how many students today will have any idea of such things, with history being neglected in favor of politically correct rhetoric?

You cannot live a long life without having been forced to change your mind many times about people and things—including in some cases, your whole view of the world. Those who glorify the young today do them a great disservice, when this sends inexperienced young people out into the world cocksure about things on which they have barely scratched the surface.

In my first overseas trip, I was struck by blatantly obvious differences in behavior among different groups, such as the Malays and the Chinese in Malaysia—and wondered why scholars who were far more well-traveled than I was seemed not to have noticed such things, and to have resorted to all sorts of esoteric theories to explain why some groups earned higher incomes than others.

There are words that were once common, but which are seldom heard any more. The phrase “none of your business” is one of these.

Today, everything seems to be the government’s business or the media’s business. And the word “risque” would be almost impossible to explain to young people, in a world where gross vulgarity is widespread and widely accepted.

Back when I taught at UCLA, I was constantly amazed at how little so many students knew. Finally, I could no longer restrain myself from asking a student the question that had long puzzled me: “What were you doing for the last 12 years before you got here?”

Reading about the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, and the widespread retrogressions of Western civilization that followed, was an experience that was sobering, if not crushing.

Ancient history in general lets us know how long human beings have been the way they are, and dampens giddy zeal for the latest panaceas, despite how politically correct those panaceas may be.

When I was growing up, we were taught the stories of people whose inventions and scientific discoveries had expanded the lives of millions of other people. Today, students are being taught to admire those who complain, denounce and demand.

The first column I ever wrote, 39 years ago, was titled “The Profits of Doom.” This was long before Al Gore made millions of dollars promoting global warming hysteria.

Back in 1970, the prevailing hysteria was the threat of a new ice age—promoted by some of the same environmentalists who are promoting global warming hysteria today.



Looking back to 2016, an article by Thomas Sowell titled “Farewell” was posted at jewishworldreview.com on Dec. 28, 2016. Following is the article.

Even the best things come to an end. After enjoying a quarter of a century of writing this column for Creators Syndicate, I have decided to stop. Age 86 is well past the usual retirement age, so the question is not why I am quitting, but why I kept at it so long.

It was very fulfilling to be able to share my thoughts on the events unfolding around us, and to receive feedback from readers across the country—even if it was impossible to answer them all.

Being old-fashioned, I liked to know what the facts were before writing. That required not only a lot of research, it also required keeping up with what was being said in the media.

During a stay in Yosemite National Park last May, taking photos with a couple of my buddies, there were four consecutive days without seeing a newspaper or a television news program—and it felt wonderful. With the political news being so awful this year, it felt especially wonderful.

This made me decide to spend less time following politics and more time on my photography, adding more pictures to my website (www.tsowell.com).

Looking back over the years, as old-timers are apt to do, I see huge changes, both for the better and for the worse.

In material things, there has been almost unbelievable progress. Most Americans did not have refrigerators back in 1930, when I was born. Television was little more than an experiment, and such things as air-conditioning or air travel were only for the very rich.

My own family did not have electricity or hot running water, in my early childhood, which was not unusual for blacks in the South in those days.

It is hard to convey to today's generation the fear that the paralyzing disease of polio inspired, until vaccines put an abrupt end to its long reign of terror in the 1950s.

Most people living in officially defined poverty in the 21st century have things like cable television, microwave ovens and air-conditioning. Most Americans did not have such things, as late as the 1980s. People whom the intelligentsia continue to call the "have-nots" today have things that the "haves" did not have, just a generation ago.

In some other ways, however, there have been some serious retrogressions over the years. Politics, and especially citizens' trust in their government, has gone way downhill.

Back in 1962, President John F. Kennedy, a man narrowly elected just two years earlier, came on television to tell the nation that he was taking us to the brink of nuclear war with the Soviet Union, because the Soviets had secretly built bases for nuclear missiles in Cuba, just 90 miles from America.

Most of us did not question what he did. He was President of the United States, and he knew things that the rest of us couldn't know—and that was good enough for us. Fortunately, the Soviets backed down. But could any President today do anything like that and have the American people behind him?

Years of lying Presidents—Democrat Lyndon Johnson and Republican Richard Nixon, especially—destroyed not only their own credibility, but the credibility which the office itself once conferred. The loss of that credibility was a loss to the country, not just to the people holding that office in later years.

With all the advances of blacks over the years, nothing so brought home to me the social degeneration in black ghettos like a visit to a Harlem high school some years ago.

When I looked out the window at the park across the street, I mentioned that, as a child, I used to walk my dog in that park. Looks of horror came over the students' faces, at the thought of a kid going into the hell hole which that park had become in their time.

When I have mentioned sleeping out on a fire escape in Harlem during hot summer nights, before most people could afford air-conditioning, young people have looked at me like I was a man from Mars. But blacks and whites alike had been sleeping out on fire escapes in New York since the 19th century. They did not have to contend with gunshots flying around during the night.

We cannot return to the past, even if we wanted to, but let us hope that we can learn something from the past to make for a better present and future.

Goodbye and good luck to all.



Isaiah 55:6-11—"Seek you the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."