THE OVERWRITTEN SERIES

Overwriting God · Overwriting the Family · Overwriting the Church
Entrusted Futures Volume · The Unbroken Line — Freedom Addendum

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About This Series

The Overwritten Series is a five-volume set of ministry booklets and a companion Freedom Addendum, produced by Entrusted Futures and Matthew 6 Ministry. Each volume builds on the one before it. Together they make a single argument: that God's original design for life, family, and Church has been systematically overwritten by a sequence of reasonable compromises — and that the Church is the institution designed to name it, resist it, and restore it.

The Freedom Addendum — The Unbroken Line — is a companion document tracing the theological and historical arc of freedom from Genesis through the American founding documents. It is the ground on which the series argument stands.

This series is written from the posture of Convicted Compassion — the full compassion of the Heavenly Father expressed through His Son's willingness for the Cross, mixed with the absolute conviction that His Word is true and His design has not been revised.

OVERWRITTEN

How mankind has claimed the authority to overwrite
what God has already written —
and what must be done before the next 250 years begin

A preface to the three-volume series

and the infrastructure of hope

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures · Matthew 6 Ministry · The Entrusted Futures Foundation

Why I Wrote This

A personal word before the argument begins

I am not a politician. I am not an activist. I am not writing to win a culture war or advance a party or build a platform.

I am a man who believes the Church was designed to change the world — not through legislation, not through cultural dominance, but through the simple, unstoppable power of the Gospel delivered by people who have been shaped, loved, and sent by Godly families, Godly people, and God-focused Churches into every corner of human need.

But when I looked at the generation being asked to carry that forward, I did not find a generation ready to be sent. I found a generation in crisis. Young adults without Hope, without foundation, without the fixed point that gives a life direction and a calling meaning. Struggling with identity, with purpose, with a world that had given them noise and distraction in place of the one thing that actually holds — and left them with the specific kind of emptiness that no program, no achievement, and no amount of cultural affirmation can reach.

That is when I began to see how the Church was failing them. And as my eyes opened further, I saw more and more of the same — a generation that lacked the very tools, the knowledge and conviction of Christ, they needed to be successful. Their future was being overwritten with the wrong values, the wrong understanding, the wrong Hope. They were being measured by the world's measuring stick rather than God's — and by that measure, they were being told they were winning while losing everything that truly mattered.

The answer to why kept moving backward. I saw high school students getting ready to step into the world and realized the number of issues confronting them was overwhelming — they were not equipped to deal with what faced them today, let alone what tomorrow would bring. So we looked earlier in their life development. But in examining junior high students I saw the same issues, only younger and less formed. Earlier still. Elementary school showed us children already carrying weight they should never have been given. Even pre-K pointed to something that should have been addressed before the classroom ever opened its doors.

And eventually the answer arrived at the moment before the family even existed — the decision a birth mother is making right now, without the support she deserves and without a family she knows exists to receive her child.

That realization did not narrow the question. It widened it. And that moment turned out not to be isolated. It was connected to everything else I had been watching — a person at a crossroads, without what they needed, inside a system that could not give it to them.

The birth mother's decision does not happen in isolation — it happens inside a broken system, a fractured family structure, and a culture that has spent decades removing the very infrastructure that should have surrounded her.

And the further I looked, the more I saw the same pattern repeating at every level.

I kept watching what happens to children when the systems designed to protect them, fail. And I kept tracing that failure backward too — through the foster care data, through the legal sequences that claimed authority over the family God never gave any government, through the silence of a Church that was specifically designed to hold the standard when everything else moved and had largely stopped doing so.

> *The answer was not complicated. It was never complicated. It has been made complicated — deliberately, systematically, one reasonable step at a time — by a culture, a legal system, and in too many cases, a Church that chose comfort over conviction and called the choice humility.*

My position in writing these three booklets is what I call Convicted Compassion. The full compassion of our Heavenly Father as shown through His Son's willingness for the Cross — mixed with the absolute conviction that we must be Born Again through the Grace of God and His infallible Holy Word if we want heaven. There is simply no other path. Not another path that is harder. Not another path that requires more. No other path.

I believe the United States of America is a land given by God for the freedom of His people to exercise the unalienable rights provided to us by God. We are a land of individuals to whom God seeks to work out our salvation and our walk — as unique individuals brought together in corporate worship of His holy Church.

I believe that despite the Church's failures — failures this series documents at length and without apology — God has not abandoned His design or His Church. The Church that returns to its calling becomes the instrument of exactly that preparation. Every family formed well, every child placed in a home with a fixed point, every believer sent into their world with the Gospel living in them — is one more stone in the foundation of a Kingdom that is being built toward a day none of us can

predict but all of us are called to be ready for. That is what these three booklets are working toward — not just the rescue of children, but the formation of the generation God is preparing to carry His Kingdom forward.

I believe God was so interested in your future that He allowed His Son to be slaughtered so there could be something that pays the price for our inability to make it into Heaven. You are so valuable that God allowed that to happen just so you could have the Heavenly Gates opened for you on the day you pass from this world to the next. That is the God this series is written for. That is the standard it refuses to soften.

These three booklets are not written from anger. They are written from grief — the grief of watching what was given to this nation be traded, piece by piece, for the comfort of not having to say the costly thing. And from Hope — the Biblical kind, the confident expectation of what God does when His people hold, rooted in a record that has never failed. And from urgency — because the children who need this are not waiting for the culture to improve, and neither is the God who placed a calling in each of them before they were formed.

The goal was never to build an adoption organization.
The goal was to participate in what God is already doing —
placing children in families that will raise up believers, sending believers into a world that needs the Gospel, and building, one faithful family at a time, the readiness of a Kingdom whose King is coming.

The Simple Answer

What government cannot give and the Church already has

The answer to every crisis documented in this series is not complicated.

A person who knows who God is — who they are in Him, what He designed them for, and what He asks of them in return — has the foundation for everything else. Family. Community. Liberty. Purpose. Hope. The architecture of human flourishing is not a mystery. It has been documented across every century of human history by the record of what happens when people live under it. It produces exactly what it promises.

That is the Gospel at its most practical: not a moral code, not a set of religious observances, but the good news that God in His Son did for mankind, what mankind could never do for itself — pay the debt sin required, defeat the death that debt produced, and opened a direct way back to the Father for anyone who will come. A person who receives that news and lives inside its reality has the fixed point everything else depends on.

The government cannot give that. Not because the government is uniformly malicious — a lot of the people inside it are trying, within the constraints of a system that was never designed to hold what it is now being asked to hold. But because the foundation that produces human flourishing is spiritual, not legislative. You cannot pass a law that produces a transformed heart. You cannot fund a program that gives a child the knowledge of *who* they are and *whose* they are and what they were made for without the foundation of the Bible. You cannot mandate the covenant that holds a family together when everything outside is pulling it apart without God as the rock.

> *The government cannot give what only God can give. And the Church — which holds the record of what God gives when His people seek Him — is the only institution in human history with a two-thousand-year track record of actually producing it. Generation after generation. Culture after culture. Under every form of government, persecution, and cultural pressure the world has ever produced.*

The complexity we have built around these questions is not the complexity of the problem. It is the complexity of the *obstruction*. Every layer of legislation, litigation, program, and policy that

stands between a child and a family that knows what they are doing and why — every accommodation the Church has made to avoid saying the costly thing — adds complexity to a problem that has a simple answer.

These three booklets exist to name the obstruction, document some of the sequence by which it was built, and point — as clearly as possible — back to the simple answer that was always there. Each booklet arrives at it from a different direction. All three arrive at the same place.

The Three Volumes

What each one argues and who it is written for

The argument in this series is one argument. But the people who need to hear it are not one audience.

Someone wrestling with the abortion question may not be thinking about foster care. Someone convinced that foster care is the solution to the child welfare crisis may not have considered what the Church's silence has cost. Someone asking how the Church got here may not have yet connected that answer to the child aging out of the foster system this year.

Each booklet was written to stand in its own room, for its own reader, making its own complete argument. You do not need to have read any of the others to understand the one in your hands. But the reader who encounters all three will find that they are holding not three separate essays but one sustained case — made across three domains, from three angles, arriving at the same answer every time.

> *Three domains where the same error has been made: God's authority has been claimed by man, one reasonable step at a time, until what God wrote has been overwritten by what man decided. Life. Family. The Church. Three case studies inside one thesis. Three rooms in one house.*

Volume One — Overwriting God

The sanctity of life — and the infrastructure of hope

The first booklet begins with a number: the current average cost of a first-trimester abortion in the United States. Not because the number is the argument — it is not — but because the number opens the door to the argument that everything else walks through.

84% of women who had an abortion said they would have kept the baby under different circumstances. That is not a pro-life statistic. That is Guttmacher Institute's own data — the most cited pro-abortion research organization in the country. 84% means the majority of women who terminated a pregnancy did not want the outcome they chose. They wanted a way out of an impossible situation. And nobody built them one.

> *That is the infrastructure argument. Not a political argument. Not a constitutional argument. A moral one: what was missing was not a legal right but an infrastructure of support — and the absence of that infrastructure cost lives that God was already writing. Entrusted Futures exists to build that infrastructure.*

The first booklet traces the biology of life, the founding theology of this nation, the mechanism by which a sequence of reasonable steps produced 1.13 million legal abortions in a single year — up from pre-Dobbs levels, with over 300,000 performed via telehealth across state lines, and the argument that every placement Entrusted Futures makes is a declaration: not this child, not this calling, not this time.

It is written for the person wrestling with the moral argument — for the pro-choice friend or family member who has never heard the case made without political framing — and for the donor or pastor who needs to understand the full weight of what Entrusted Futures is building and why.

Volume Two — Overwriting the Family

The failure of the system — and families willing to stand firm

The second booklet opens with 15,379 — the number of children who aged out of foster care in FY2024 with no permanent family. Not reunified. Not adopted. Not placed with a guardian. Just — out. The case closes. The file is marked exited. And a young person who has spent years inside a system built to protect them walks out of it alone.

Foster care is often offered as the answer to the child welfare crisis. The second booklet examines that answer honestly — the outcomes data, the ACEs scoring framework that named the problem without solving it, the $34 billion system that produces results that look remarkably like the conditions it was designed to address. And then it traces the legal and institutional sequence by which the government came to claim an authority over the family that was never given to it.

A parent's authority to raise their child according to their convictions is endowed, not issued. No court granted it. No legislature authorized it. No agency can revoke what was never theirs to grant. And the system that scores a family's faith as a risk factor has not protected a child. It has created exactly what it claimed to prevent.

It is written for the pastor or family who believes foster care is the solution — and for the caseworker, the CASA volunteer, the family court judge who has felt the limits of the system and wondered if there was something better available. There is.

Volume Three — Overwriting the Church

The silencing of the standard — and the call to reclaim it

The third booklet answers the question the first two imply but do not fully answer: how did we get here? How did a nation built on the explicit acknowledgment of God's authority arrive at a place where government redefines life, family, and rights — and nobody stopped it?

The answer: the institution designed to stop it was systematically overwritten first. Not by force. By a sequence of documented, verifiable steps — beginning with a single phrase that does not appear anywhere in the Constitution, elevated to constitutional doctrine 145 years after it was written in a private letter. The phrase "separation of church and state" was never ratified, never debated, never intended as doctrine. It was a private letter from Thomas Jefferson — written to reassure a Baptist congregation that the government would not interfere with their worship. From that letter, the courts built the framework that removed prayer from schools, Scripture from classrooms, and the Church's voice from the public square it was specifically designed to occupy.

The third booklet also names what the Church did to itself — the accommodation of theological positions that have no precedent in two thousand years of Church history, the trading of Joy for happiness, the silencing of Biblical manhood, the abandonment of the covenant of marriage as the architecture of human flourishing. The external sequence removed the Church's voice. The internal accommodation ensured it would not reclaim it.

It is written for pastors, church leadership, and theologically engaged donors who are asking how the Church reclaims its role — and for anyone who has sat in a pew wondering why the most urgent questions of their time are never addressed from the pulpit. That person is this booklet's most important reader.

It is written for the pastor who wants the full historical record to preach from the pulpit. For the donor or family member who has asked why these three domains — life, family, Church — matter so deeply to the founding of this nation. And for the skeptic who is not yet convinced that freedom has always been a divine design rather than a human invention. The primary sources answer that question. The Freedom Addendum simply follows them.

> *The Freedom Addendum does not add a new argument to the series. It answers the question the series keeps raising: where did the conviction come from that produced the four words "endowed by their Creator"? The answer runs six thousand years. And the Church was its carrier every step of the way.*

Its central thesis is one the series has been building toward from its first page: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness are not political concepts. They are theological ones. Life is the calling God spoke over every person before they were formed. Liberty is the freedom to pursue that calling without institutional interference — the same freedom the torn veil declared, the same freedom the First Amendment protects. And Happiness, in its original founding understanding, is not the pursuit of pleasure or comfort. It is the pursuit of divine calling. The freedom to walk in step with the God who made you. These three rights are not three separate ideas. They are one idea expressed three ways — and every argument in this series is ultimately the defense of all three simultaneously.

The three booklets argue from the present backward — naming what has been overwritten and why it must be restored. The Freedom Addendum argues from the beginning forward — tracing the documented chain from Genesis to the founding documents that shows why the freedom those booklets defend has always been God's original design for His people, not a political tradition that can be revised. It is the theological foundation beneath the series' argument. Not a fourth volume. The ground on which the other three stand.

The Freedom Addendum — *The Unbroken Line*

The theological and historical record of freedom in America

The Sequence — Read in Reverse. Why recovery must run backward

The sequence of the overwriting runs forward in time: the Church was silenced first, which allowed the family to be overwritten, which allowed the child to be lost. Each step was made possible by the one before it. A nation without the Church holding the standard produces institutions without the moral framework to protect the family. Institutions without that framework produce systems that manage the breakdown of the family rather than preventing it. And systems that manage breakdown produce the children documented in the first two booklets of this series — aging out, homeless, cycling through justice systems, repeating the pattern for the next generation.

The overwriting ran forward. Recovery must run backward. And it must run in that specific order — because you cannot place a child in a stable covenant family that does not yet exist, and a covenant family cannot be formed by a Church that has stopped preaching what covenant means. The child is the destination. The family is the vehicle. The Church is the engine. All three must be restored, in sequence, or none of them hold.

The three volumes of this series defend Life, Family, and Church. The three rights the Declaration names are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. These are not parallel lists by coincidence. Overwriting God defends the Life God authored in the womb. Overwriting the Family defends the Liberty of the family to pursue the calling God placed in each member without the state overriding the covenant that holds them together. Overwriting the Church defends the Happiness — the pursuit of divine calling — that can only be sustained when the institution designed to carry the standard is free to do so. One series. One theological idea. Three expressions of the same God-given design that no government authored and no government can legitimately revoke.

> *Restore the Church — the ekklesia preaching the full record, holding the unmoving standard, surrounding the covenant of marriage — and the family has something to build on.*

Restore the family — the man in his God-given role as servant leader, the woman in her God-given strength, the covenant modeled daily so the next generation knows what to look for — and the child has somewhere to land.

Restore the child — placed in a home with a fixed point, raised inside a standard that does not move when the culture moves — and the next generation begins differently than this one ended.

Entrusted Futures is one expression of what that restoration looks like at the point of the child. A birth mother surrounded by the infrastructure she deserves so that money is never the reason a child does not find a loving home. A family prepared, pastorally endorsed, prayer-confirmed to receive that child. A child placed with a standard that does not move — who grows up, forms a family of their own, and passes that standard to the next generation. The cycle that was broken before it began does not continue.

That is not a program. It is not a government initiative. It is the Church doing what it was designed to do — earlier than the system was ever designed to go, with a standard the system is structurally incapable of providing.

We do not place a child.

We participate in what God is already doing.

The 250th Year

Why now — and what the first year cost

We are writing in the year of the 250th anniversary of this nation's founding.

That number — 250 — carries weight that is easy to let pass without examining. A quarter of a millennium. Two and a half centuries of the experiment the founders described as unprecedented: self-governance, equal rights, limited government, all of it resting on the explicit acknowledgment that the rights being protected were not the government's to define because they were not the government's to give.

The founding documents did not create this nation's destiny. They acknowledged it — and built a government designed to protect what they did not author. The first footstep on this land was not about economic opportunity. It was about the freedom to seek God without a king telling the Church what it could say. The Pilgrims did not cross an ocean for comfort. They crossed it for the right to live under God's authority rather than a government's redefinition of it.

> *The 250th anniversary of this nation's founding only became a first year option because of the willingness of people with deep moral conviction to come to this land for freedom in Christ. They did not come for comfort. They came for the right to seek God without interference. They built what they built on a foundation they could only recognize, never author. And they bore the wounds that building it required — because they understood that the scars are not evidence of failure. They are evidence of faithfulness.*

These three booklets exist because that foundation is being overwritten. Life. Family. The Church. Three domains. One pattern. One mechanism. One destination — arrived at, as always, not in one dramatic act but in a long sequence of reasonable steps, each one taken from the position the last one created, until what was written at the beginning is nearly buried beneath what man has decided instead.

But the principle has not changed. God has not moved. His design has not been revised. The Word that was written before any legislature sat — still speaks. Still calls. Still holds. The record

of what happens when His people trust it unconditionally is documented across every century of human history. The parting of the sea is not a metaphor. It is evidence.

And the Church that returns to preaching that record will find that the Hope it has been withholding from its people was never gone. It was simply not being proclaimed.

> *The same posture that produced the first year — convicted compassion, an unmoving standard, the willingness to bear the wounds — is the only thing that will produce the next 250.*

That is what these three booklets are asking for. Not a political movement. Not a cultural campaign. The same thing the Pilgrims brought across an ocean: the conviction that God's authority supersedes any government's authority to redefine it — and the willingness to live by that conviction regardless of what it costs.

The children are waiting. The families are forming. The work is already underway. The only question is whether the Church — the ekklesia, the called-out assembly, the institution designed for exactly this moment — is going to show up for it.

> *We have been given a Hope that gives life — both now and forever.*

HIS Kingdom Come.

HIS Will Be Done.

Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures

entrustedfutures.com

Overwriting God

How mankind's reasonable compromises became justification for murder — and what one organization is doing about it

A moral argument for the sanctity of life,
the failure of our institutions,
and the infrastructure of hope

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures · Matthew 6 Ministry · The Entrusted Futures Foundation

A Personal Word Before You Read

I did not set out to write a booklet about abortion.

I set out to build an adoption organization. To create a pathway that gives birth mothers a real choice and qualified families real hope — and funds the gap between the two so money is never the reason a child does not find a loving home. That is the mission of Entrusted Futures.

It is the work I have given myself to.

But you cannot build that organization honestly without eventually arriving at the conversation this booklet contains. Because the child you are trying to reach — the one whose family does not yet exist, whose birth mother is making a decision right now — exists inside a cultural, legal, and moral framework that has spent fifty years deciding that her child is not a life worth protecting.

I want to be clear about what this booklet is and what it is not.

This is not a political document. I am not interested in the political argument about abortion. I am interested in the moral one — and I believe those are two entirely different conversations. The political argument is about law and power and who controls what. The moral argument is about truth. About what a life is. About who has the authority to define it. About what happens to a nation — to any nation — when it decides that authority belongs to itself rather than to God.

At some point however, whether I like it or not, politics and morals for a nation will interact. That interaction shall be left for another day. In this I focus on what God has called me to write.

The positions I take in this booklet are mine. They are drawn from years of watching what happens when children grow up without stable families. From the data — documented, sourced, and cited where cited.

From the founding documents of this nation and what they actually say about where rights come from. From a Biblical framework that I hold without apology and argue without defensiveness. And from a deep conviction that the conversation our culture has been refusing to have — the moral one, the one underneath all the political noise — needs to be had plainly, honestly, and with full force.

Some of what I argue here is documented fact. Some of it is theological conviction. Some of it is my own moral position on the state of our nation and the direction it is traveling. I have not attempted to separate these into different registers or soften one to make room for the other. Each builds on the one before it. That is intentional. The argument is designed to be followed to its honest conclusion.

If you disagree with me — I welcome that. The argument deserves engagement, not dismissal. If you find yourself nodding as you read — I ask you to do more than nod. At the end of this booklet I will tell you what there is to do about it.

Read it through. Follow the logic. Ask the questions it raises. And then decide what you are going to do with what you have read.

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures

Chapter One

What It Costs

The price of a life — and what it tells us about the value we have assigned to it

Let us start with a number. Not because the number is the argument — it is not — but because the number opens the door to the argument that everything else in this booklet walks through.

A first-trimester abortion in the United States costs between $600 and $750. That is the current verified average from Guttmacher Institute and Planned Parenthood's own published figures. Most women pay it out of pocket. Not because their insurance does not cover it — often it does — but because they do not want a record. They do not want it traced. They are carrying the weight of this decision alone and they want the transaction to be as invisible as possible.

> *$600–$750*
>
> *Current average cost of a first-trimester abortion in the United States*
>
> *Guttmacher Institute · Planned Parenthood published figures · 2024–2025*

A second-trimester abortion averages $1,200 to $2,000. Later-term procedures run $2,000 to $3,000 or more. The numbers go up as the life develops further. Which is its own kind of statement and discussion.

For the cost of a car repair — sometimes less — a life that God was writing is ended. The transaction is completed. The remains are disposed of. And the world goes on as if nothing of consequence occurred.

> *Everything that child would have been. Everyone they would have loved. Every life they would have touched. Every prayer they would have answered. Gone. And the transaction… treated as routine.*

I am not going to argue about whether you call that a choice or a tragedy or a right. I am going to ask a simpler question first — a question the entire cultural debate has spent fifty years carefully avoiding.

Why did she make it?

Not as a political question. As a human one. Guttmacher Institute — the research organization most cited by pro-abortion advocates — surveyed women who had abortions and asked them directly. The reasons they gave are worth reading carefully.

Financial — Cannot afford a child. Cannot afford to stop working. Cannot afford the pregnancy itself. The single largest category.

Timing — Wrong time in life. Still in school. Just starting a career. The circumstances *feel* impossible.

Partner or relationship — He left. He will leave. He does not want it. He is dangerous. She is alone.

Already have children — Cannot provide for another. The existing children would suffer.

Family will find out — She is young. Unmarried. In a family or community where the shame feels un-survivable.

Health concerns — Real and legitimate in a small fraction of cases.

The child will have problems — A diagnosis. A fear. A test result. A sense that the support does not exist.

Look at that list and ask what every single item on it has in common.

Every one of them is an infrastructure failure. Not a desire to end a life. A collapse of the support system that should have been there before the decision was ever forced. Financial infrastructure — gone. Relationship infrastructure — absent. Family and community infrastructure — condemning rather than surrounding. Medical and support infrastructure — inaccessible.

> *84%*
>
> *of women who had an abortion said they would have kept the baby under different circumstances*
>
> *Guttmacher Institute survey data — the most cited pro-abortion research organization in the United States*

Eighty-four percent. Not a fringe finding. Not a pro-life study. Guttmacher's own data. 84% of women who terminated a pregnancy said they would have kept the baby under different circumstances.

Those are not women who did not want their child. Those are women who wanted their child and did not have what they needed to keep them. The infrastructure gap did not just cost a placement. It cost a life that God had already named.

And fewer than 1% of women who carry to term and consider adoption actually place their child — not because they changed their minds, but because the infrastructure to support that choice does not exist at scale.

> *<1%*
>
> *of women who carry to term and consider adoption actually place their child — not by choice but by absence of infrastructure*
>
> *National adoption research consensus*

The number that should stop everyone in the room — on every side of this conversation — is not 1.13 million. It is 84%. Because 84% means the majority of those 1.13 million did not want the outcome they chose. They wanted a way out of an impossible situation. And nobody built them one.

> *The answer to why someone wants to terminate a child's life is — in most cases — they don't. They want a way out of an impossible situation. And nobody built them one.*
>
> *Until now.*

Chapter Two

What Happens Next

The disposal of remains — and what it tells us about the value we have assigned to a life

Before we reach the philosophical argument — before we discuss rights and personhood and the founding of the nation — I want to stay with the concrete for one more chapter. Because the concrete is more disturbing than the abstract. And the concrete is documented.

The United Kingdom — 2014

A Channel 4 News investigation in the United Kingdom revealed that the bodies of more than 15,000 aborted and miscarried babies had been incinerated as clinical waste by NHS hospitals. Some of those facilities used the remains in waste-to-energy plants that generated heat and electricity for the hospitals themselves. Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge was specifically named. The UK Health Minister called it totally unacceptable and ordered it stopped.

The hospitals were burning the remains of unborn children to keep their own lights on.

The Oregon Power Grid — 2014

Within weeks of the UK story, reporting revealed that a waste disposal company in British Columbia — Stericycle — was incinerating fetal remains shipped from American abortion clinics across the border. The waste-to-energy process generated electricity fed into the Oregon state power grid. Oregon officials responded with outrage and directed the practice to stop.

The remains of aborted children were generating electricity consumed by Oregon households and businesses. Without disclosure. Without announcement. As a routine feature of the waste management industry.

Ohio — Planned Parenthood and the Landfill

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine found that fetal tissue from three Planned Parenthood clinics in Ohio was being disposed of in landfills — intermingled with ordinary residential and commercial trash — in violation of state law.

June 2025 — The Sewage Legislation

In June 2025 — not 2015, not over a decade ago — Congressman Brandon Gill and Senator Jim Banks introduced the Respectful Treatment of Unborn Remains Act. The legislation was introduced to bar abortionists from disposing of fetal remains in publicly owned water systems; Sewage systems. The bill was necessary because the practice was documented and ongoing in states without disposal laws.

As of 2025 there is no federal standard for fetal remains disposal. Most states still do not require burial or cremation. When a baby of **the same gestational age** is miscarried at a hospital — burial or cremation. When the same baby is aborted at a clinic — it is labeled medical waste and may end up in a landfill, a power plant, or a sewage system.

> *Same gestational age. Different legal status. Different dignity. The only thing that changed was whether someone wanted the child.*

The Tissue Procurement Industry

A legal industry of tissue procurement companies existed and operated openly. StemExpress, Novogenix Laboratories, and Advanced Bioscience Resources contracted with abortion providers to collect fetal specimens and supply them to medical researchers including major universities. This was not secret. It was documented, operating, and known.

Federal law — 42 U.S.C. § 289g-2 — prohibits the buying or selling of human fetal tissue. It does permit reimbursement for the costs of procurement: collection, processing, storage, and shipping. That distinction — sale versus reimbursement — is the entire legal architecture on which the industry rested.

In 2015, the Center for Medical Progress released undercover video recordings of conversations between procurement company representatives and abortion providers discussing fetal tissue, specimen condition, pricing, and in some cases the modification of abortion procedures to preserve intact specimens for research purposes. The videos were disturbing not because they revealed something hidden but because they made visible something that had been operating in plain sight.

The Senate Judiciary Committee spent more than a year investigating. It reviewed more than 20,000 pages of documents. In December 2016, Chairman Grassley referred StemExpress,

Advanced Bioscience Resources, Novogenix Laboratories, and multiple Planned Parenthood affiliates to the FBI and Department of Justice for investigation and potential prosecution. The committee's report documented substantial evidence that the federal law banning the sale of human fetal tissue had been violated.

The Department of Justice — across administrations of both parties — never prosecuted a single case. The investigation was formally reopened in October 2025.

The legal defense was straightforward. The payments were reimbursements, not sales. The margin was not large enough to constitute profit. That was the argument. Not that the tissue should not have been collected. Not that the money should not have changed hands. **Only that the accounting had been done correctly.**

Pause on that for a moment…

A child is terminated. The remains are harvested. Specimens are catalogued, packaged, and shipped. Invoices are generated. Payments are received. And the only legal question anyone thought to ask — the only moral threshold the law required anyone to cross — was whether the margin was large enough to call it a sale.

Not: should this market exist at all?

Not: what does it say about us that it does?

Not: what is the moral meaning of the transaction that just occurred?

Only: did the numbers add up correctly?

We never asked the moral questions. We didn't ask the dignity questions. We didn't even ask the humanity question.

We only asked the money questions.

And a human life — the calling God spoke before the foundation of the world, the purpose He wrote in the womb, the story He was still writing — became a line item. A specimen. A rounding error.

A rounding error is the number so small it does not change the outcome. It does not affect the bottom line. It is beneath notice.

That is what the system decided a child was worth.

> *A child is terminated. The remains are harvested. Money changes hands. We never asked the moral questions. We only asked the money questions. And a human life became a rounding error.*

Chapter Three

It Is a Life

The biological argument that was always available and never honestly answered

The pro-abortion position requires you to identify a moment — a specific, defensible, biological moment — where non-life becomes life. That moment has never been successfully named. Because it does not exist.

From the moment of conception there is a continuous, uninterrupted biological process. Cell division. Organ formation. Heartbeat. Movement. Viability. Birth. Infancy. Childhood. Adulthood. Old age. Death.

> *From microscopic cell to 6'6" athlete — one continuous unbroken process until the body can no longer sustain itself and expires of age. Left alone — undisturbed, unstopped — the process produces a person we know and love. That is what a person is. A continuum of life that was not interrupted. Only man's negative intervention changes that pathway.*

Nobody argues that an infant is not alive. Nobody argues that a toddler is not alive. Nobody argues that an elderly person in decline is not alive even as their body loses the ability to sustain itself. We do not say a 90-year-old in hospice is not a life because they can no longer sustain themselves independently. We do not say a premature infant on a ventilator is not a life because they require another system to breathe for them.

The only phase of the continuum where the 'it is not a life' argument is applied is the earliest one. The most defenseless one. The one that cannot speak for itself.

The differences noted between the earliest phase and every other phase are three: size, location, and dependency. None of these have ever been accepted as criteria for whether something is alive anywhere else in medicine, in law, or in human experience.

The honest restatement of the argument

"It is not a life" was never a biological claim. It was a permission structure. Verbal gymnastics for a linguistic workaround on a moral decision that could not survive being stated plainly.

Stated plainly it sounds like this:

> *"We have decided that this life, at this stage of its continuum, is less valuable than the convenience of ending it… so we will."*

Nobody wanted to say that out loud. So instead they said — it is not a life yet. The language did the work that the argument could not.

God's design — both purposes, not one

The sexual revolution did not just change behavior. It changed the framework. It separated the two purposes God designed into the act — pleasure and procreation — and declared that one was acceptable and the other was optional.

Once that separation was culturally established, the logic followed inevitably. If sex is only about pleasure, then a pregnancy is not a natural consequence of a design. It is an accident. An intrusion. A malfunction of what was supposed to be a purely recreational experience. And once a pregnancy is framed as a malfunction, a horrible thing to have happen - terminating it feels like correcting an error rather than ending a life.

We made the choice to engage in an activity designed for both pleasure and procreation. We only wanted half of God's design. And when the other half arrived anyway — because that is how the design works — we decided to eliminate the consequence rather than accept the responsibility.

That is not a medical argument. Not a rights argument. Not a constitutional argument. That is selfishness given legal protection and cultural permission.

And the most devastating part is not the selfishness itself — human beings have always been selfish. The most devastating part is that the entire cultural, legal, and medical infrastructure was rebuilt to accommodate the selfishness rather than to challenge it.

Chapter Four

What the Nation Was Built On

The Declaration, the Founders, and the Biblical standard that separated America from the world

Most of the world's great civilizations were built on power. On conquest. On the divine right of kings. On the strength of the strongest. The value of a human life was determined by its usefulness to the state, to the emperor, to the ruling class.

America was built on something that had never been tried at national scale before. The idea that rights do not come from government. They come from God. And because they come from God they cannot be taken away by government.

> *That inversion — God above the state rather than the state as God — was the revolutionary idea. Not democracy. Not freedom of speech. The acknowledgment that there is a higher authority than the authority of men.*

What the Declaration actually says

The Declaration of Independence does not say rights are endowed once a sufficient stage of biological development is reached. It does not say rights begin at birth, at viability, at the second trimester, or at any other point that a court or a legislature might later find convenient.

It says — endowed by their Creator.

Not born. Not viable. Not past a certain trimester. Created. The rights were **not** invented by government.

Not granted by a king.

Endowed — breathed into man — by God himself. And the role of government was simply to protect what God had already given.

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness — the original understanding

These three rights are not ranked in a hierarchy where one subordinates another. They are interdependent and co-equal — each depending on the others to have meaning. Life without liberty is imprisonment. Liberty without life is impossible.

> *The Founders' "happiness" was not the modern word wearing old clothes.*
> *It meant something the culture has since hollowed out: the pursuit of divine calling. The ability to live out what God placed in you before you were formed. The freedom to walk in step with the God who made you.*
> *In that older, fuller sense, mankind could only achieve what the Founders meant by happiness — and what Scripture calls Joy — when he was in step with his Creator.*
> *Life was built with purpose in the womb of the mother.*

These three rights are not three political concepts. They are one theological idea — Life the calling God authored, Liberty the freedom to pursue it, and Happiness the pursuit of divine calling itself. This booklet is the defense of the first of them. The series that surrounds it defends all three.

The first footstep on this land

The Pilgrims did not come to America for economic opportunity. They came for the freedom to seek God without interference. To worship. To live according to His Word. To build a society on Biblical foundations. That is the first footstep on this land.

The Founders' moral and religious understanding was a Biblically based understanding that traced directly to those first footsteps. They were not deists who happened to use religious language. They were men who understood that the entire project they were building — self-governance, equal rights, limited government — was only coherent if God's authority was acknowledged above the authority of men. Remove that acknowledgment and the project falls apart. Because without it there is no authority above the powerful.

The unbroken theological line

A life is created at conception. That is where the line begins. Not at birth. Not at viability. Not at any point a court has found convenient. At conception creation — the moment God forms what He has already named, breathes purpose into what He has already called, and sets in motion a story He has already written.

The Declaration of Independence did not invent that idea. It acknowledged it. The Founders were not writing theology — they were writing governance. But they understood that governance without a foundation above itself is only *power dressed in procedure*. And so they named the source. Endowed by their Creator. Not granted by government. Not conferred by birth certificate. Endowed — breathed in — by God himself. Before the ink was dry on any human document. Before any court had jurisdiction. Before any legislature had convened.

That word — *endowed* — is doing more work than most readers stop to notice. To endow is to permanently vest. It is not a loan. It is not a conditional grant subject to review. It is a permanent transfer from the one who holds ultimate authority to the one He has made. The rights the Declaration names are not rights the government gives. They are rights the government is obligated to recognize because they already exist — placed there by a higher authority than any government will ever hold; by God directly.

And the first of those rights is life.

Not liberty first. Not the pursuit of happiness first. Life first. Because the Founders understood what the argument in this booklet has been making from the beginning — without life, no other right can be exercised. Liberty without life is impossible. The pursuit of happiness without life is a philosophical abstraction. Life is the load-bearing right. Remove it and every other right collapses into it.

Now hold that against what God was actually doing in the womb in the creation of that person.

Before the Pilgrims crossed an ocean. Before the Declaration was written. Before any government had an opinion on the matter — God was placing a calling in every life He formed. That calling is not incidental to the life. It is the point of the life. It is the happiness the Declaration was written to protect — not pleasure, not comfort, not personal preference — but the divine purpose placed in a person before they drew their first breath, that they were created to discover, to live out, and to offer back to the God who gave it.

That is what is terminated. Not a clump of cells. Not a pregnancy. Not a product of conception. A calling. A purpose God spoke. A story God was writing. A life designed for fellowship with Him and with the people He was already preparing to surround it.

To terminate that life is to silence a voice God had already given words to. It is to close a book God had already begun. It is to take by force — for the cost of a car repair, with the blessing of a judicial opinion, justified by an accounting argument — everything that person was created to be, to give, to build, to love, and to offer back to the One who made them.

And the line that connects all of it — from God's act of creation to the calling placed in the womb to the Declaration's acknowledgment of unalienable rights to the nation's founding obligation to protect life from its origin — is not a theological inference or a political argument. It is the straightforward logic of a founding document written by men who understood exactly what they were saying.

The nation was founded on the premise that God's authority over human life supersedes any government's authority to redefine it.

That premise has not changed. God has not revised it. The Declaration has not been amended to add a trimester threshold. The rights remain what they were — endowed by the Creator, at creation, permanently vested, beyond the reach of any court that has ever convened or ever will.

What changed is that we stopped believing it.

One reasonable step at a time.

Chapter Five

One Reasonable Step at a Time

How murder became routine — and the mechanism that made it possible

> *Our national moral failure came one small, reasonable step towards evil at a time.*

Evil rarely arrives as evil. It arrives as reasonable. As compassionate even. As the humane exception to an otherwise difficult rule. And each reasonable step makes the next one easier because you are no longer starting from the original position — you are starting from where the last step left you; the last compromise placed you.

The first step was not we will kill children. The first step was we will make an exception in the hardest cases. And from that position the next step seemed reasonable. And from that position the next one. And somewhere in the sequence of reasonable steps the destination became unrecognizable from the starting point — but no single step felt significant the moment it happened.

The language shift

The language of healthcare replaced the language of life and death. Termination instead of murder. Tissue instead of child. Products of conception instead of a baby. When you change the *words* you change what people are able to see; to feel. The moral question did not disappear. It was obscured. The new language made it possible to perform the act without naming it and without creating emotional ethical outrage.

The rights framing

Moving the conversation from medicine into law and politics meant anyone who raised a moral objection could be accused of imposing their values rather than engaging the actual question. The moral conversation was crowded out by the constitutional one. And the constitutional

conversation was, from the beginning, built on a premise that the Constitution's authors **never** stated, never debated, and never intended.

Normalization by volume

1.13 million times last year. When something happens that many times it stops feeling like an event and starts feeling like a condition. Like weather. Like traffic. The scale itself produces numbness. And numbness produces the next generation — one that grew up inside the new normal and cannot imagine the line ever having been anywhere else.

The number demands context that the culture has not yet processed. Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization — the 2022 Supreme Court decision that overturned Roe v. Wade and returned abortion law to the states — was treated as the turning point. The legal victory the pro-life movement had pursued for fifty years. And yet the number went up. Not because the law failed. Because the infrastructure adapted. Over 300,000 abortions in 2025 were performed via telehealth — chemical abortifacients prescribed remotely and mailed directly to women, including into states with protective laws, through a system of shield states that refuse to prosecute providers operating across their borders. Approximately one in five abortions in 2025 was illegal under the law of the state where it occurred. The infrastructure did not stop. It evolved. And the only answer that reaches a birth mother before the decision is made — the only intervention that operates upstream of the legal battle — is exactly what this booklet argues for: a rebuilt infrastructure of real choice and real support, placed directly in the path of an impossible situation before it becomes an irreversible one.

> ***1.13 Million***
>
> estimated abortions performed in the United States in 2025 —
> up from pre-Dobbs levels
>
> *300,000+ via telehealth · ~20% illegal but occurring through shield law workarounds*
>
> *Society of Family Planning #WeCount · 2025*

The financial architecture

Once there is an industry built around something, the people inside that industry have a stake in its continuation that has nothing to do with the original argument. The tissue procurement companies. The insurance billing codes. The clinic revenue models. The lobbying organizations. Once the financial architecture exists it becomes self-defending. Not because anyone set out to defend evil — but because people set out to defend their livelihoods. And the livelihoods were built on the *reasonable* steps.

The taxpayer funding argument

There is a dimension to this conversation that receives far less attention than it deserves — and it connects directly to the question of freedom.

Federal law has prohibited direct government funding of abortion procedures through Medicaid since the Hyde Amendment was passed in 1976. But yet federal dollars still flow abundantly to organizations that perform abortions through other channels — Title X family planning grants being the most significant.

As of 2025, $286.5 million flows annually to family planning providers through Title X federal grants — plus substantially more through Medicaid reimbursements at a 90% federal match rate for eligible patients. Combined, the federal government funds a significant portion of the infrastructure that surrounds the decision this booklet documents.

The fungibility of money means the distinction between direct and indirect funding is largely a bookkeeping exercise. A dollar that covers overhead is a dollar that frees another dollar for procedures. The accounting separates them. The business operation reality does not.

This produces a contradiction that the culture has chosen not to examine. The same framework that insists abortion is a matter of personal choice — that no one should be able to impose their moral position on another — has no difficulty compelling citizens to fund it through taxation. The freedom of choice, it turns out, flows in one direction.

Millions of Americans believe abortion constitutes the taking of a human life. They hold that position not as a political preference but as a moral conviction — grounded in exactly the Biblical framework this booklet has argued is the foundation of the nation itself. But they are compelled (possibly by threat or force) to fund organizations whose central work they believe to be murder, with no recourse and no alternative.

> *The government has decided that this is a winner — that public funds should support this industry — and the American taxpayer has no vote on the matter and no exemption available. So much for freedom of choice.*

The free market would resolve this question honestly. An industry that survives because people choose to fund it with their own money is one thing. An industry that survives in part because the government has decided to pick it as a winner and route public dollars toward it — regardless of the moral objections of the people providing those dollars — is something else entirely. It is the reasonable step of making the murders permanent by making it funded.

C.S. Lewis understood this

The Screwtape Letters is essentially a manual on this exact process — the patient, incremental, always-reasonable corruption of a soul, one small accommodation at a time. Each step taken from the position of the last one. Each one seeming not only defensible but obviously correct from where you are standing when you take it. Forgetting the past and seeing only 'now'.

The church did not wake up one morning and decide to be complicit. They took reasonable steps. Each one defensible. Each one building on the last. And they arrived at a destination that, had it been shown to them at the beginning, every one of them would have refused.

That is how routine is manufactured. Not by one decision but by a thousand decisions not to ask the question that was always there.

What makes Lewis's insight so enduring — and so directly applicable to this conversation — is that he named the mechanism rather than the outcome.

Most moral arguments argue about destinations. Lewis argued about the road. And the road he described is the one we have been walking for fifty years on this subject — each practical, understandable, small step taken from the position of the last one, each one feeling not just defensible but obviously correct from where we were standing when we took it.

This is why arguing about abortion as an outcome is largely pointless.

Both sides have been standing at the destination shouting at each other across it for half a century and the line has barely moved.

The argument that needs to be had is not about where we are. It is about how we got here.

Name the mechanism and you give people something they can actually examine.

Name the destination and you give them something to fight about.

The mechanism is *reasonable compromise*. One step at a time. From wherever the last step left you.

That is what needs to be seen clearly. Not the outcome — but the road that produced it, and the next reasonable step that is always already being prepared.

The mechanism of *reasonable compromise* depends on a kind of enforced '*presentism'* by the mob — each step feels reasonable only because the starting point has been forgotten. You cannot feel the full distance traveled if you only measure from where you last stood. That is all you are allowed to discuss in the general discourse of conversations.

This is what the wisdom and insight of C.S. Lewis shows in the Screwtape Letters; and we have completely lost that understanding.

Chapter Six

Black Robe Reasonable Compromise

How the courts institutionalized the reasonable steps — and what it cost, one step at a time

The legislature did not do this. The people did not vote for this. Nine people in black robes decided that the Constitution — written by men who believed life was endowed by the Creator at creation — contained a right that permitted the termination of that life.

> *And they found it in a penumbra. A shadow. An implied right that the men who wrote the document never named, never debated, and never intended.*

One reasonable compromise at a time.

First the exception for the hard cases. Then the trimester framework. Then viability as the line. Then partial birth defended. Then born alive protections fought — meaning a child who survived an abortion and was born alive outside the womb was not guaranteed medical care. Then tissue procurement structured to stay inside the legal definition of reimbursement. Then the remains flushed into the public sewage system while Congress writes a bill to stop it.

Every step blessed by a legal framework that began with nine people in black robes deciding that the God who endowed unalienable rights at creation had less authority over the definition of life, than a judicial opinion written in 1973.

The full arc

The Pilgrims crossed an ocean for the freedom to seek God without government interference. Their descendants built a government that used its courts to override what God wrote in the womb.

From the first footstep on this land to the last reasonable compromise in a black robe — one long departure from the foundation. Not in one decision. Not in one moment. One small reasonable step at a time.

> *God does not grade on the curve the courts invented. The life He wrote does not become unwritten because a judge said it could be ended. And the woman who made that decision under the weight of impossible circumstances, inadequate support, and a culture that called the killing healthcare — she deserves a Church willing to say: we know what that was, we know what it cost, and we know the God who restores what the years have taken.*

And it requires naming plainly what the legal double standard reveals: that fifty years of jurisprudence has produced a system in which the value of an unborn child's life depends entirely on whether that child was wanted. Which means the courts have not been protecting life. They have been protecting preference. And preference is not a foundation on which any civilization has ever successfully stood.

It requires telling a woman in crisis the full truth. Not the legal truth only. Not the cultural truth only. The complete truth — that the life inside her is the life God is writing, that the decision she is being pressured toward is one she will carry beyond the reach of any court's protection, and that there is another way. That someone will walk with her. That the child does not have to die because the circumstances are impossible. That impossible circumstances are exactly what Entrusted Futures was built to interrupt.

Convicted Compassion — the posture this series is written from — does not allow for this particular silence.

What Convicted Compassion Requires Here

> *The legal protection was real. The moral protection was not. The culture offered one and called it the other. That is not compassion. That is the most consequential deception of the last fifty years — and the Church watched it happen from the sidelines because it confused silence with kindness.*

This is an argument for truth. The culture told women that what was legal was also safe. That what was permitted was also without consequence. That what the court protected was also what God would overlook. None of those things are true. A Church that softens this because the culture has decided softening is the compassionate position is not protecting women. It is abandoning them to a decision whose full weight was deliberately hidden from them.

This is not an argument for prosecution. The question of how the law handles those who have made this decision belongs to a different conversation — one that requires wisdom, mercy, and a full accounting of what women were told and what they were not told when they made it.

There is no trimester exception before God. There is no gender exemption. There is no supreme court whose opinion supersedes His. The same God who knit that life together in the womb — who spoke a calling over that child before they were formed — is the same God before whom every decision made about that life will be answered. Not by the state. Not by the court. By every person who participated in it. Regardless of what the law permitted. Regardless of what the culture normalized. Regardless of what language was used to make the act feel like something other than what it was.

The legal double standard evaporates entirely in eternity.

Before God There Is No Carve-Out

> *There is no position between these two that survives honest scrutiny. One door leads to the collapse of feticide law. The other leads to the collapse of abortion immunity. They must walk through one of them.*

Either the unborn child is one of us — or the law has no business calling his death homicide when it is politically useful. But if the child is one of us, then no mother, father, doctor, judge, legislator, activist, or slogan has the authority to make that child disappear.

Or the unborn child is a human victim — in which case abortion is the intentional killing of an innocent human being. The mother's consent cannot erase the victim. The doctor's license cannot erase the victim. The word healthcare cannot erase the victim. The mother's sex cannot create immunity. They lose the abortion carve-out entirely.

Either the unborn child is not a human victim — in which case every feticide statute in every state is legally incoherent. Wrongful-death claims for unborn children are fraudulent.

Prosecuting a man for killing an unborn child against the mother's will is unjustifiable. And calling the child a baby when wanted but tissue when unwanted is not science, not law, and not compassion — it is deliberate manipulation. They lose the moral high ground in every wanted-child murder case. Permanently.

The opposing position must choose. There is no middle ground that survives honest scrutiny.

Either/Or — There Is No Third Door

> *The courts have answered every question about abortion except the one that matters. They have debated trimesters and viability and privacy and precedent and penumbras. They have never answered this: if the child is a homicide victim when the wrong person causes the death — what is the child when the right person does?*

If the answer is the child's death — then the mother's sex cannot create immunity from the same standard applied to the father. Equal means equal. It cannot mean equal authority and unequal accountability simultaneously.

If the answer is the woman's authority — then the law was never protecting the child. It was protecting abortion. The child's life has no independent legal standing.

So the courts must answer a question they have spent fifty years refusing to ask plainly: Is the crime the death of the child — or only the violation of the woman's authority to make the decision?

The child is dead in both cases. The intent to end the child's life exists in both cases. The act is materially identical in both cases.

Now reverse the decision. The man wants to end the pregnancy. The woman wants the child. He gives her the same medication without her consent. The child dies. He faces serious felony charges — for the death of the child, for the assault on the woman.

A woman decides to end her pregnancy. The man wants the child. She takes the medication. The child dies. In most states she is protected, immune, beyond the reach of the criminal law that would otherwise govern the intentional ending of a human life.

Consider two scenarios identical in every material fact except one.

The Double Standard the Courts Will Not Name

That is not a religious question. It is not a political question. It is the only question that matters. Because if the answer is yes, then no subsequent word — not healthcare, not choice, not autonomy, not compassion, not reproductive freedom — changes what the act is. A human victim does not stop being a human victim because the killing is renamed.

Is this a human life — and was that life intentionally taken?

Before any argument about choice, privacy, autonomy, or compassion — before any of those words enter the room — there is one question that must be answered first. Every other argument is irrelevant until this one is settled honestly.

The Question the Courts Have Never Answered

> *That is not equal protection. That is conditional personhood. And conditional personhood is not a legal principle — it is a political arrangement dressed in the language of law. If the law protects life only when circumstances fit a legally preferred category — then the law is not protecting life. It is protecting categories.*

The law is not protecting the child. The law is protecting whoever holds the authority to consent to the child's death.

The child is equally dead in both scenarios. The intent to end the child's life exists in both scenarios. The victim is identical in both scenarios.

Those same states protect the deliberate termination of the same child's life when the mother consents. Thirty-eight states have feticide statutes. Those laws recognize the unborn child as a homicide victim when a third party causes the child's death against the mother's will. A man who

causes the death of an unborn child through assault, through recklessness, through any act that terminates a pregnancy without the woman's consent — can be charged with homicide or feticide in most of this country. The unborn child in those statutes is not tissue. Not a medical condition. Not a product of conception. The unborn child is a person. A victim. Someone whose death the law is prepared to prosecute.

The Legal Contradiction That Cannot Be Explained

The age question — where the logic leads

Here is the question that the justification for abortion cannot answer. If the grounds for terminating a life are that it is inconvenient, dependent, unable to care for itself, a burden on the person responsible for it, an obstacle to the life the responsible party wants to live —

Then there is no principled reason that justification for termination stops at birth.

A three-year-old is dependent. Cannot care for themselves. Requires constant attention. Has no economic productivity. Is a significant burden on the resources and freedom of the parent.

An elderly person in decline is dependent. Cannot care for themselves. Requires constant attention. Has diminishing economic productivity. Is a significant burden on the resources and freedom of the family.

The argument that justifies terminating the unborn — applied consistently, without a principled boundary — justifies both. Godly principles must terminate this logic.

It has already moved in other countries

This is not a hypothetical. In the Netherlands and Belgium, euthanasia of children under twelve is being reconsidered after being legalized for twelve and older. In Canada, Medical Assistance in Dying has been extended to include people with mental illness — not terminal illness, mental illness. The line is moving. Not hypothetically. Actually.

Once you accept that the right to life can be *conditioned* — you have handed the definition of life to whoever holds power at the moment. And power changes hands. And the definition changes with it. One reasonable step at a time.

> *There is no principled place to draw a line once the principle is gone. Every line drawn after the foundational one is arbitrary.*
> *And arbitrary lines move.*
> *They always move.*

Chapter Seven

Overwriting God

The complete argument — in two sentences

We have spent six chapters building to this.

> *In mankind's arrogance,*
> *we have decided that we have the right and ability to overwrite God's definition of rights —*
> *and overwrite what God is writing in the womb.*

Everything else is evidence.

The biology. The Declaration. The founding theology. The reasonable steps. The black robes. The rounding error. The sewage pipes. The accounting defense. All of it supports these two sentences.

Mankind decided he had the authority to overwrite God. Not through one bold act of rebellion. Through a long sequence of reasonable compromises that each moved the line just far enough that the next step seemed manageable. Until a judicial opinion has more authority over the definition of life than the God, who wrote it from the beginning of time.

The arrogance of that position is not argued. It is assumed. It is baked into the framework so completely that to question it is to be called extreme. When the extreme position — the one that requires defending — is that man outranks God on the question of what constitutes life.

Did God really say?

The enemy has been running the same play since the Garden.

Did God really say life begins at creation — or did nine judges decide otherwise. Did God really say marriage is between a man and a woman — or did the culture redefine it. Did God really say there are two sexes — or did the legislature update the definition.

Did God really say murder is wrong — or does it depend on the age and the circumstance and who holds power this term. The question never changes. Only the subject changes.

All we had to do

Make God subservient to democracy — mob rule — and now truth is determined by majority vote. Whoever wins the election defines what God said. And since majorities shift, truth shifts with them. There is no fixed point. There is only the next election and the next redefinition.

Remove the republic — the system specifically designed to protect the minority from the mob, to protect God-given rights from the temporary preferences of the powerful. The republic was the structural acknowledgment that some things are beyond the reach of majority rule. Remove it and the only remaining standard is power.

Create moral ambivalence — your truth is your truth and mine is mine and neither of us has the right to say the other is wrong. This sounds like tolerance. It is actually the complete surrender of the concept of truth. Because if all moral positions are equally valid then no moral position can be called evil. **And if nothing can be called evil the only remaining standard is power**.

> *All this proved was the stupidity of mankind and their selfish ways since the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had everything — fellowship with God, purpose, design, abundance. And the one thing they could not accept was the one boundary God placed. Not because it was unreasonable. Because someone told them they deserved to be their own God.*

The only hope

The only hope for mankind — including the children we are trying to save — is returning to Biblical principles, held by families who live Biblical principles, active in honoring God.

Without that foundation a child wakes up every morning in a world where truth is negotiated. Where moral failure requires only a reasonable justification. Where the standard shifts with whoever holds the microphone. Where the next reasonable step toward evil is always available and always defensible and always finds willing participants — because there is nothing inside them that names it as evil.

The foster care system produces exactly that child. Not because the people in it are malicious. Because the system has no Godly foundation. It has no Godly programs. It has not enough Godly case managers. It may have funding, but it does not have the Biblical standard. It cannot give what it does not have.

> *If we do not have children in homes with families who live Biblical principles, they will wake up every morning with the idea that they simply need a reasonable justification to validate whatever they do. And if someone comes up with a reasonable justification for another moral failure — they will willingly jump onboard. Because the very basic principles laid out in God's Word do not exist in their lives. And without a single, unchanged standard, we will be tossed about by the whims of reasonableness.*

God's purpose and plan is life in fellowship with Him and one another. When the Biblical standard is removed it is not just rules that disappear. The design disappears. The family fractures. The covenant is redefined. The community dissolves into individuals competing for resources. The generations lose their connection to one another and to the God who connects them.

And life — which was designed for fellowship with Him and one another — becomes solitary. Purposeless. Defined only by what it can produce or consume before it ends. And a child — who was designed to enter that fellowship, to be received by a family, to grow in a community, to

discover the calling God placed in them before they were formed — becomes instead an interruption. A burden. A cost. A rounding error.

The principle has not changed. God has not moved. His design has not been revised. His image is still stamped on every life conceived. His calling is still spoken over every child formed. His fellowship is still the purpose for which every human being was made.

Chapter Eight

What We Are Doing About It

Entrusted Futures — a moral intervention at the origin point

For years I watched what happens when children grow up without stable families. Every time we asked how we could have intervened earlier in a child's life, the answer kept moving.

High school students told us we should have been there in junior high. At-risk junior high students showed us we needed to be in elementary school. Elementary school pointed us to pre-K. Pre-K pointed us to the home before the child starts school. And eventually you arrive at the moment before the home even exists.

At conception. At pregnancy. At the decision a birth mother is making right now — without the support she deserves, without the family she needs to know exists, without a system built to bring them together.

> *Entrusted Futures is not just an adoption organization. It is a moral intervention at the origin point. An interruption of the failure cycle. An infrastructure of hope placed directly in the path of the sequence of reasonable steps that leads to a rounding error.*

What we are building

We are building an adoption pathway that gives birth mothers a real choice and qualified families real hope — and then funds the gap between the two so money is never the reason a child does not find a loving home.

Adoption in America costs $30,000 to $50,000. We rebuilt the model. We own the agency as a nonprofit. We handle the legal fees differently. We draw from a permanent Foundation endowment to cover the gap between what a qualified family can contribute and what placement actually costs. The family contribution target is under $10,000.

The barrier we removed was financial. The standard we kept.

Our want is for every family in the process to have been referred by their pastor — a pastor who knows them, has watched them in real life, and whose endorsement is not a character reference but a pastoral testimony. And while this is not the only entry point available, it is one that we celebrate and promote due to the importance we place on the church's role in child development.

Two independent assessors score each family across five dimensions: Character and Covenant, Financial Stewardship, Faith and Worldview, Community and Church Support, and National Vision.

A standing prayer committee seeks divine confirmation of each specific match. Not a selection committee. A confirmation committee. Human process ends there. Divine confirmation begins.

And the Foundation endowment funds the gap permanently — principal never spent, only earnings fund placements. A gift placed in the Foundation endowment works in perpetuity. Every year. Long after any single donor is gone.

What a placement actually is

The number — 1.33 placements every year, for every million dollars the endowment holds, never spent, only earning — is the financial argument. The same million funds 1.33 placements this year, and 1.33 more every year after, for as long as the Foundation stands. The downstream cost prevented is the civic argument. The foster care failure rates are the policy argument.

But the real conversation is this…

Every child enters the world on a trajectory. That trajectory is shaped by the home they land in, the community that surrounds that home, the values operating inside it, and the standard by which the adults in their life make decisions. A child has no say in any of this. They receive what is given to them. And what is given to them in those earliest years — the foundation, the standard, the model of how a life is lived — will shape every choice they face for the rest of their lives.

The foster care system demonstrates what happens when that foundation is absent. The data is not ambiguous. More than 40% incarcerated by age 20. Between 50% and 60% of child sex trafficking victims have a history in the foster care system — making former foster youth among the most disproportionately represented victims of trafficking in the country. Less than 3% earning a college degree.

These are not the outcomes of children who were unloved in the abstract. They are the outcomes of children who were never placed on the best available path — who were processed through a

system that had programs and case managers and funding but no foundation, no standard, no unchanging point of reference when the culture around them shifted.

Entrusted Futures is built on a different premise entirely.

This is not a placement into any family. It is a placement into the best available foundation. While no family is perfect, the underlying goal is to see how imperfect operates in growth towards becoming more like Christ.

A standard that does not move when the culture moves. A family that models what fellowship with God and one another actually looks like. A community that knows their name. A God they are introduced to not as an abstraction but as the operating reality of the home they live in.

That child — when the next reasonable justification for moral failure is offered, and it will be offered — has something inside them that names it. Not because they are smarter or stronger or more disciplined than any other child. Because they were given the one thing that makes the difference. A foundation that holds. A true anchor point. A rock on which to build.

And that child grows up. And builds a family. And passes the standard to the next generation. And the cycle — the one that was broken before it began — does not continue.

The booklet has made the case that life has intrinsic value — that the calling God places in a child before birth deserves to be protected, supported, and given every opportunity to be lived out fully. The birth mother who chooses placement over abortion is not just choosing life in the biological sense. She is choosing the best possible outcome for that life. She is choosing a prepared family over an inadequate system. She is choosing a community over isolation. She is choosing a foundation over a void. That choice deserves infrastructure worthy of it. That is what we are building.

Not this one

Every placement Entrusted Futures makes is a declaration.

That God's full design — both purposes, both gifts, both the pleasure and the life it can produce — is worth protecting. That the child did not choose to be conceived. That the child did not choose the circumstances. That the child is simply the fullness of a design that two people chose to engage — and that we chose to honor.

We are building an adoption pathway, that gives birth mothers a real choice and qualified families real hope — and then funds the gap between the two… so money is never the reason a child does not find a loving home.
We do not place a child. We participate in what God is already doing.

An invitation

If what you have read in this booklet has landed — if the argument has moved you, troubled you, or confirmed what you already knew in your bones but had never seen stated plainly — then I want to ask you to do something with it.

Not to agree with every word. Not to resolve every question it raises. Simply to do something with it rather than set it down and return to the comfortable distance the culture has spent fifty years carefully maintaining around this subject.

If you are a birth mother reading this — or if you know one — I want you to understand something clearly. The decision you are facing or the decision she is facing is not a decision between abortion and hardship. It is a decision between abortion and a family that has been prepared, vetted, prayed over, and confirmed — a family that has been waiting, that has a community surrounding it, and that has a God already writing the story of the child you are carrying. The infrastructure that should have always existed is being built right now. You are not alone in this. There is a real pathway and a real family on the other side of it. Reach out.

If you are someone who has been handed this booklet by a person who thought you needed to read it — they were right. The conversation our culture has been refusing to have IS the one this booklet contains. Engage it. Ask the hard questions. Bring it to your pastor, your small group, the person in your life who is pro-choice and who you have never known how to talk to about this — because now you have a framework that is not political, not hostile, and not evasive.

And for those who are asking how to direct your God given resources…

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells the story of a master who was leaving on a long journey. Before he left he called three servants and entrusted each of them with a sum of money — to one he gave five

talents, to another two, to another one — each according to their ability. Then he left. When he returned, he called each servant to account.

The first two had put their resources to work and doubled what they were given. The master's response was identical to both — *well done, good and faithful servant.*

The third had been afraid. He had buried his talent in the ground to keep it safe. He returned it exactly as he had received it — unused, undeployed, producing nothing; hidden. The master's response to him was not gentle. He called him wicked and lazy.

The resource had been given for a purpose. Leaving it buried was not caution. It was faithlessness. It dishonored the Master. It was stealing the outcome.

The point of the parable is not the money. It is the accountability. The master entrusted what was *his* to the servants — it was never theirs. They were stewards, not owners. And stewardship that produces nothing is not safe. It is a failure of the purpose for which the resource was given.

A gift to The Entrusted Futures Foundation endowment is permanent. The principal never leaves. Only the earnings fund placements — every year, in perpetuity, long after you and I are both gone. By year twenty a single million-dollar gift has funded twenty-six placements and prevented an estimated $7.8 million in downstream social cost. The endowment grows. The work compounds. A child placed in a prepared family carries the standard into the next generation. The return cannot be fully calculated in any currency.

> *The parable of the talents is not a metaphor about attitude. It is an operational model for the stewardship of real resources in a Kingdom that actually expects a return. The question is what you do with what is already in your hands?*

What is in your hands was placed there by the same God whose image is stamped on every life this booklet has been arguing for. The question the parable asks is not whether you have enough. It is what you do with what you already have. And the master in that story is not difficult to identify.

The work is being built permanently. The invitation is open.

HIS Kingdom Come.

HIS Will Be Done.

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures

entrustedfutures.com

Overwriting The Family

How the system built to protect children became the thing it warned us about — and what families willing to stand firm can do instead

A companion volume to "Overwriting God" — the same conviction applied to the family

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures · Matthew 6 Ministry · The Entrusted Futures Foundation

A Personal Word Before You Read

I did not set out to write a second booklet.

My previous publication, "Overwriting God" was built around one moment — the decision a birth mother makes, the infrastructure that should surround her, and the organization being built to close that gap. While building that argument, something else kept surfacing. Something that did not belong inside that booklet, but could not be ignored.

People kept telling us — gently, helpfully, in good faith — that foster care already exists for children who need families. That the safety net is there. That this is a solved problem, or at least a managed one.

So we looked. And what we found is the subject of this booklet.

This is not an attack on the people who work inside the foster care system. Many of them have the biggest hearts in the room, and the system limits what even the most devoted caseworker or foster parent can do.

This is an examination of the system itself — what it produces, what it has named but not solved, and what families willing to stand on an unmoving foundation can do that no system, however well-funded, can replicate.

The theological foundation here is the same one "Overwriting God" stands on. That booklet argued that mankind has claimed authority to overwrite God's definition of life. This one argues the parallel — that government has, one reasonable step at a time, claimed authority over the family that was never given to it. Two different subjects. One underlying error.

You do not need to have read the other booklet to read this one. They were written to stand in separate rooms, for separate audiences. Both arguments deserve to be heard on their own terms.

Read it through. Follow the logic. Ask the questions it raises.

And then decide what you are going to do with what you have read.

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures

Chapter One

What the System Produces

The outcomes — before any argument is made

Every year, nearly sixteen thousand children in America turn eighteen — or age out at whatever the state's threshold is — having spent years inside a system built to protect them, and then simply walk out of it alone to life.

Not reunited with their family. Not adopted. Not placed with a guardian. Just — out. The case closes. The file is marked exited. And a young person who has spent a significant portion of their childhood as a ward of the state now has no family, no guarantee of housing, and in most states, very little beyond a list of phone numbers for services they may or may not know how to access.

> **15,379**
>
> *youth aged out of foster care in FY2024 — with no permanent family*
>
> AFCARS, Administration for Children and Families · FY2024

Picture the day itself. For most eighteen-year-olds, turning eighteen is a milestone inside a family that does not change — the same house, the same people, the same Thanksgiving table, just with new legal permissions attached. For a young person aging out of foster care, eighteen can mean the opposite. It can mean the housing ends. The caseworker's involvement ends. The system that has structured every placement, every school transfer, every birthday for years, simply — stops.

Where They Go Next

The data on what happens next is not ambiguous.

> **31–46%**
>
> *of youth exiting foster care experience homelessness by age 26*
>
> National Alliance to End Homelessness

Compare that to the general population, where lifetime homelessness prevalence is estimated around 4%. A young adult who spent their childhood in the system built to protect them is somewhere between seven and eleven times more likely to become homeless than a peer who did not.

Only 1 in 2

youth who age out have any form of gainful employment by age 24

Social Work Today

Under 3%

of youth who age out of foster care earn a college degree

Foster Care Statistics, 2025

These numbers compound. A young person without stable housing, without a degree, and without employment is not failing at three separate things. They are failing at one thing — the thing every other outcome depends on — having somewhere to land when life gets hard. For most people, that somewhere is family. For these young people, by definition, it is not.

The Justice System

~50%

of children in foster care will have contact with the juvenile legal system

Criminal Law Practitioner

5x / 14x

Boys who age out of foster care are 5 times more likely to be arrested than their peers. / Girls who age out are 14 times more likely.

Shawn Ryan Show Episode #314 · Jen Lilley · June 2026

Half. Not a vulnerable subgroup — half of all children who pass through the system, at some point, end up inside another system entirely — one built not to help them, but to hold them.

> **71%**
>
> *of young women formerly in foster care were pregnant by age 21*
>
> *Foster Care Statistics, 2025*

That last figure deserves a moment, because it closes a circle this booklet will return to. A young woman who spent her own childhood in the system — without the stability, the standard, or the family this booklet argues every child needs — is, by these numbers, more likely than not to become a parent herself before she has had the chance to build any of those things for her own child. The cycle does not need anyone's intention to continue. It only needs nothing to interrupt it.

> *None of these numbers are about bad kids. They are about what happens to almost any child — any child at all — when stability is removed from their life during the years it matters most, and nothing equally stable is reliably put back in its place.*

That is the starting point. Not an accusation. An observation — about outcomes, about a system, and about what it produces, regardless of the intentions of the people working inside it.

Chapter Two

A Name, A Score, and the Same Outcome

What the system did with what it knew

In 1998, a landmark study conducted jointly by the CDC and Kaiser Permanente gave the world a framework called Adverse Childhood Experiences — ACEs. The study scored people from zero to ten based on categories of childhood hardship: physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; neglect; and household dysfunction — a parent with mental illness or addiction, domestic violence in the home, an incarcerated family member, divorce.

The finding was significant and well-documented. The higher a person's ACE score, the higher their measurable risk for nearly every negative outcome in adulthood — addiction, chronic disease, mental illness, early death. The CDC links at least five of the ten leading causes of death in America to ACE exposure.

> *None of this was news to anyone who had lived it,*
> *or watched someone they love live it.*

Ask a person who grew up in chaos — without stability, without safety, without someone consistently in their corner — whether their childhood affected the rest of their life. You will not need a ten-point scale or a peer-reviewed study. You will get an answer, immediately, from lived experience. Human history wisdom did not need an acronym to know that children raised in hardship tend to carry that hardship forward. Every grandmother who ever said "that poor child never had a chance" already knew the 1998 finding.

So why does the score matter? Mostly, it matters because naming something can feel, to an institution, like progress. A name. An acronym. A scoring rubric. Trainings. Conferences. Funding streams attached to all of it.

What the Score Shows About Foster Care

Apply the ACE framework to children already in the foster care system, and the numbers are not subtle.

Nearly 80%

of foster youth report 6 or more ACEs — vs.
roughly two-thirds of the general adult population scoring 0–1

Liming et al., 2021 · CDC-Kaiser baseline

Two-thirds of adults in the general population have zero or one adverse childhood experience. Nearly eighty percent of children in foster care have six or more. These are not overlapping populations on the same curve — they are at opposite ends of it.

76% vs. 33%

of children in foster care report childhood trauma or adversity,
compared to the general U.S. child population

national survey data

The system that exists to address childhood adversity is populated overwhelmingly by children with the highest adversity scores possible under the framework the system itself uses. It has correctly identified who is most at risk. What it does next is where the argument turns.

The Finding That Should Change Everything

28% — 42%

The children with the highest adversity scores are less likely
to reunify with a family than children with lower scores

survival analysis, foster care reunification research

The children the system's own framework identifies as carrying the heaviest load are the children the system is least able to move toward a permanent family. Which means the highest-risk children spend the most time inside a system whose own length-of-stay independently adds more instability — which is itself the kind of adversity the ACE framework measures.

What we can draw from this is simple: the system's own measurement confirms the children who need permanency most are the ones the system reaches *least*.

These numbers are known by the very system that developed a mechanism for measurement — and yet cannot change the outcomes. Children are still being failed.

> *So we have a score. And — ? The honest answer is: and nothing changed. The children who need the most are the ones the system is least equipped to help. The score proved it, in writing, with a number attached. And the outcomes in Chapter One are the result.*

Before asking why naming something without solving it is not just a failure of policy — but a failure of a deeper kind — there is one more piece of the picture that needs to be in place. Hold onto one thought about that score: it looks objective. A number, zero to ten. But several of the categories that produce it require someone to make a judgment call. We will come back to that.

There is also a political dimension to this worth naming plainly. An entire industry has grown up around the measurement, documentation, and management of childhood adversity — researchers, agencies, grant writers, training organizations, consultants. The incentive structure of that industry rewards finding things worse, not better. Worse outcomes justify more funding. More funding justifies more staff. More staff justifies the existence of an infrastructure that, at its foundation, feeds off the pain and struggle of the very people it claims to serve.

Underneath the institutional machinery is something more basic than policy failure. It is greed, dressed in the language of benevolence. A researcher whose findings show improvement loses the urgency that drives the next funding cycle. A training organization whose clients no longer need training has no clients. The financial incentive, at every level of this industry, runs in one direction: keep the problem alive, keep the numbers alarming, keep the language urgent — because the job, the salary, the agency, and the conference exist only as long as the crisis does.

This is what feel-good politics produces at scale. A system that looks, from the outside, like compassion in action — and functions, from the inside, like any other industry protecting its market.

> *The children are not the product. They are the raw material. The product is the funding cycle. And the funding cycle requires, above all else, that nothing actually gets solved.*

That is not a conspiracy. It is simply what happens when the financial architecture of a system is built around a problem rather than around a solution.

None of that is said about the caseworker carrying sixty files who stayed late on a Tuesday because one of those kids needed someone to answer the phone. Or the foster parent who opened their home for the fourth time knowing exactly how hard it was going to be. Those people exist at every level of this system — and they deserve to be named alongside the architecture that limits them. Also alongside this industry there are organizations — many of them faith-based, most of them operating quietly, very few of them inside the $34 billion funding structure — that are genuinely aligned with solving the problem rather than managing it.

> *"Oh honey, I make $28,000 a month on foster care.... You want to make sure they fail in school. If they fail in school and you can get them on medication, your rate goes up. Every time they don't pass a grade, your rate goes up because they're a more difficult kid. Every time they need medication, your rate goes up."*
>
> *A foster mother, speaking to actress and foster parent Jen Lilley at a Los Angeles foster care conference. Shawn Ryan Show, Episode #314, June 2026.*

63

children disappear from foster care every single day —
often lured by traffickers via social media platforms

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children · 2025

> *There is currently no law in any of the 50 states that makes it a crime to adopt a child from foster care with the explicit intent of sexual exploitation. Because adoptive parents are granted the same legal rights as biological parents, traffickers can use the legal adoption process to gain control over victims.*
>
> *Jen Lilley · Shawn Ryan Show, Episode #314, June 2026*

These are not the failures of a broken system struggling to do its best. These are the documented outcomes of a system whose financial architecture has been shown to actively reward keeping children in a worse condition. A system with no legal protection against adoption by predators. A system inside which sixty-three children disappear every single day. The $34 billion is not producing outcomes. It is producing an industry. And the children inside it are the inventory.

Churches that have been surrounding struggling families for generations without a grant application. Ministries that place children in prepared, principled homes and measure success by permanency, not caseload. Individuals and organizations whose motivation is not the funding cycle but the Biblical call to care for the orphan, the widow, and the vulnerable — and who have been doing so, largely unrecognized, while the industry built around the same children, grew larger and the outcomes stayed the same. They become proof that an option exists — and that the best option for true solution and lasting outcomes rests within a community of believers standing on the very mechanism that has shown irrefutable results for generations.

> *The Church is that very system that needs to return to the forefront of this entire discussion.*

So let me be clear: my indictment is not of the people doing the hard work inside a broken structure, nor of those outside it doing the right work for the right reasons. It is of a structure that found a way to pay people well for managing a crisis, and in doing so, removed the financial incentive to end it — while the organizations most likely to actually end it remain underfunded, underrecognized, and outside the room where the money is decided.

Good people exist on both sides of that divide. Wrong architecture on one side. Right foundation on the other. And the children bear the cost of which one has the resources.

Chapter Three

Before the System Ever Sees Them

The earliest point of intervention — and what it means

There is a question this booklet has to ask carefully, because it is easy to ask it badly.

If a child's risk for the outcomes described in the last two chapters is, to a meaningful degree, predictable based on the environment they are conceived and born into — before the state ever opens a file, before any removal, before any placement — what does that mean for how we think about the earliest possible point of intervention?

> ***This is not a claim that any parent is disqualified from raising their child because of their circumstances.*** *It is an observation that the conditions associated with the highest-ACE, highest-risk outcomes are very often already present — visibly, knowably — before a child is born.*

A household with active, untreated addiction. A relationship marked by ongoing violence. A parent who is themselves a product of the same cycle, without the support, stability, or resources to interrupt it for the next generation. These are not hidden conditions that a system discovers later. They are frequently known — to family, to neighbors, to the community, sometimes even to the parents themselves — at or before the moment of conception.

The Backward Question, Asked Again

This booklet's companion volume, Overwriting God, traces a single realization across an entire ministry's founding: every time the question was asked — "where could we have intervened to change this outcome?" — the answer moved backward. High school pointed to junior high. Junior high pointed to elementary school. Elementary pointed to the home before school ever started. And the home pointed, finally, to the moment before the family even existed — the decision a birth mother makes, and whether she has the support to choose differently.

The foster care data in this booklet is a second, independent path to the exact same backward-pointing answer.

Whether you arrive by tracking ACE scores, or by tracking foster care outcomes, or by tracking what happens to children who age out — every path leads to the same place. Earlier. Always earlier.
And the earliest point of all is before the family exists.

If the conditions that predict a high-ACE trajectory are often visible at or near conception — and if the system that exists to intervene after the fact produces the outcomes documented in Chapters One and Two — then the honest conclusion is not "we need a better foster care system." It is: "the earliest possible alternative to that entire trajectory is adoption into a stable, principled family, offered as early as it can possibly be offered."

Again, let me be absolutely clear - this is **not** a claim that every child in a hard situation should be adopted, or that birth parents in difficult circumstances are disqualified from parenting. It is a claim about what the data shows once a trajectory is already, predictably, heading toward the outcomes in Chapters One and Two — and about what the earliest, most effective off-ramp from that trajectory actually looks like.

Which raises the next question this booklet has to answer carefully: who gets to decide any of this — and on whose authority?

That question does not begin in a courthouse. It begins eight hundred years ago.

Chapter Four

What a Right Actually Is

The test that changes everything that follows

The word "rights" has been emptied of meaning through overuse. Housing rights. The right to work. Healthcare as a right — including, in the most pointed example of rights: "reproductive healthcare." Which is ironically applied to a procedure in which, of the two lives involved, only one walks out alive. That is not healthcare in any honest sense. It is a euphemism doing work an honest description could not.

The pattern matters more than any single example. Mankind has acquired the habit of creating rights — declaring something to be a right because doing so serves a goal, wins an argument, or sounds compassionate. As though rights are something human beings have the authority to manufacture.

The idea that mankind has the ability to even create rights is one of the greatest deceptive lies we tell ourselves. It is the very exercise of trying to make ourselves God — or at the very least, equal to God Himself.

> *A right that comes from God costs society nothing to exist. Life. Liberty. The pursuit of one's God Ordained calling. One person having these does not require another person to pay for them.*

Apply a simple test to anything called a right: does it cost anyone anything to provide? If the answer is yes — if someone must be taxed, billed, bullied, or burdened so that someone else can have it — then whatever it is, however worthwhile it may be as policy, it is not a right in the sense the Declaration and Scripture describe. It is a program. A policy choice. Real, possibly necessary — but not endowed.

A parent's authority and responsibility to raise their own child falls on the endowed side of that line.

No one has to pay for a parent's right to raise their child. It costs society nothing for that right to simply exist, undisturbed.

Which Means Government Did Not Grant It — And Cannot Revoke It

God gave the right. Government did not — and therefore government cannot take it away as it is not under their purview of ownership.

That does not mean parents are without responsibility, or that real harm to children should go unaddressed. It means the authority being exercised when a child is removed from a family is borrowed authority — and borrowed authority has limits the lender defines, not the borrower.

A parent's authority over their own child was not issued by a family court, a child welfare agency, or a legislature. Those institutions can recognize it, regulate around it, and — in cases of genuine, demonstrated harm — intervene to protect a child. But recognizing a right and originating a right are not the same thing, and that distinction matters enormously for how easily it should be overridden.

Once God performed the miracle of creation in the mother's womb, rights were conveyed to that child. Those rights are not to be infringed by government — because God's plan was already in motion.

No court issued that life. No legislature authorized it.

No agency can revoke what was never theirs to grant.

That principle did not appear for the first time in the Declaration of Independence. It has a longer lineage — one that makes the argument harder to dismiss as modern religious sentiment and easier to understand as the bedrock every generation of this nation built on.

Chapter Five

The Lineage

Eight hundred years of the same recognition

In 1215, the Magna Carta did not invent the idea that free men have rights. It recorded — under pressure, imperfectly, but unmistakably — the recognition that even a king is bound by a higher law, and that the people he ruled possessed protections he had not granted and therefore could not simply revoke. It carried forward and deepened a tradition of recognized rights that the Charter of Liberties had established 115 years earlier in 1100. Rights that are recognized are different in kind from rights that are issued. One comes from God directly. The other comes from whoever holds power today — and can be taken back tomorrow. That distinction is the spine of this entire argument, and it is the reason the government's claim to override a parent's authority over their own child is not just a policy disagreement. It is a category error.

In 1620, a small group of English colonists, before stepping onto the land that would become their home, signed the Mayflower Compact. It is a short document, and its opening words carry the argument of this booklet in miniature: they covenanted together "in the name of God" to form a civil body politic and to frame "just and equal laws" for the "general good" — laws understood, from the very first sentence, as operating under God's authority, not replacing it.

The Declaration of Independence, 156 years after the Mayflower Compact, did not depart from this lineage. It named it: rights are "endowed by their Creator." Not born at a particular stage of development. Not issued by a court. Not granted by a legislature. Endowed — breathed into man — before any government existed to recognize them. And the role of government was simply to protect what it did not create and cannot redefine.

> *From the Charter of Liberties, to the Magna Carta to the Mayflower Compact to the Declaration — the line is continuous, and it runs in one direction. Each document recognizes a standard its authors did not set. None of them claimed the authority to write it.*

This is the lineage. Not a single verse. Not a single document. Nine centuries of people — flawed, imperfect, often falling short — nonetheless writing down, again and again, that the standard was not theirs to make.

Scripture was always the source. What changed across all those centuries was mankind's growing ability to read it, access it directly, and therefore understand — with increasing clarity — that the rights described in it were not granted by kings or popes but endowed by the God who wrote it. Every expansion of literacy was an expansion of the understanding of freedom. Every time Scripture reached a new reader, that reader discovered they were answerable to a higher authority than whoever currently held power over them.

The Pilgrims didn't arrive at Plymouth with a new idea. They arrived with the oldest idea in the world — that God's authority supersedes any earthly power — finally freed from the institutional filters that had obscured it for a thousand years, carried in their own language, in their own hands, across an ocean to build something that had never been tried at national scale before.

And this booklet's argument is that we are now running that sequence in reverse. Literacy hasn't declined — but Biblical literacy has. Scripture is still accessible, but its authority in public life has been systematically removed. The institutional filters are back — not the Pope and the Archbishop this time, but the IRS, the Johnson Amendment, the cultural gatekeepers, the redefined "separation of church and state." The people have the Bible in their hands and cannot hear it preached on the things that matter most from the pulpits that were built to preach it.

> *The Pilgrims left a country where the king told the Church what it could say. We have built a country where the government tells the Church what it cannot do or speak.*

Subservient, Not Subjective

This matters for how this booklet's argument must be understood — and for what it is not claiming.

> *This is not an argument that any individual's personal moral interpretation should override government. It is an argument that government — and every individual — is subservient to a standard neither of them gets to write.*

Mankind has spent decades attempting to rewrite moral law in two directions simultaneously. One direction is government redefining standards by institutional decree — the pattern the next chapters trace through child welfare policy and the courts. The other is the individual deciding that their own conscience is the final word, and that whatever they sincerely believe becomes the standard simply because they believe it.

Both make the same underlying claim: the standard is ours to set. One does it through legislation and agency policy. The other does it through personal conviction treated as ultimate authority. Both are overwriting God — from different desks.

> *We speak for the most vulnerable. But we do so at the direction of a standard our nation's founding documents recognized across eight centuries — not at the direction of any individual's personal interpretation of what feels right, including our own.*

With that foundation in place, the question becomes: how did a nation built on that foundation arrive at a child welfare system that produces the outcomes in Chapter One? The answer is not a single failure. It is a sequence.

Chapter Six

One Reasonable Removal at a Time

How the sequence was built

No one set out to build a system that produces the outcomes in Chapter One. Every expansion of state authority over families was framed — and in most individual cases genuinely intended — as protection. A response to real harm. A reasonable step.

> *Evil, and even ordinary institutional failure, rarely arrives announcing itself. It arrives as the reasonable next step from wherever the last reasonable step left you.*

The first child welfare interventions targeted the most extreme, most visible cases — a child in immediate, life-threatening danger. From that position the next step seemed reasonable: broaden the definition of danger slightly, so cases nearly as severe could also be addressed. And from that new position, the next step looked reasonable again. Each step justified by where the system was already standing — not by where it started.

The Language That Made It Possible

Track the vocabulary. "*Removal*" is a softer word than what it describes — a child taken from their parents, often without warning, sometimes in front of siblings or at school. "*Placement*" describes what follows — a word that could describe furniture. "*Permanency planning*" describes the bureaucratic process of deciding where a child will live for the rest of their childhood, in the language of a project management timeline.

The language did not change what was happening. It changed what people were able to see while it happened. Softer words made it easier to expand the system's reach without anyone feeling, at any individual step, that something large was occurring.

The Financial Architecture That Followed

$34 billion+

combined annual federal, state, and local government spending on child welfare

research compilation, FY2023 basis

Once an industry exists around something, the people inside it have a stake in its continuation. Not because anyone is corrupt — because livelihoods, agencies, contracts, and career fields now depend on the system operating at scale.

Reducing the number of children entering is the stated goal of nearly everyone involved.

But the funding structure built around managing children once they are in the system vastly outweighs the funding directed toward the kind of early, family-based intervention this booklet argues for.

Foster care adoption, subsidized by this $34 billion structure, often costs an adoptive family between $0 and $2,500 out of pocket — a figure documented by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — with most states waiving or reimbursing even those minimal charges. That figure is not a criticism — it demonstrates that when funding and will align, the financial barrier to adoption can nearly disappear. The question this booklet keeps returning to: if the government — by its own admission is the least efficient mechanism available — can make adoption nearly free through subsidy, what could be accomplished by families and churches motivated by conviction rather than caseload, reaching children earlier, before removal is ever necessary?

Every reasonable step, taken from the position of the last one, eventually adds up to a system spending over thirty-four billion dollars a year managing the aftermath of family breakdown — with a fraction of that imagining what could prevent it.

What the language softened and the funding reinforced, the courts then institutionalized. And the legal doctrine they used to do it carries a name that sounds, in Latin, like authority — but has a history worth examining carefully.

Chapter Seven

Parens Patriae & Whose Authority It Was

When best interest became a standard without a standard

There is a legal doctrine, centuries old, called parens patriae — Latin for "parent of the country." It holds that the state has an inherent authority to step in as guardian for those who cannot protect themselves. In its narrowest form — the state acting when a child faces genuine, demonstrable danger and no parent is able to protect them — it reflects something true and necessary. No one is arguing that a child should remain in a home where they are being seriously harmed simply because the parent has authority.

> *The question is not whether the state ever has a role. The question is what "parent of the country" has quietly come to mean in practice — and whether the threshold for invoking it has moved, one reasonable step at a time, from "this child is in danger" toward something closer to "this family does not meet the standard we have currently decided is best."*

"Best interest of the child" — a phrase that sounds unimpeachable — is the mechanism. Best interest according to whom? By what standard? A standard that, by its nature, can be redefined by whoever holds institutional power at a given moment — which means it is not a fixed standard at all. It is whatever the current cultural and institutional consensus says it is, applied to families who may hold a different standard, often a religious one, often one that has guided families across generations.

> *Once "best interest" can mean whatever the evaluator believes it means, the family's own standard — even a healthy, functional, loving one — becomes vulnerable to being overridden simply for being different. Not dangerous. Different.*

When Difference Becomes a Diagnosis

This is not hypothetical. In recent years a documented pattern has emerged across multiple states: parents who hold to their family's religious convictions about gender and the body — convictions shared by millions of families, rooted in the same Biblical framework this booklet stands on — have had that conviction treated, by courts and agencies, as evidence of unfitness. Custody has been reassigned. Parental rights have been challenged. The disagreement between a parent and a state agency over a single question of conviction became the basis for state intervention into the family.

Set aside, for a moment, where any individual reader stands on questions of gender identity. What this booklet is examining is the mechanism: a parent holding a sincerely-held religious conviction about how to raise their own child found that conviction reclassified, by an agency or a court, as the kind of harm that triggers the removal machinery Chapter Six describes.

> *This is parens patriae doing exactly what this chapter warned about. Not protecting a child from danger. Overriding a family for holding a different standard than the state currently prefers — and calling the override "best interest."*

If "best interest" can be stretched to mean "this family's religious convictions differ from the state's current position on a contested question," then the standard has ceased to be a standard. It has become whatever the state currently believes — a position that, as Chapter Six traced for the child welfare system itself, is a standard that moves. And once a standard can move based on prevailing cultural consensus, no family's convictions are actually protected. They are simply not yet the convictions a state has decided to act against.

Which brings us back to the question Chapter Two planted: who decides what counts as dysfunction in a family? And what happens when the instrument used to answer that question looks objective — but isn't?

Chapter Eight

The Lab Coat

How a number launders a judgment — and who holds the pen

Remember what Chapter Two left open: that several of the categories feeding an ACE score require someone to make a judgment call. Here is why that matters far more than it initially appears.

> *ACEs scoring looks objective. A number, zero to ten, generated by a checklist. But categories like "household dysfunction," "emotional neglect," or "instability" are not measured with a thermometer.*
> *They are observed, interpreted, and recorded by a person.*
> *The number is downstream of a judgment call.*

A scoring system that looks objective but rests on subjective interpretation is not a neutral instrument that occasionally gets misapplied. It is, by its structure, a tool that can convert a subjective "best interest" judgment — the exact mechanism Chapter Seven examined — into something that reads on paper as clinical. "The score was elevated" sounds like a fact. It is, in significant part, an opinion wearing a lab coat.

A family that prays together, holds to a Biblical view of the body and marriage, and disciplines according to Scripture can look — to an assessor operating from a significantly different framework — rigid, controlling, or dysfunctional. That difference can be scored. Converted into points. Filed as data. And that data can become the ostensibly objective basis for the intervention Chapter Six described.

When the Hand Holding the Score Has Its Own Agenda

The $34 billion structure described in Chapter Six does not only fund case files and housing stipends. It funds salaries, training curricula, and institutional authority — given to individuals. Most of those individuals are exactly who Chapter One and Chapter Six described: people trying to do right by children inside a system that limits them.

> *But some are not. And a scoring tool that launders subjective judgment as clinical fact is especially dangerous in the hands of someone whose personal convictions diverge sharply from the moral and religious foundation this nation was built on — because that person now has an instrument that can register a family's faith as a risk factor, and a system funded by that family's own taxes ready to act on the result.*

This is not a claim that this happens in every case, or even most. It is a claim that the structure makes it possible, that it has occurred, and that a structure enabling this cannot be defended as objective simply because it produces a number.

Why This Makes the Outcome Worse, Not Better

Here is where Chapter One's data and this chapter's argument converge — and where the "so what" from Chapter Two receives its fullest answer.

> *A removal driven by ideology rather than genuine danger does not just fail to protect a child. It takes a child who was likely on a stable trajectory — in a home with faith, structure, and a family who loved them — and places them onto the trajectory Chapter One spent its entire length documenting.*

Run the sequence in order. A family operates according to convictions rooted in the lineage Chapter Five traced across eight centuries. An individual inside a taxpayer-funded system, holding a significantly different worldview, encounters that family. The ACE framework — or "best interest," or both together — provides the vocabulary to register that difference as a risk.

The child is removed. And the child now enters the population Chapter One described: the homelessness rates, the education gaps, the justice-system involvement, the trafficking vulnerability.

> *The score did not just fail to solve the problem it named. In a case like this, the score becomes the mechanism that creates the very outcome it was supposedly designed to prevent — by removing a child from the one thing this booklet's own data shows actually prevents it.*

This is the fullest shape of the argument. What remains is to name it plainly — and then to say what there is to do about it.

Chapter Nine

Overwriting the Family

The complete argument — and what it costs

Nine chapters have built to this. Not to a political conclusion. Not to a policy recommendation. To a moral one — the same kind this booklet's companion volume arrived at on a different subject, through the same pattern of evidence.

> *In mankind's arrogance, we have decided that we have the right and ability to overwrite God's definition of the family — and overwrite the authority He gave parents to raise the children He entrusted to them.*

Everything else in this booklet is evidence. The outcomes in Chapter One. The score that named a problem without solving it. The political incentive to keep the problem alive. The $34 billion spent managing aftermath rather than preventing it. The language that softened what was actually happening. The standard — "best interest" — broad enough to mean almost anything, applied by whoever holds the institutional pen at a given cultural moment. The lab coat that dressed subjective judgment as clinical fact. The individual, funded by public money, using that instrument to register a family's faith as a risk factor.

None of it required a single dramatic seizure of power. It required only what Chapter Six named as the mechanism for every moral failure of this kind: a long sequence of reasonable steps, each taken from the position the last one created, until a system designed to intervene in genuine emergencies became a system that, by its own data, produces emergencies of its own.

What Is Actually Lost

It is worth slowing down here — before the Garden, before the theological argument — and naming in plain language what is actually lost when a family is overwritten. Because the loss is not abstract.

A child is not just a biological event. They are a calling God spoke before they were formed. A purpose written before a name was given. A design that, left undisturbed, undistracted,

surrounded by a family rooted in the God who authored it — would grow into something the world has never seen before and will never see again. That is what every child is. That is what God is doing in the womb.

> *When the family is overwritten — when the authority God placed in parents is claimed instead by a system, a score, a standard that moves with whoever holds power — what is lost is not just stability. What is lost is the environment in which a calling was meant to be discovered, named, and walked out.*

A child who ages out of foster care at eighteen does not just lack housing. They lack the people who were supposed to be there when they first asked the question every human being eventually asks: *why am I here, and what am I for*?

The system cannot answer that question. It was never built to. And in the absence of an answer, children do not wait patiently. They find one.

> *They find it in substances that quiet the noise of a life that has never been told it has meaning. They find it in relationships that mistake intensity for love because they have never seen the real thing modeled by true Godly parents. They find it in identities built around pain, around belonging to something — anything — that names them, claims them, and tells them they matter, even if the thing doing the naming is destructive.*

This is not a moral failure of the child. It is a predictable human response to an unanswered question. Every human being was designed to know their purpose. When the institution designed to give them that answer is absent — the family, the Church, the community of faith — they will fill that void with whatever is available. And what is available, at the bottom of the foster care outcome curve, is rarely what God designed them for.

> *The Church is not one option among many for addressing this. It is the only institution in human history that has been doing this — successfully, continuously, across every culture and every century — for two thousand years. Not perfectly. Not without failure. But with a track record of transforming broken lives, interrupting destructive generational cycles, restoring purpose to people the world had written off, that no government program, no ACE score, no funding stream has ever come close to replicating.*

The proof is not theoretical. It is historical. The Church has been taking in the orphan, the widow, the addict, the outcast, the child nobody wanted — and handing them back to the world as people who knew *who* they were, *whose* they were, and what they were made for. That is the proven solution. Refined over centuries. Available now. And largely sitting on the sideline of the very crisis it was built to solve.

And the outcomes in Chapter One are what not finding it looks like, measured in percentages and printed in government reports that nobody seems to be able to do anything about.

Did God Really Say

> *The enemy has been running the same play since the Garden.*

God said parents have authority over their children. The state decided it knows better.

God said a family's convictions are theirs to live by. "Best interest," defined by whoever is in the room, now overrides them.

God said children belong first to the families He placed them in. That has been quietly redefined — one reasonable step at a time.

The enemy has been running the same play since the Garden. The question is always the same. Did God really say? And the answer, every time, is — yes. He really said it. The only thing that changed is whether anyone was willing to stand on it.

The question never changes. Only the subject changes. And each time it is answered in the direction of man's authority rather than God's, the line moves — towards man giving himself power. And from the new position, the next question seems reasonable. And the next. Until a nation that covenanted in God's name before it set foot on its own soil finds itself scoring the faith of Christian families as a risk factor for their children — and calling that score objective.

> *That is not a slippery slope argument. It is a description of what has already happened. The slope was not hypothetical. The destination was not warned about. It was arrived at — one reasonable step at a time.*

What the Church Has Always Known

None of what this booklet argues is new to the Church. The Church has always known that the family is the first institution God established — before governments, before courts, before child welfare agencies. The Church has always known that a child raised in a home where God is known, where His Word is lived, where covenant shapes the daily rhythm of life, develops differently than a child who is not. This is not a statistical insight. It is the accumulated testimony of every generation of believers who have ever raised a child in the faith and watched that child carry it forward.

What the data in this booklet adds is not new truth. It adds documented, secular confirmation — from government reports, federal data systems, and peer-reviewed research — that what the Church has always said about family is measurably, verifiably true in the outcomes we can count. The children who lack it end up in the statistics of Chapter One. The children who have it do not.

> *Entrusted Futures is not asking the Church to start something new. It is asking the Church to apply what it has always known — to the children the system has failed to reach, earlier than the system was ever designed to go, with a standard the system is structurally incapable of providing.*

The Church has been interrupting problematic generational cycles since the first century. Families broken by poverty, addiction, violence, abandonment — the Church has always been the

place where those cycles could be named, repented of, and replaced with something different. The foster care crisis is not a new problem waiting for a new solution. It is the old problem of family breakdown — now operating at scale, documented in federal databases, producing outcomes that secular researchers confirm and secular systems cannot fix — waiting for the Church to do what the Church has always done.

> *We are not building a program. We are adding to an effort already underway — the effort the Church has always been engaged in — of interrupting the transmission of failure from one generation to the next, one family at a time, one child at a time, by the power of a standard that does not move.*

The Generational Argument

Return for a moment to the statistic in Chapter One: 71% of young women who age out of foster care are pregnant by age 21. That number is not just a measure of one generation's outcome. It is a preview of the next generation's starting point.

A young woman who spent her childhood without the stability, the standard, and the family this booklet argues every child needs is, by that statistic, likely to become a mother before she has had the chance to build any of those things for herself. Her child enters the world into conditions that the ACE framework — for whatever its limitations — would already flag as high-risk. Before the child has drawn a breath, the trajectory is visible.

> *This is what generational failure looks like, measured. Not a moral judgment on any individual. A description of what happens when the interruption never comes — when no family steps in, when no standard is offered, when the cycle is left to complete itself because the system that was supposed to intervene produced the conditions for the next cycle instead. The Church must interrupt this cycle.*

And this is what generational interruption looks like, in reverse: a child placed in a home with a family that lives Biblical principles does not just escape the trajectory Chapter One documents. They grow up inside something they have never seen before — a home where the standard is not imposed from outside but lived from within.

These children see what a Godly man looks like — not a perfect one, but one who knows who he answers to and lives accordingly. They see the strengths and requirements of leadership and servanthood. These children witness what a Godly woman looks like — her strength, her conviction, her love that tells the truth rather than simply affirming whatever feels good in the moment. They see a marriage that is a covenant, not a contract. They see conflict resolved rather than abandoned. They see failure met with repentance rather than denial.

These children see the fullness of God's design for family — imperfect in its execution, unshakeable in its foundation — and they learn, without being taught it as a lesson, that this is what a home is supposed to feel and be like.

More importantly, when the time comes for them to choose a partner, to build a home of their own, to bring children into the world — they know what they are looking for. Not because someone handed them a checklist. Because they lived inside the standard long enough for it to become the expectation they carry into every relationship that follows.

Their potential mate must meet a Godly standard, not a worldly compromise.

They raise children who have the grace to never have known the inside of a foster care system. The next generation of children do the same. And the cycle — the one that was broken before it began, before this child was ever born — does not continue.

The placement is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of a different story — one that runs forward through every generation that family produces, long after any single donor has given, any single caseworker has filed, any single chapter of this booklet has been read and set down.

> *God's design for the family was not a suggestion. It was the architecture of human flourishing — built to transmit faith, calling, and covenant from one generation to the next. When that architecture is intact, the transmission happens. When it is broken, Chapter One is what we measure in its place.*

This series defends three domains — Life, Family, and Church. The three rights the Declaration names are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. These are not parallel lists by accident. This booklet defends the Liberty God designed — the freedom of the family to pursue the calling He placed in each member, without a state that did not author that calling claiming the authority to override it. The series that surrounds this booklet defends all three rights simultaneously because they were always one theological idea.

The only hope — for the child aging out this year, for the child whose trajectory is already visible at conception, for the 71% statistic that is simultaneously this generation's outcome and the next generation's beginning — is the restoration of that architecture. Not through government. Not through a scoring system.

Through families.

The same answer the Church has always had.

Applied now, at scale, with urgency, because the data leaves no room for a slower timeline.

The question that remains is what this ministry is building to make it possible — and what it is asking of the people reading this.

Chapter Ten

What We Are Doing About It

The off-ramp, built

Everything in this booklet points toward one practical answer: families — vetted, prepared, prayer-confirmed, operating on an unmoving standard — as the actual off-ramp from everything Chapters One and Two documented. The question this chapter has to answer is concrete: what does that look like, and where does it intersect with the system this booklet has examined?

The Door Stays Open — On Both Ends

Entrusted Futures was built around one moment: a birth mother's decision, before the family exists, supported so that money is never the reason a child does not find a loving home. That mission does not change.

> *But refusing to recognize a second moment God might be working through — a caseworker, somewhere, with a child already in the system who needs exactly the kind of family Entrusted Futures has spent years preparing — not helping would itself be a failure. Not a neutral choice. A failure to participate in what God is already doing, in the very language this ministry has used from the beginning.*

So the model holds, and the aperture widens. The same pipeline — pastor referral, the Entrusted Score across five dimensions, the standing prayer committee seeking confirmation rather than making selections — is not exclusive to infant placement. It is the standard for any child God brings to a prepared family, regardless of how that child enters the picture. A newborn through a birth mother's decision. Or a child already inside the system, identified by a caseworker who now has access to a pool of vetted families that did not exist before.

What Entrusted Futures Is Committing To

Entrusted Futures will actively work to build the bridge between prepared families and the foster care system — not as a new program competing for funding, but as a connector. A caseworker with a child who needs a family, and a family that has already been through pastoral endorsement, the Entrusted Score, and prayer confirmation, should be able to find each other. Today, in most places, they cannot. Closing that gap is part of what this ministry is for.

The Cost of Standing Firm

Chapter Eight was not an aside. It was a preview of what this invitation actually costs.

> *A family that takes this seriously may, at some point, find their own convictions looked at the way Chapter Seven describes. Questioned. Scored. Called a risk factor by someone with a clipboard and a different worldview. That is not a hypothetical reserved for someone else. It is what it costs in obedience to be the family answer to a child who has never had one.*

This booklet is not asking families to sign up for something easy, popular, or safe from misunderstanding. It is asking families to be willing to stand tall in the face of adversity — name-calling, suspicion, sometimes worse — because the alternative, for the child in front of them, is the trajectory Chapter One documented. Not because standing firm is comfortable. Because it is the right and righteous thing to do. And because the children this booklet is about do not have the luxury of waiting for it to become comfortable first.

To Those Already Inside the System

> *If you are a caseworker, a foster parent, a CASA volunteer, a family court judge — someone Chapters One and Six were careful not to blame — this invitation is for you too, and it is not an accusation.*

You did not build the system you work inside, and in most cases you cannot single-handedly change it. But you may know — better than anyone reading this — exactly which child, right now,

on your caseload would thrive in a home built on the standard this booklet describes. A pipeline of families who have already been through pastoral endorsement, independent assessment, and prayer confirmation is not a threat to your work. It is the resource your work has been missing.

An Invitation

If what you have read has landed — if the data in the early chapters troubled you, if the lineage in Chapter Five clarified something you already sensed, if Chapter Eight made you angry in a way that felt righteous rather than partisan — this booklet is asking something specific of you.

> *Not awareness. Awareness was never the missing ingredient. The system has been aware of its own outcomes for decades — it gave them a name and a score. What was missing was families willing to stand in the gap.*

The Pastor

If you are a pastor: you already know what this booklet documents — you have sat across from the families living it. The question is not whether you are aware. It is whether your congregation's families, when they say yes to fostering or adopting, are being prepared and matched in a way that accounts for what they will carry into that home. A family that has not been prepared for what a child with this kind of history may bring is a family at risk of becoming one more placement disruption. Bring this booklet to your leadership. Ask whether your church has a way to prepare families before they say yes — not just encourage them to say yes.

The Loving Family

If you are a family who has felt a pull toward fostering or adoption but assumed the system was the only door — it is not the only door. Come hear how the process actually works, what the standard is, and what it would mean for your family to be ready before a need arises. Come hear what this kind of readiness actually looks like — and what it could mean for your family to say yes before the need arises.

The Donor

If you have resources — a gift that funds the preparation of families multiplies every time God brings a child to a family that pipeline has prepared. It is not a gift to a case. It is a gift to the standard itself forever.

We are seeking those who want to multiply — not once — but in perpetuity. Because what has been given to you was given with the expectation that you are not to bury it or hide it — but to put it to work immediately for the calling of the Master.

A gift to the Foundation endowment doesn't fund one placement and stop. It keeps working — every year, long after you are gone.

Right Now

> *Somewhere, right now, a child is spending another day inside a system this booklet has described in numbers — one more day on a trajectory traceable from conception to age twenty-six. Nearly sixteen thousand of them will age out this year with no one. Not someday. This year.*

This booklet does not ask anyone to fix that number by tomorrow. It asks something smaller, and harder, and more durable: become the kind of family that number cannot describe.

> *We do not place a child. We participate in what God is already doing — whether that child's path to us runs through a birth mother's decision, a caseworker's file, or a family in crisis who simply needed someone to stand with them before crisis became removal.*

The system named the problem and called it progress. This booklet is the call to do the thing the name was never going to do on its own.

HIS Kingdom Come.
HIS Will Be Done.

Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures

entrustedfutures.com

Overwriting the Church

How the government systematically removed the one institution designed to keep it in its place — and what the Church must do now

The third and final volume in the Overwriting series

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures · Matthew 6 Ministry · The Entrusted Futures Foundation

We speak often of being His hands and feet.

Yet the very hands and feet of which we speak

are noted by the scars of persecution and crucifixion.

If we claim true fellowship and a life that mirrors His walk,

then we should expect hurtful piercings by this world.

A Personal Word Before You Read

This is the third booklet in a series that did not set out to be a series.

The first — "**Overwriting God**" — was built around the decision a birth mother makes and the infrastructure that should surround her. The second — "**Overwriting the Family**" — was built around what happens to a child when that infrastructure fails and the system that steps in fails worse. Each one pointed, at its close, to the same answer: families, the Church, and a standard that does not move.

This one asks the question neither of those booklets fully delved into. If the Church is the answer — the institution that holds the standard, forms the families, surrounds the birth mother, raises the child, and reminds a nation who authored its rights — then why is it sitting on the sideline of the very crisis it was built to solve?

> *My position in writing this is what I call Convicted Compassion — the full compassion of our Heavenly Father as shown through His Son's willingness for the Cross, mixed with the absolute conviction that we must be Born Again through the Grace of God and His infallible Holy Word if we want heaven.*
> *There is simply no other path. This booklet is written from that posture: full compassion, full conviction, no softening of either.*

This booklet is not written against the government. It is written to the Church. It is a documentation of how the government — one reasonable step at a time — removed the Church from the public square it was designed to occupy.

And it is a call for the Church to stop cooperating with its own removal.

You do not need to have read the other two booklets to read this one. But if you have, this one will answer the question that has been building since the first page of the first booklet:
how did we get here?

A lot of the answers are touched on in this booklet.

The scars in the epigraph are not a warning. They are an invitation. The One whose hands and feet we claim to be wore those wounds as a crown, not a defeat. The Church that spent decades avoiding wounds has not protected itself. It has arrived at a sideline — by choosing, again and again, the path that cost less.

> *This booklet is the call to choose differently. Not because it is comfortable. Because the children in the first two booklets are running out of time, and the Church is the only institution that has ever actually known what to do about it.*

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures

Chapter One

The Document That Defines Everything

What we lost when we lost the Word

Without Scripture we would never know who God is. Nor would we ever know who we are not.

That second half is the part the culture has spent decades erasing — not necessarily the existence of God, but the definition of man. What we are. What we are not. What we were made for. What we are capable of becoming, and what we are without God, incapable of escaping. Scripture answers all of it. Nothing else does.

> *The Word of God is the most crucial document ever created for mankind — as it is the very defining component of life itself. While mankind seeks to define truth, God has already done that in His Word.*

Mankind would never know our origin, our divine purpose, or the great destiny that could be ours through Christ without it. Those are not religious preferences. They are the foundational answers to the questions every human being eventually asks: who am I, where did I come from, what am I for, and where am I going? Scripture answers every one of them. Not as one option among many. As the record of what is actually true.

This matters for a booklet about the Church and government because the Church's entire authority rests on this foundation. The Church does not speak its own opinion. It speaks the Word of a God whose record of accuracy spans every culture, every century, and every human condition that has ever existed. That is not a modest claim. It is not meant to be. It is either true or the Church has nothing worth saying.

The government understood this — which is why removing Scripture's authority from the public square was the first and most important step in removing the Church's voice from it. You do not silence a voice by attacking it directly. You silence it by delegitimizing the authority it speaks from. Once Scripture was removed from the classroom, relocated from the courthouse, and reclassified from foundational truth to private religious opinion — the Church could still speak, but it was speaking into a room that had been told, by every surrounding institutional authority available, that what it was saying was not knowledge. It was preference. It was personal opinion.

Hope Without Evidence Is Nothing to Hope On

The Bible is not just God's commands and call to His people. It is a record of evidence.

The Old Testament gives the pattern: Abraham trusted when there was nothing visible to trust. Joseph held when every circumstance said God had abandoned him. Moses stood before a power that dwarfed him and watched an ocean part. Daniel prayed when prayer was a capital offense and walked out of a den of lions. Esther stepped into a court where her life had no protection and saved a nation. Generation after generation, the pattern holds: God keeps His word precisely when human circumstances insist He won't.

And then the New Testament supports and proves that the pattern was never going to stop. The early Church worshipped under conditions that would have destroyed any movement built on anything less than eyewitness testimony of a bodily resurrection and a Holy Spirit filled people.

The empty tomb is not one more entry on the list. It is the event the entire Old Testament record was pointing toward — the promised Savior, arrived, validating everything God had spoken through the prophets about His plan to change the relationship between Himself and mankind. The veil was torn. Not as a single dramatic gesture, but as an invitation to a closer walk than the law alone had ever permitted.

God's permanence is not something the resurrection proves. God is permanent by definition — He invented time itself, and what invented time cannot be subject to it. He has always loved. He has always been. The resurrection does not make that true. It is simply where mankind was given the clearest possible view of a truth that never needed proving in the first place.

> *Our hope comes in remembering and teaching what happened when people trusted God unconditionally. If this is not coming from the pulpit, we are failing a basic tenet of the Bible — and cheating God's people out of understanding how great a God we serve.*

That is the Gospel. Not a moral code. Not a set of religious observances. The good news that God, in His Son, did for mankind what mankind could never do for itself — paid the debt sin required, defeated the death that debt produced, and opened a direct way back to the Father for anyone who will come. This is the message the Church was entrusted to carry. Not a philosophy to debate. Not a tradition to maintain. News — the kind that changes what is true about a person's standing before God the moment they receive it.

A Church that does not preach this record produces people whose faith has no foundation beneath it. They believe because they feel. And feeling collapses under pressure.

The historical record of God does not and cannot.

How much of the hopelessness of people today comes from the very world they live in? They look at the government and see oppression. They look at the culture and see the things they love being redefined, the standards they hold being scored as deficiencies, the faith they have built their lives on being classified as a risk factor. And they wonder — where is God? Who delivers me from this?

The answer is in the record. The Israelites asked the same question under Pharaoh. The early Christians asked it under Rome. The answer, every time, was not a policy solution or a political movement. It was a God who parted oceans and emptied tombs. But you cannot draw hope from a record you have never been given. And a pulpit that has spent decades avoiding the hard things has withheld the very evidence that produces the kind of faith that holds when the world pushes back.

God created man with intent and purpose — not for that intent to be destroyed. In this, we are not to be deprived of our existence, and thus rights are granted to us by the decrees of God, allowing us to pursue His divine reason for our design and birth. That pursuit requires freedom — not freedom as the world defines it, the freedom to do whatever feels good, but freedom as the founders understood it: the liberty to walk out the calling God placed in us without a government, a culture, or a system standing between us and Him.

This is where purpose and Hope meet. A person who knows they were made with intent has a reason to hope — because the God who authored that intent does not abandon what He authors. And a person who is free to pursue that intent without interference has the conditions necessary for the pursuit to actually happen. Take away the freedom, and the purpose cannot be lived out even if it is known. Take away the Hope, and the freedom has nothing worth pursuing.

In this we are to find God, so our soul may be saved — and so the purpose He placed in us before we were formed can be walked out in the liberty He intended all along.

The question is why the pulpit stopped. The answer is not simple — but it is documented. And it begins, as everything in this series begins, with a sequence of reasonable steps.

Chapter Two

The Church Was Not Conquered

It was domesticated — one documented step at a time

The Church was not defeated. It was not outlawed. It was not driven underground by persecution — not in America, not yet. What happened to the American Church in the twentieth century is something more subtle and, in some ways, more dangerous than any of those things.

> *The Church was domesticated. Not through force. Through a sequence of documented, verifiable steps — each one defensible from the position the last one created, each one moving the line just far enough that the next step seemed manageable.*

What follows is not legal argument. This booklet is not written by a legal scholar and does not pretend to be. What follows is the documented record — the sequence of decisions, amendments, and cultural accommodations that, taken together, produced a Church that no longer believes it has the right to speak on the things it was specifically called to govern. Each step is cited. Each step is real. And at each step the question must be asked: where should the Church have stood — and what actually happened?

The Myth That Has to Go First

Before the sequence, the most important myth in American public life needs to be named and demolished — because everything else in this chapter rests on it.

> *The phrase "separation of church and state" does not appear in the United States Constitution. It does not appear in the Bill of Rights. It does not appear in the Declaration of Independence. It does not appear in any ratified founding document.*

It appears in a private letter Thomas Jefferson wrote on January 1, 1802 — eleven years after the First Amendment was ratified — to the Danbury Baptist Association of Connecticut. Jefferson was reassuring a religious minority that the federal government would not interfere with their worship. He was protecting the Church FROM government. Not protecting government FROM the Church.

The First Amendment says exactly what it means: "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof*." The Establishment Clause was written to prevent a state religion. The Free Exercise Clause was written to protect religious practice from government interference. Together they were designed as a shield around the Church — not a wall to contain it.

*Jefferson's letter was a **private political document** written to win support from religious communities in New England.*

Library of Congress scholar James H. Hutson, who analyzed the letter in 1998, concluded that Jefferson did not intend this language to be used to interpret or apply the First Amendment at all.

It was never ratified. It was never debated. It was never intended as doctrine. And yet it became the foundation of a century of jurisprudence that inverted the very Amendment it claimed to interpret.

If there was ever a clearer example of the democracy mob deciding something is true — and that belief, repeated long enough, becoming treated as constitutional fact — the Jefferson letter is it.

Written by a man who was not in the country when the Amendment was drafted. Quoted in courtrooms and classrooms as bedrock. Ignorance elevated to precedent. And the Church that held the historical record to refute it stood largely silent while the myth became doctrine.

The Church should have named this from the moment it appeared in case law. Most did not. The myth hardened into assumed fact — assumed fact became cultural consensus — and cultural consensus became the framework within which every subsequent step in this chapter was taken.

Step One — Reynolds v. United States (1878)

The first time Jefferson's letter appeared in Supreme Court reasoning was 1878 — **seventy-six years after it was written** — in a case about polygamy in Utah. Chief Justice Morrison Waite cited Jefferson's Danbury letter and used the phrase "wall of separation between church and state" as constitutional reasoning for the first time in Supreme Court history.

The case had *nothing* to do with church speech, religious education, or the Church's public voice. It was a polygamy case. But the precedent was set: a private letter from a prominent historical figure had been inserted into constitutional jurisprudence as an interpretive principle.

> *Reynolds v. United States, 98 U.S. 145 (1878). The holding: the Free Exercise Clause protects religious belief but not necessarily religious conduct if a valid law prohibits that conduct. The first step. Taken in a polygamy case. The line moved.*

Step Two — Everson v. Board of Education (1947)

In 1947, Justice Hugo Black — appointed by President Roosevelt — wrote the majority opinion in Everson v. Board of Education (330 U.S. 1) and embedded Jefferson's wall of separation into constitutional doctrine as an operative principle for the first time. The Church schools won the case — New Jersey could reimburse bus fares. But the reasoning built the framework that would be used against the Church for the next seventy-five years.

> *The Church schools won the case. The Church lost the framework.*
>
> *A 5-4 majority — relying on what Justice William Rehnquist would later call, in a 1985 dissent, "a metaphor based on bad history... useless as a guide to judging" — created the constitutional architecture that would remove prayer from schools, Bible reading from classrooms, and religious expression from public life for generations.*
>
> *The win obscured the loss.*

Step Three — The Schools (1962 and 1963)

In 1962, Engel v. Vitale (370 U.S. 421) removed a 22-word nondenominational prayer from New York public schools. In 1963, Abington School District v. Schempp (374 U.S. 203) removed Bible readings. In a nation whose earliest schools used the Bible to teach children to read — where the New England Primer opened with the alphabet taught through Scripture verses — these decisions removed the faith foundation from the institution designed to transmit the founding vision to each new generation.

> *Schools cannot have God in them. School problems have escalated. Society problems have escalated. And an enormous amount of cultural and institutional energy is spent ensuring that no correlation is ever drawn connecting those facts.*
> *Remove the foundation. Watch the structure weaken.*
> *Then insist the foundation was never load-bearing.*

The Case That Settled It — And Was Then Ignored

Here is the legal case that should stop every conversation about religion in public education cold. Moreover, it should demand the question as to why it was not part of every case involving the Church and the Government.

In 1844, the Supreme Court of the United States decided Vidal v. Girard's Executors — 43 U.S. 127. Daniel Webster — possibly the greatest attorney and orator in America, former U.S. Secretary of State — argued the case.

His argument before the Court lasted ten days. It was described as one of the most powerful defenses of the Christian religion ever delivered in an American courtroom. Tears reportedly poured from the eyes of observers in the gallery.

Webster argued that Christianity was part of the common law, that the Bible could not be excluded from the education of youth, and that education stripped of religious content was worthless to society.

The Supreme Court ruled unanimously. Justice Joseph Story — the Father of American Jurisprudence, placed on the Court by President Madison — delivered the opinion. Both sides agreed that Christianity must be taught in the school. The Court affirmed:

"It is also said, and truly, that the Christian religion is a part of the common law of Pennsylvania."

The Court held that the Bible could not be excluded from the school's instruction.

Story wrote that a school hostile to Christianity would be inconsistent with the public policy of a Christian nation.

That decision has **never** been overturned. It was unanimous. Engel (1962) and Abington (1963) did not acknowledge it. Did not distinguish it. Did not overrule it. A unanimous 1844 Supreme Court holding that the Bible cannot be excluded from public education was simply — not mentioned.

This is not a legal argument. It is a documented historical observation. When settled precedent is inconvenient for the direction the culture has decided to move, it is not always overruled. Sometimes it is simply ignored. And the institution designed to notice, name, and uphold HIS Word — the Church — was not in the room when the ignoring happened.

Step Four — The Johnson Amendment (1954)

On July 2, 1954, Senator Lyndon B. Johnson quietly inserted an amendment into a massive congressional rewrite of the tax code. It was approved by voice vote. There was no debate. There were no hearings. Johnson's actual motivation was to silence two nonprofit organizations supporting his political opponent in his Texas Senate re-election campaign. Churches were collateral. Johnson was protecting his Senate seat. The amendment was a political maneuver dressed as tax policy.

The text prohibits candidate endorsements. That is narrow. But the cultural weight expanded far beyond the text — creating an institutional reluctance across the American church to address any topic that might be construed as political. Which, increasingly, includes everything this series is about: the sanctity of life, the definition of family, parental rights, the authority of government over the family.

The Johnson Amendment has been rarely enforced.

Its power was never in prosecution. Its power was in the threat.

And the threat produced exactly what enforcement would have: silence.

★ 2025 update: In July 2025, the IRS formally agreed in a consent decree (National Religious Broadcasters v. Long, E.D. Texas) that when a church speaks to its congregation on matters of faith in connection with religious services, this does not constitute prohibited political campaign intervention. The legal constraint was always smaller than the cultural one. The cultural one remains. Despite the clarification, the point stands that once again the church was silent when laws were written that directly impact the church pulpit.

Step Five — Employment Division v. Smith (1990)

In 1990, Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the majority in Employment Division v. Smith (494 U.S. 872), eliminated the "*compelling interest*" test that had protected religious practice since 1963. Under the new Smith standard: if a law is neutral and generally applicable — meaning it applies to everyone, not just religious groups — the government no longer needs to demonstrate a compelling interest to enforce it against religious objectors, even when it substantially burdens their faith.

The practical effect was this: any law the government chose to apply neutrally could now override religious conviction without justification. The burden of proof — which had sat with the government since 1963 to demonstrate that its interest was compelling enough to override the First Amendment — shifted entirely to the believer. What had been a constitutional protection became a procedural hurdle. And the hurdle was designed to be cleared by the government every time.

Legal scholar Stephen Carter, writing shortly after the decision, observed that "commentators were falling all over each other to insist that the Justices were allowing the Free Exercise Clause to disappear."

It may be the most significant reduction in religious liberty protection in American constitutional history. Congress responded with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993), passed 97-3 — but the Supreme Court later ruled it cannot apply to state governments.

Most states retain the Smith standard. The Church continues operating under a level of assumed constitutional protection the actual law may no longer provide.

This list of abuses against ordinary Americans is not limited to the cases cited, we could go on for some time and legal scholars would debate endlessly for hours on them all. Some we can easily recall. Consider a few of the following:

Wickard v. Filburn (1942) gave the federal government power to regulate a farmer's wheat grown and consumed on his own property because it theoretically affected interstate commerce. The Commerce Clause — written to allow Congress to regulate trade between states — was stretched to cover activity that was neither commercial nor interstate. Once that interpretation held, federal regulatory power had no principled limit.

Kelo v. City of New London (2005) held that the government could seize private property not for traditional public use — a road, a school, a military base — but for economic development, transferring one private owner's land to another private entity. The Fifth Amendment's public use requirement was emptied of its content. What a man built on his land became subject to a city council's economic projections.

And one of the most recent examples of *reasonably* moving the line…

Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) redefined marriage at the constitutional level — not through legislation, not through democratic vote, but through five people in black robes deciding that the Constitution contained a right that two thousand years of legal, religious, and social consensus had never found there. The same mechanism as Roe. The same methodology. The same departure from the text.

But there is a deeper question underneath the mechanism, and it is the question this entire booklet has been building toward: how does government claim the authority to define something it never had the authority to define in the first place?

Government did not create marriage. It found marriage already in existence — a covenant instituted by God in the Garden, recognized by every legal system in human history, embedded in the common law this booklet's earlier chapters have already traced back through Vidal v. Girard to the founding itself.

The government's only legitimate role with respect to marriage was the same role it has with respect to every God-given institution: to recognize it, regulate around its edges for the sake of public order, and protect it. **Recognition is not the same as authorship**. A government that records a marriage license has not created the covenant. It has acknowledged one that already existed.

But Obergefell did something categorically different. It did not recognize marriage. It redefined it — and in doing so, claimed an authority no government has ever legitimately held: the authority to decide what marriage **is**, rather than the authority to recognize what marriage has always been. That is not a legal evolution. It is a category error elevated to constitutional law. Five individuals claimed the power to define a term whose definition was never theirs to set, because the institution itself was never created by mankind in the first place.

This is the same overreach this series has documented in every domain.

Life was not government's to define — it claimed the authority anyway.

The family was not government's to define — it claimed the authority anyway.

And marriage, the covenant that forms the family that raises the child, was not government's to define either.

Each time, the same error: confusing the authority to recognize with the authority to author.

Confusing the role of a witness with the role of a god.

Freedom Has Always Been a Godly Attribute

Freedom is not a political invention. It is a divine attribute — part of the nature of the God who made man in His image before any government existed to define what he was worth. The Church was not one institution among many that happened to care about freedom. It was the custodian of

the only framework in human history that grounded freedom in something no government can revoke — the image of God stamped on every human being at creation. And America was not a political accident. It was the political expression of what the Church had been carrying for fifteen hundred years.

The documents that gave this nation its legal foundation did not originate in the minds of philosophers. They originated in a conviction the Church had been preaching since Pentecost: that there is a law above the king's law, that authority is delegated from God and therefore conditional, and that the people God made in His image possess protections that no earthly power granted and no earthly power can revoke.

In 1100, the Church stood behind the barons who forced Henry I to issue the Charter of Liberties — the first documented acknowledgment in English history that even a king is bound by a higher law. In 1215, the same Church-backed principle forced King John to Runnymede, where Magna Carta was sealed — the king acknowledging protections he had not granted and therefore could not simply revoke. In 1620, the Pilgrims — who crossed an ocean specifically for the right to seek God without a king or an institution standing between them and Him — wrote the Mayflower Compact before stepping ashore. Its opening words are not political. They are theological: "Having undertaken, for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith... do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, Covenant and Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic."

The Declaration of Independence followed in 1776 — not as an invention but as an acknowledgment. "Endowed by their Creator" is not decorative language. It is the precise legal claim that the rights being declared are above the authority of any government to define or revoke, because they were never the government's to grant. The Bill of Rights followed — ten amendments that do not grant rights but **prohibit** the government from overwriting what God had already written. The Church was the connective tissue through every step of that chain. The conviction that produced each document was the conviction the Church had been carrying and preaching since the early martyrs refused to say Caesar is Lord.

> *From the Charter of Liberties to Magna Carta to the Mayflower Compact to the Declaration of Independence to the Bill of Rights — one unbroken line. Not a political tradition. A Church tradition. The conviction that freedom is God's design for His children, and that no king, no court, and no legislature stands above the God who made them free.*

Civil Disobedience as Higher Loyalty — The Church's Ancient Calling

Acts 5:29 · Exodus 1:17 · Daniel 3:18

The Church's role in the freedom tradition was never passive. The prophets were not passive. The barons at Runnymede were not passive. The Pilgrims who abandoned everything they had built in England were not passive. And the apostles who stood before the Sanhedrin and said "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29) were not being rebellious. They were being faithful. There is a difference — and it is the most important distinction the Church can make in any generation.

Civil disobedience in the Biblical tradition is not the refusal of authority. It is the exercise of a higher loyalty. The Hebrew midwives defied Pharaoh's order to kill Hebrew infants — not because they rejected Egyptian law, but because they feared God more than Pharaoh (Exodus 1:17). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood before Nebuchadnezzar's furnace and said "We will not serve your gods" — not as an act of political rebellion but as an act of theological clarity. There is a King above this king. There is a law above this law. And when the two conflict, the higher one governs.

The Founders understood this. The Declaration of Independence does not claim the right to overthrow any government. It claims the right — and names it as a duty — to alter or abolish any government that becomes destructive of the God-given rights it was established to protect. That is not rebellion. That is the same principle Nathan invoked before David, the same principle the barons invoked before John, the same principle the apostles invoked before the Sanhedrin. A government that overreaches the authority God delegated to it has not just made a policy error. It has violated a covenant.

The Church today holds this same call. Not to partisan politics. Not to culture war. But to the ancient, Biblical, documentable obligation to evaluate leadership through the lens of whether it is honoring or overwriting the God-given freedom this nation was built to protect.

"Choose this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15) was not spoken to individuals alone. It was spoken to a nation. And the Church — which has been the carrier of the freedom tradition from the Cross to Plymouth Rock to the Bill of Rights — is the institution best positioned to ask that question with clarity, with courage, and with the full weight of fifteen hundred years of documented history behind it.

The Church does not evaluate leadership to win elections. It evaluates leadership to fulfill its oldest and most documented function: holding power accountable to the standard that was established before any power existed. That is not political activism. It is faithfulness. And it is the one thing the silencing of the Church's voice has made impossible — which is precisely why that silencing was worth pursuing.

The complete historical and theological record of this freedom tradition — from the first breath God breathed into Adam to the first step on Plymouth Rock — is documented in the **Freedom Addendum**, a companion document to this series. The argument presented here is the summary. The addendum is the full account.

For the reader who wants to follow the chain link by link — through Genesis, the Covenant, the Prophets, the Cross, the torn veil, the Charter of Liberties, Magna Carta, Tyndale, the Geneva Bible, Hampton Court, and the Mayflower Compact — the addendum is that document. It is written to be so historically precise and so theologically grounded that the only way to dismiss its argument is to disprove the primary sources. Read it. Give it to the person in your life who believes freedom is a political idea.

The design by God is simple, the Church preaches the standard, measures what it sees against the standard, and says plainly when what it sees falls short. His Word is the standard bearer.

The Pattern Complete

At no single step did anyone say: we are removing the Church from the American public square. At every single step, someone said: this is narrow, reasonable, and does not apply to what you are worried about. And at every single step, the line moved. Until the destination was reached — a Church that no longer believes it has the right to speak on the things it was specifically called to govern.

The Sequence Continued — Freedom Quietly Lost

The legal sequence documented in this chapter are not the only major legal cases, and it did not stay confined to the Supreme Court.

Supreme Court decisions are visible. They are argued, briefed, decided, and reported. A citizen can read Reynolds, Everson, or Smith and understand exactly what happened and when. But the overreach that has probably done the most damage to ordinary religious liberty has not come from nine justices in Washington.

It has come from a far less visible source: the thousands of agencies, boards, commissions, and bureaucratic offices that issue rules with the force of law, enforce them with the threat of fines and imprisonment, and answer to no electorate at all.

This is where the pattern continued — and where it became most dangerous, because it became least visible. A Supreme Court ruling makes the news. An agency rule does not. A zoning board's interpretation of a permit requirement does not. A state licensing board's decision that a counselor's religious convictions disqualify them from practice does not. Each one, individually, looks like a narrow administrative matter — the kind of thing reasonable people assume must have a reasonable justification, because surely no one would build an entire system of *unaccountable* religious restriction one office memo at a time.

But that is exactly what has happened. The pattern of overreach continued — through agencies, lower courts, and legislative actions that each claimed narrow authority and produced broad results — and it continued precisely because it operated below the level of visibility where anyone organizes to resist it.

And beneath the headline decisions, a quieter machinery has been doing the same work: federal agencies — the IRS, OSHA, FDA, EPA, ATF — pass rules that are effectively laws, carrying criminal penalties, without a single vote of Congress. Consider the evidence of the shift. The IRS Criminal Investigation division carries approximately 2,000 armed special agents – nearly equal to the number of ATF agents. The EPA maintains its own armed enforcement division. Federal agencies that began as regulatory bodies now carry weapons and make arrests — not because Congress authorized it explicitly, but because no one stopped them from claiming the authority

The nondelegation doctrine — the constitutional principle that Congress cannot give its lawmaking authority to unelected bureaucrats — has been hollowed out so thoroughly that we no longer need a legislature. We have agencies. And their word is law until decades later a court might say otherwise. Interesting how agencies always interpret their authority into maximum power with maximum penalties.

Consider an irony most homeowners never stop to examine. The founders spent the Constitutional Convention building elaborate structural limits on federal power — checks, balances, enumerated powers, a Bill of Rights specifically designed to keep government out of the most basic decisions of a citizen's daily life. And millions of Americans have since signed all of that away voluntarily, in a stack of closing documents nobody reads, to a private board most residents could not name.

The homeowners association (HOA) does not derive its authority from the Constitution. It derives it from a contract — the covenants, conditions, and restrictions recorded when the development was built. But the day-to-day reach of that contract routinely exceeds what the federal government has ever claimed the authority to do. An HOA can fine a resident for the color of their front door, the height of their grass, the placement of their trash cans. It can place a lien on a person's home — and in some states, foreclose on it — over unpaid dues that may amount to a few hundred dollars.

And because the authority comes from contract rather than constitution, none of the protections citizens assume apply to government — due process, free speech, the right to a hearing before an impartial body — necessarily apply to the board governing their street.

This is worth naming because it is the same pattern in miniature. The founders built careful structural limits on power, understanding that any authority left unchecked will eventually claim more of it than was ever intended. And one neighborhood association at a time, citizens have re-created exactly the kind of unaccountable, intrusive governance the founders spent a Constitutional Convention trying to prevent — not because government seized it, but because people signed it away themselves, without reading what they were signing, for the promise of a tidy lawn next door.

> *We do not have too many laws. We have too many lawmakers who were never elected, never accountable, and never required to name the God whose authority their position was designed to serve.*
> *Freedom has not been lost in one moment.*
> *It has been regulated away, one agency rule at a time.*

That is the documented sequence of what was done to the Church from outside. What remains — and what this booklet must be honest about — is what the Church did to itself from inside.

Chapter Three

The Sovereign Self

What fills the space the Church left — and what the Church did with its own sword

Nature abhors a vacuum. So does the human soul.

When the Church stopped answering the question — who are you, and what are you for — the culture did not leave the question unanswered. It developed an answer of its own. And that answer is, at its foundation, the oldest offer in human history: *you are your own God*.

> *Increasingly, society allows each one of us to become our own sovereign God. Thus as God we make perfect rules. And since our rules are perfect, they are perfect for us as individuals. As our own sovereign godhead, making up our own rules, we can never be wrong. When people question what we have decided, they are wrong — because they are not as wise as we are... since we are God.*

This is not a new philosophy dressed in modern language. It is the Garden offer, restated in the therapeutic vocabulary of a culture that has removed every external authority capable of naming it for what it is. The serpent did not offer Adam and Eve knowledge as an intellectual gift. He offered them sovereignty — the knowledge of good and evil.

What Satan was really offering: autonomy and God-like independence — the promise of becoming like God, *deciding* for yourself what is good and evil instead of trusting and obeying God's command.

Hidden knowledge — the idea that God was withholding something beneficial. Rebellion without consequences — the lie that there would be no death or judgment for disobeying God. And none of this came with any reference to the very God who created them from nothing. They would be just like God.

We have been grabbing the fruit and taking a bite ever since. Every downstream error in this series is a variation of the same acceptance of that offer.

The Wrong God

Without an accurate view and understanding of the accurate understanding of who Christ is — you will be easily led astray into seeing the wrong god.

The wrong god is not *always* obviously wrong. It is usually a version of the right God — adjusted to be more comfortable, less demanding, more affirming, less holy. A god who validates rather than transforms. A god who confirms rather than challenges. A god who looks, on the surface, like the God of Scripture — but has been quietly edited to remove everything that would require the Church to say something costly.

The Church's role was always to interrupt that assembly. To name the sovereign self as the oldest lie in human history. To offer, instead, submission to a God who actually is all-knowing and all-understanding — whose standard does not shift with the culture, whose definition of man does not change with the election, and whose record of what happens when His people hold stands across every century the world has ever produced.

Two Thousand Years Without a Different Reading

The Church has taken the time, in recent decades, to change generations of accepted theology regarding human sexuality, marriage, and gender identity. None of today's redefined interpretations existed in any document, any sermon, or any theology until recent memory. And even "recent memory" is not that old.

The circuit riders of old, the missionaries of old, the pastors of yesterday — none of those groups preached anything different on marriage or gender.

The Church taught what was taught from previous teaching going all the way back to the day the text was written. Scripture on these subjects has been read, interpreted, preached, and applied consistently — across every denomination, every century, every culture, every language into which the Bible was translated — for two thousand years. There was no affirming theology in the first century. There was none in the fifth. None in the fifteenth. None in the nineteenth. The reinterpretation that now claims the Church has always had room for these positions did not exist until the last twenty to thirty years.

> *If a teaching was not interpreted differently — or even corrected — by the original author, by the early Church fathers, by the councils, by the reformers, by any generation of serious theological scholarship across two millennia — we have no option but to hold the author's intended interpretation. The burden of proof for a radical reinterpretation is not on those who hold the historic position. It is on those who claim to have discovered in the text something no one found there for two thousand years.*

Some theological discussions — Calvinism vs. Arminianism, questions of eschatology, the timing of the rapture — require time and effort to work through. But none of these change historical Church teaching radically. They refine the how and when of what God does. The reinterpretation of human sexuality is categorically different. It does not refine existing theology. It contradicts it. And it does so not because a closer reading of the text demanded it — but because the culture did.

We only became enlightened to this new interpretation when we took another bite out of the fruit to find this progressive knowledge.

A Church that revises its theology in response to cultural demand has not discovered new truth. It has accepted cultural authority over Scriptural authority. Which is the overwriting pattern applied to the interior life of the Church itself — not the government overwriting the Church from outside, but the Church overwriting itself from within.

The Dictionary as Evidence

In 1828, Noah Webster published the first American Dictionary of the English Language — the document that would carry his name into every household, schoolroom, and courtroom in the

nation for the next two centuries. It was, by design, a Christian dictionary. Webster believed language itself was a creation of God, and his definitions reflected it. His entry for sin read: "the voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule of rectitude or duty, prescribed by God." His entry for marriage, for law, for liberty — all of them rooted in Scripture, all of them assuming a fixed moral order beneath the English language itself.

That dictionary is still in print. And it can be opened side by side with any dictionary printed today.

Look up the same words — marriage, education, sin, law, faith — and the distance between the two is not subtle. It is not the natural evolution of language. It is the documented record of a culture systematically removing the foundation beneath its own vocabulary, one word at a time, until words that once carried a fixed meaning rooted in God now mean whatever the culture currently prefers them to mean.

Consider the following two examples:

	1828 — Noah Webster's American Dictionary	Today — Merriam-Webster.com
MARRIAGE	*"The act of uniting a man and woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man and woman for life. Marriage is a contract both civil and religious... Marriage was instituted by God himself for the purpose of preventing the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, for promoting domestic felicity, and for securing the maintenance and education of children."*	*"The state of being united as spouses in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law."*
SIN	*"The voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule of rectitude or duty, prescribed by God; any voluntary transgression of the divine law, or violation of a divine command; a wicked act; iniquity."*	*"An offense against religious or moral law; an action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible; an often serious shortcoming: fault."*

Two Words, Two Different Mechanisms

Look at what happened to each word, and notice that the two drifted differently — which makes the pattern more revealing, not less.

Marriage lost its author. The 1828 definition names God as the one who instituted it, and names permanence — "for life," "till death shall separate them" — as inseparable from what marriage is. The modern definition keeps the contract and drops everything else: no Author, no permanence, no purpose beyond the legal recognition itself. The word still exists. The reasons it existed for are gone.

Sin kept its Author and added an exit. The religious meaning is still there, still listed first, still recognizably Webster's. What changed is that the modern entry surrounds it with alternatives — "or moral law" as a substitute for God's law, and "an often serious shortcoming: fault" as an option with no reference to God at all. Merriam-Webster's own editors note (Did you Know?) that the word now carries "weakened, non-religious meanings." Nobody deleted the religious definition of sin. They simply built a door out of the room and left it standing open, so that anyone who wants to use the word without ever encountering the God it was defined against, can do exactly that.

Two different mechanisms.
Marriage: delete the foundation and keep the shell.
Sin: keep the foundation and build an exit beside it.
Both produce the same result — words that no longer require God to use correctly, in a dictionary descended from a man who believed exactly the opposite: that words that define right and wrong could not be used properly or defined without God.

Webster understood something this entire booklet has been documenting: words drift, and when they drift far enough, people read the same text and receive a different meaning without ever noticing the change occurred. Two years after his dictionary, in 1833, Webster revised the King James Bible itself — not to change what it said, but to stop a slow erosion of meaning from changing what readers heard.

In his preface he wrote: "Whenever words are understood in a sense different from that which they had when introduced... they do not present to the reader the Word of God."

He built his dictionary on the same conviction, anchoring the nation's vocabulary to a fixed point — God's Word — so that "marriage," "law," "sin," and "education" would mean what they had always meant, regardless of what the culture later preferred them to mean.

Two centuries later, look at what has happened to the institution that carries his name. The dictionary remains. The fixed point does not. We deleted the foundation of a nation one word at a time — and the very tool built to prevent exactly that erosion is now, itself, evidence of how completely it occurred.

Words, Logic, and the Art of Justifying Everything

Mankind has an extraordinary capacity to justify its sins with words and circular logic. Consider this argument, followed honestly to its conclusion:

Premise One: Love is love. Undeniable. A tautology by definition.

Premise Two: God is love. Foundational — 1 John 4:8. Therefore love and God are interchangeable.

Premise Three: I love myself. Love is love. My self-love is therefore divine. I am participating in God's very nature.

Premise Four: I also love pizza. My capacity for love is consistent and true. The love I feel for pizza is the same kind of love I feel for myself. Love does not change its essence depending on the object. Therefore my love for pizza is just as divine as my love for myself.

Conclusion: God loves pizza with God's own love. Pizza participates in the divine essence.

Therefore: God is a pizza. The extra cheese validates it further.

The difference between "God is love, therefore my relationship is valid" and "God is love, therefore God is a pizza" is not the logic. The logic is the same. The difference is which conclusion the culture has decided to take seriously. But you do not get to keep the method and discard only the conclusions you find inconvenient.

Notice what just happened. The same four premises that produced "God is a pizza" are the same four premises people use to validate whatever they want validated. Swap "pizza" for anything else — a relationship, a lifestyle, a choice Scripture calls sin — and the argument runs exactly the same way, premise for premise, with exactly the same logical force.

The only difference between the pizza conclusion and the conclusion someone actually wants you to accept is that one of them is obviously ridiculous and the other one is not. But "obviously ridiculous" and "actually false" are not the same thing. The method that produces a pizza-god is the same method, used the same way, producing whatever conclusion the user finds convenient. You cannot call the method valid when it serves you and call it absurd when it doesn't. It is either valid or it isn't — and the pizza already told you which.

"Love is love" is a tautology — a statement true by definition that carries no information. A = A tells you nothing about A. "Love is love" tells you nothing about what love is, what it requires, what it forbids, or how it is properly expressed. It is a thought-terminating cliché designed to end the conversation by making whatever the speaker wants to justify appear to be a simple extension of a self-evident and undeniable truth.

The Biblical definition of love is not a tautology. It is the Cross. Costly, self-giving, truth-telling, standard-holding, willing-to-wound-for-the-sake-of-the-beloved. God who is love is a God who loves you enough to tell you the truth about what you are, what you have done, and what it cost Him to make a way for you into His Eternal Kingdom.

That is not extra cheese. That is the full weight of what love actually costs and what it actually demands.

Political Correctness as Bondage

Political correctness is a bondage on America and its citizens. It is a full onslaught to limit what can be said, what can be done, and ultimately, what can be believed. It is a full exercise in limiting another person and their God-given rights of freedom.

Key to this is changing the basic underpinnings of society as it has existed for millennia — and redefining evil as acceptable at the risk of penalty. The ultimate goal of the redefinition of marriage is part of the larger goal of defining the Word of God as hate speech. Should you cite a passage of Scripture that would possibly interfere with someone's now legally recognized behavior, you could be technically in a position of hate speech. We are already in a place where wearing a cross or a Scripture shirt can be construed as creating a hostile environment.

And here is the canard that enables it — the misquotation that has done enormous work in silencing speech: "You cannot shout fire in a crowded theater." The actual standard, from Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in Schenck v. United States (1919), was that you cannot ***falsely*** shout fire in a crowded theater.

The key element is false. The government's interest was in preventing deliberate deception that causes immediate harm — not in regulating the content of speech generally. Strip the word "*falsely*" from the standard and what remains is a shell that can justify almost any speech restriction. Which is precisely how it has been used.

The deception runs deeper still. The Schenck standard itself stopped being the law more than fifty years ago. The Supreme Court replaced it in Brandenburg v. Ohio (1969) with a far narrower test — speech can only be restricted if it is both intended and likely to produce immediate lawless action. Sound familiar?

It should. This is the same mechanism Chapter Two traced through Jefferson's letter, through Reynolds, through Everson — a narrow, defensible legal standard gets adopted, then quietly stripped of the one word or one clause that made it narrow, and the stripped-down version goes on to justify far more than the original ever did. Holmes wrote "falsely."

The culture kept "shouting fire" and dropped the qualifier. The Court itself later abandoned the entire framework as too dangerous to leave standing. And none of that mattered, because by then the phrase had already escaped the courtroom and become folklore — repeated by people who have never read Schenck, never heard of Brandenburg, and have no idea they are citing a standard that failed twice: once when it was misquoted, and again when the Court itself threw it out.

Ultimately the phrase fails on three levels, not two.

It misquotes a ruling that never said what people claim it said.

It cites a legal standard that has not been the law in over half a century.

And it does both while functioning as one more example of the pattern this entire booklet has been documenting — not a single dramatic act of censorship, but a quiet erosion, one dropped word at a time, until the culture is enforcing a rule that no court currently recognizes and the original court never actually wrote.

Compelled speech is not free speech. It is the opposite of free speech.

A pastor compelled to use language that affirms what his Scripture calls sin is not exercising free speech.

He is being conscripted into government speech.

A right is not a right if you must ask permission to exercise it. And a Church that accepts compelled speech — that adjusts its language, its counseling, its preaching to comply with governmentally mandated vocabulary — has not preserved its freedom. It has surrendered the one thing the First Amendment was specifically written to protect.

All of this — the bondage, the canard, the compelled silence — describes what was done to the Church from outside. None of this required the Church's permission. What happens in the next chapter did.

Chapter Four

The Church Accommodated

What the Church did to itself — one comfortable step at a time

Chapter Three documented what the culture became when the Church left the public square. This chapter is harder. This one is about what the Church did to itself.

The government silenced the pulpit from outside through legislation, litigation, and institutional pressure. But the Church did not need the government's help for what happened next. It accommodated. Gradually, voluntarily, and in many cases sincerely — it opened the door to the very things it was designed to name and resist. Not because it was forced to. Because it chose the path that cost less.

> *The external sequence removed the Church's authority in the public square. The internal accommodation ensured it would not reclaim it — because a Church that has spent decades softening its own convictions has nothing sharp left to say when sharpness is required.*

Stop Swinging the Sword at Each Other

Before examining how the Church accommodated, this chapter has one thing to say directly to the people inside it.

> *We need to quit fighting each other and fight the true enemy.*
> *We have spent far too much time swinging the gospel sword at each other.*

The enemy does not care which denomination wins the internal argument. Frankly, I doubt he cares about either side of the argument. He cares that the argument is happening inside the sanctuary instead of outside it. A Church at war with itself cannot hold a standard, cannot form families, cannot speak to a nation, cannot interrupt generational cycles. The domestication described in this chapter was made easier by a Church already divided against itself — easier to

isolate, easier to silence, easier to remove from the public square one institution at a time, because those institutions had already stopped speaking with one voice on the things they all held in common.

It is the oldest battle strategy in the book… divide and conquer.

What follows in this chapter is a sequence — not a list. Each accommodation built on the last. Each one seemed reasonable from the position the previous one created. Read it as a progression, not as separate failures. Because that is what it was: a single long departure from the standard, taken one comfortable step at a time.

The Inclusivity Trap

The biggest fallacy the Church made was allowing the world's definitions to become the Church's meanings and answers. We allowed "inclusivity" — the world's definition of it — to be defined within the Church on the world's terms.

The Church has always been *Welcoming*. Few ever shut their doors on anyone. What people wanted was to come to church and not be told they are wrong — to support their idea that God loves them just as they are and is willing to accept the sinner without the expectation of change. They came to get their ears tickled. People church-shopped until they found the church that said the things they wanted to hear. And church growth proved that the messages preached were resonating and the offering plate being full added to the evidence.

> *"Inclusivity" in the world's frame means no one is ever told they are wrong. "Welcome" in the Biblical frame means the door is open to everyone — and everyone who enters will be told the truth. Those are not the same thing. The Church accepted the world's definition and called it love. It was not love. It was the abdication of love.*

And worse — we started treating God not as a Savior but as a heavenly vending machine, a butler, to give and do our bidding in prayer. When God is reduced to the affirming, non-judgmental presence who makes Sunday morning feel good, prayer becomes a transaction. Faith becomes a strategy for getting what I want. And when God does not deliver on the terms I set, the faith collapses — because it was never rooted in **who** He is. It was rooted in what I wanted Him to be.

Each redefinition the Church accepted made the next one easier. Once "welcome" meant no one would be told they were wrong, the congregation that formed around that premise needed a God who confirmed rather than challenged. Which is exactly what arrived next.

The Sunday/Monday Gap

We came to "Love Jesus" and sing songs — often of questionable theology — in big productions. We jumped for joy in our "Loving Jesus" moments. Then left and went back to being our own selfish gods on Monday morning. We daily served the unholy trinity of **Me, Myself, and I** — giving glory to our works. But we always loved Jesus along the way.

> *But we forgot to fear Jesus. To give Him the reverence, awe, and wonder that is due HIM in HIS Holiness. We loved "love" because we thought it gave us permission with Grace to live a lifestyle that was acceptable at any level. And a Church that preaches love without Holiness, Repentance and Godly Fear, produces people who love the idea of Jesus while living as their own god from Monday through Saturday.*

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Not the beginning of misery. Not the beginning of joyless rule-following. Wisdom — the settled, grounded, unshakeable understanding of what is true, what matters, and what does not move. A Church that removed the fear of the Lord from its preaching did not make its people more joyful. It made them more vulnerable — to the sovereign self, to the validation economy, to the next cultural redefinition that arrived at the sanctuary door with a smile and a new vocabulary.

The Watchman Who Left the Wall

Because we lost the moral standard of bright-line, clearly defined convictions — the Church became so much like the world that when the massive moral shift came to the Church's front door, instead of pushing back on what had been the Godly standard for an unchanging God for thousands of years, we just opened the door, put the name of Loving Christianity on the sin, and invited it in. Reasonable compromise. One wonderful redefined word at a time.

We lost the moral mantle of America because we stopped being the watchman on the wall calling out the compromise. We feared the fight. We watched the Church become little more than an activity point on Sunday so we could sound better than our neighbors. And we forgot the purpose of the Gospel message — to allow a clear contrast between good and evil — and give people an answer.

The watchman on the wall — Ezekiel's image — is charged with seeing what is coming and calling it out, regardless of whether the people want to hear it. The watchman who stays silent when danger approaches is held responsible for what follows. The Church was the watchman. It saw the moral shift coming. It chose silence — or worse, accommodation — and called the choice love. The scars that would have come from naming it were avoided. And the destination they should have prevented was arrived at anyway.

The accommodation was now complete in its internal logic. A Church that had redefined welcome, replaced God with a vending machine, traded Joy for happiness, and left the wall unguarded had also, quietly, replaced the God of Scripture with a more *manageable* version of Him. The final step in that replacement was the most significant: exchanging the fear of the Lord for the comfort of religion.

From God-Fearing to Religious — and the Difference Matters

We have moved from a country of God-fearing people with Godly faith to a nation of religious people. And that shift matters more than it sounds.

Know the difference between the Gospel and religion.
The Gospel is God's loving good news through His Son Jesus Christ — to reach and fellowship with His people.
Religion is mankind's attempt to reach God and feel good about ourselves.

The God-fearing person stands in awe of who God actually is — His Holiness, His justice, His love, His sovereignty — and lives accordingly. The religious person manages their relationship with God as a social and institutional obligation. They attend services. They follow the right forms. They say the right words. And they leave the same person they arrived as, having fulfilled the cultural expectation of religiosity without any expectation of transformation. One has an encounter with the living God. The other has a standing appointment.

Trace the sequence: the world redefined welcome, the Church accepted the definition.

The world offered a transactional God, the Church let Him become one.

The world made Sunday about feeling, the Church made Sunday about feeling.

The world removed the standards, the Church removed the standards.

The world called the compromise love — and the Church, the institution that had held the definition of love for two thousand years… agreed.

> *That is not a story of external pressure overcoming internal conviction.*
> *That is a story of internal conviction quietly yielding,*
> *one wonderful redefined word at a time,*
> *until the institution most capable of interrupting the culture*
> *had become the culture's most faithful mirror.*

What the external sequence removed, and what the internal accommodation reinforced, the culture then filled. And the cost of that filling is what brought us to this booklet in the first place.

Chapter Five

We Lost Joy and Settled for Happiness

How fun morality invaded the pew before it invaded the culture

There is a distinction the Church has largely stopped making — and its absence explains more about the current state of both the culture and the congregation than almost anything else in this booklet — Joy.

Joy is not a mood. Joy is not dependent on circumstances. Joy is the settled confidence of a person who knows *who* they are, *whose* they are, and what they were made for. Joy can coexist with suffering. Joy can be present in the darkest of times. The early Church sang in prison. The martyrs died with it. The missionaries carried it into places of extraordinary hardship and found it did not leave them.

Happiness is different. Happiness is a mood — a response to circumstances. When circumstances are pleasant, happiness follows. When circumstances are not, happiness collapses. Happiness requires favorable conditions. Joy does not.

This aids in understanding how you can be sad and Joyful at the same time; in the same moment.

> *The Church preached Joy for two thousand years. Somewhere it began preaching happiness instead — a version of the faith adjusted to produce emotional satisfaction rather than transformed lives.*
> *Come to church, feel better, go home.*
> *The wrong God assembled from comfortable parts*
> *produces happiness theology.*
> *The right God — costly, demanding, worthy of the Cross — produces Joy.*

Where the Shift Came From

The emergence of happiness as the culture's highest good did not happen in a vacuum, and it deserves to be understood with compassion before it is critiqued.

Two world wars. Some of the most destructive events in human history — unprecedented industrial-scale death across two generations of young men. The survivors came home to a prosperity the nation had never known: the GI Bill, the suburbs, the automobile, the television. And a deep, understandable, human need to live — to enjoy what remained, to feel something other than grief and terror.

These were not morally corrupt people making a cynical choice. They were people who had watched the world burn twice in thirty years and wanted, reasonably, to experience what life could offer in peacetime. The culture's turn toward pleasure and leisure in the 1950s is human. It is comprehensible. And the Church that failed to meet it with the actual answer — True Hope, not cheap comfort — bears some responsibility for what followed.

In 1951, psychoanalyst and social scientist Martha Wolfenstein published a paper in the Journal of Social Issues titled "The Emergence of Fun Morality." Comparing decades of official U.S. government childrearing guidance, she documented a real and measurable shift — and named it: an old goodness morality, which stressed discipline over impulse, displaced by a new one. Under fun morality, not having fun became an occasion for anxiety rather than virtue: "Whereas gratification of forbidden impulses traditionally aroused guilt — failure to have fun now lowers one's self-esteem."

> *Fun morality displaced goodness morality. And it did not stay in the culture. It walked through the sanctuary door. A Church whose people had been taught to expect emotional satisfaction from faith could not, when the cultural moment demanded something harder, call them to the Cross. The wounds that are the evidence of faithfulness had become, in a happiness-oriented congregation,*
> *evidence that something had gone wrong.*

The Pursuit of Happiness — What It Actually Meant

The founding documents speak of the pursuit of happiness — but happiness in the founding understanding was not a mood. It was the pursuit of divine calling, the ability to live out what God placed in you before you were formed, the freedom to walk in step with your Creator. Life was built with purpose in the womb of the mother.

This series defends three domains — Life, Family, and Church. The three rights the Declaration names are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. These are not parallel lists by accident. This booklet defends the Happiness God defined — the pursuit of divine calling that requires the Church's voice to be present, clear, and unsilenced in the public square it was designed to occupy. A Church that has been removed from that square cannot deliver the Happiness the Declaration was written to protect. The series that surrounds this booklet defends all three rights simultaneously because they were always one theological idea.

What happened: happiness came to be understood as whatever any individual conceives it to be. Since it could no longer be objectively defined in terms of a fixed purpose for human nature, the pursuit of happiness came to mean the pursuit of pleasure — the relentless quest for fun, for an emotional state of carefree bliss. And this state need have no correlation to the ethical choices one has made or the way one has ordered one's life.

And if challenged in our definition or pursuit, we vindicate it with our Constitutional "Freedoms".

Many people seem committed to pursuing this kind of happiness by means of making bad ethical choices — choices that produce the momentary feeling without the enduring foundation. When happiness becomes merely a mood — the sustaining of which is the highest good — rules tend to get broken — or worse, justified.

This connects directly to the foundational argument of this entire series: sex had dual purposes — pleasure and procreation — and the culture decided to eliminate the consequence via abortion. Fun morality wanted the pleasure without the responsibility. When happiness is the highest good and the sustaining of a good mood is the moral standard, the consequence of the design becomes the inconvenience to be eliminated.

And the permission structure to eliminate it gets built, one reasonable step at a time.

The Destruction of Men

Fun morality did not only displace goodness morality. It displaced Biblical manhood.

God designated man with a role as protector and provider through servanthood. Not domination. Not superiority. Servant leadership — the model Christ demonstrated when He took a towel and washed His disciples' feet before going to the Cross. The man who leads through service, who provides through sacrifice, who protects through covenant — this is the Biblical design. Neither

gender is perfect. But God designed distinct roles — not for the subordination of one, but for the flourishing of both.

This did not happen all at once. The provider role was the first casualty — as industrialization moved work outside the home, then as economic pressure made two incomes the assumed norm, the father's presence in the daily life of his children thinned before anyone named what was being lost.

The protector role followed — as the culture redefined every form of male strength as a threat to be managed rather than a gift to be stewarded, men learned to make themselves smaller, quieter, less present, because presence itself had become suspect.

And the spiritual leadership role went last, and went quietest of all — because a man who has already been told his strength is dangerous and his provision is optional rarely has the conviction left to also believe he is called to lead his household in prayer.

What the culture has done is systematically delegitimize that design. The Biblical model of manhood has been reclassified as toxicity. Strength is now suspect. Leadership is now dominance. The protector is now the threat. Men have been told, by every cultural signal available, that the role God gave them is the problem rather than the solution.

And many have believed it — retreating into passivity, absenting themselves from families, ceding the spiritual leadership of their households because they have been told their presence in that role is itself the harm.

The same mechanism worked on Biblical womanhood from the opposite direction. Where men were told their strength was the problem, women were told their nurture was the limitation — that the home was a smaller calling than the career, that the design God gave them for raising the next generation was a cage to escape rather than a calling to inhabit.

Both distortions came from the same source: a culture that could not tolerate distinct, complementary roles, because distinct roles imply a design, and a design implies a Designer. **The sovereign self cannot share authorship with God over what a man or a woman is for.**

> *We have penalized men for being men — all in the name of standardizing a different model of leadership as the correct one. The family fractures when the man at its center has been told his God-given role is the problem.*

And a Church that absorbed this cultural critique rather than answering it produced a generation of men who no longer know what they are for — which is, at its root, the same crisis the children in the first two booklets of this series are facing. Nobody told them who they were. Nobody told them what they were made for.

This is not abstract. The children documented in this series' second volume — the ones aging out of foster care, the ones whose trajectories were visible before birth, the ones cycling through a system that cannot give them what they need — are disproportionately children who grew up without a father present in any of the three roles Scripture assigns him. Provider, protector, spiritual leader. Remove the man from all three, and the home that should have interrupted the cycle becomes, instead, one more entry in the data.

The destruction of Biblical manhood is not a side issue. It is the same overwriting pattern applied to the most fundamental unit of the Church's architecture: the man standing in his God-given place at the head of a covenant family, raising children who see what servant leadership looks like, who grow up knowing what a Godly man and a Godly woman look like in daily life. Remove that model, and the generational transmission this series has been arguing for becomes structurally impossible.

Two things have filled the space Biblical manhood and Joy once occupied: a culture of pleasure that cannot sustain itself, and a people who have no fixed point from which to answer the most basic questions of human existence.

The next chapter examines what that world looks like — and why it cannot provide what it promises.

Chapter Six

Two Kingdoms

The world, the Word, and the war that was never political

There are two populations in this nation. They share geography, tax brackets, and many of the same social institutions. But they do not share a foundation. And the difference between them is not political. It is spiritual.

> *People who love and live in the WORLD find the current system the best possible arrangement — because they have a government that will protect them in their chosen behavior, calling evil good, and justify whatever they have decided to do.*
> *People who love and live in the WORD see the same system as oppression — antithetical to the freedom found in God, a structure that penalizes the very convictions that gave this nation its foundation.*

These two populations are not divided by party, race, income or education level. They are divided by whether they acknowledge a standard above themselves — one that was not assembled from their preferences, cannot be revised by their wishes, and does not move when the culture moves.

What the person living in the Word needs — what they have always needed, and what the Church was designed to provide — is the reminder that this pattern has a track record. The Israelites felt exactly this under Pharaoh. Moses arrived. The early Christians felt exactly this under Rome. They arrived in America. God delivered both times. Evil was parted like an ocean, and the chance to serve God entered. The parting of the sea is not a metaphor. It is evidence. And it is precisely the kind of evidence a people under oppression needs to hear from the pulpit.

Of the People, By the People — But Not For the People

We speak of the three coequal branches of government — of the people, by the people, and for the people. Yet the people certainly do not seem to have a lot of value in the actual conversation.

Elected representatives have handed their lawmaking authority to unelected agencies. Courts have discovered constitutional rights the document's authors never named and never debated. And the people — who built the government, who fund it, who live under it — watch as decisions that reshape the most fundamental aspects of their lives are made in rooms they were never invited into, by people who were never elected, under authority that was never explicitly granted.

This is not a party argument. Both sides of the political divide have been complicit in the accumulation of government authority at the expense of the people it was created to serve. The founders built a republic — a system with structural protections specifically designed to prevent the government from growing beyond its mandate. Those protections have been eroded, one judicial decision and one agency rule at a time, until the government created to protect God-given rights now defines what those rights are and who gets them.

Legislating Morality Does Not Produce Morality

We have allowed the government to become the moral authority — the definer and enforcer of ethical standards that were always meant to belong to God and be transmitted through the Church and the family. The founders built a government explicitly limited in its authority over the moral lives of citizens because they understood that moral authority belonged to God. We have inverted that entirely.

And the result is exactly what should be expected: legislation of morals by government fiat will not make mankind more moral. A law against a behavior does not change the heart that produces it. We run the same argument with firearms: take away guns from law-abiding people to stop the people who don't respect the law and have no morals. Legalism will not give them morals. The war on drugs cannot be won with more drugs. The war on despair cannot be won with more programs. The war on moral failure cannot be won with more legislation. What the law is powerless to do…

> *Only the Church — preaching the Gospel, the new birth, the transformation of the inner man — can produce actual moral change. A law against murder does not make a person who wants to murder less murderous. It only constrains the act while the heart remains unchanged. This is why the Church's silence matters beyond politics: when the Church goes quiet, the government tries to fill the moral vacuum through legislation. And legislation cannot do what only conversion can do.*

A Right Is Not a Right If You Must Ask Permission

There is a test that runs through the entire series this booklet completes. A true right — one endowed by God rather than issued by government — requires no permission to exercise. Life requires no permission. Liberty requires no permission. The pursuit of the calling God placed in you before you were formed requires no permission.

> *A right is not a right if you have to ask permission from an authority to utilize it.*
> *For us to ask permission for what God has established is the truest form of evidence that we are not free.*

Apply this test to the Church's current position in American public life. A pastor who calculates whether his sermon will trigger IRS scrutiny before preaching it is asking permission. A church that adjusts its teaching on marriage or the sanctity of life to comply with cultural acceptance is asking permission. A denomination that softens its theological claims about who Christ is in order to remain welcome in the public square is asking permission.

The asking is the surrender. Not because the government has technically prohibited anything. Because the Church has already conceded, through the permission calculation, that the authority over what it says belongs to someone other than the God who called it to say it. And what the government did not give, the government cannot revoke — ***unless*** the Church cooperates with the revocation by treating the permission as real.

There Is No Separation of Church and State — Only Separation of Church and Mind

We have become so open-minded our brains have leaked out.

The revisionist history that removed the Bible from its foundational role in this nation's formation did not just change the legal relationship between the Church and the public square. It changed the way the culture thinks. And — more damaging still — it changed the way the Church thinks about itself.

A culture that built its educational system on Scripture, its legal framework on the acknowledgment of God's authority, and its founding documents on the premise that rights are

endowed rather than issued — and then spent seventy years removing every visible trace of that foundation — did not become neutral. It became amnesiac. It forgot what it was built on and started arguing about the load-bearing walls.

And the Church, which held the memory, largely stopped insisting on it. Which means both institutions are now operating without the foundation that made either of them coherent: the culture without the moral framework that produced its freedoms, and the Church without the public voice that gave its convictions consequence beyond Sunday morning.

> *A nation that cannot remember why it was free will no longer remain so. And a Church that has forgotten it was designed to be the memory, will not be able to remind the people.*

The Hierarchy of Texts — The Bible as the Controlling Document

Before leaving this chapter, one more thing needs to be stated plainly — because it governs every argument in this series and every legal claim this booklet makes.

> *The Bible supersedes all other documents. It is the controlling document of all thinking on the matter. Every document in this nation that names God within it must, by default, serve that document as the principle against which the thinking was leveraged.*

The chain of authority is clear. No law can supersede the Constitution. And the Constitution — along with the Bill of Rights — is subservient to the Bible as the foundation of this nation's laws and existence. The Constitution derives its authority from the acknowledgment of the God whose authority it is subordinate to. Remove that acknowledgment and the document loses the only ground on which its own claims stand.

This is not a theocracy argument. It is a textual hierarchy argument — the documents themselves, by their own language and internal logic, establish this chain. The Declaration says rights are endowed by the Creator. The Constitution was built to protect those rights. Every law beneath it is built to protect what the Constitution was built to protect. And what the Constitution was built to protect was not created by the Constitution. It was created by God.

To ignore this hierarchy is not judicial neutrality. It is the same overwriting pattern documented throughout this series — claiming an authority the document itself does not grant, from a position the last reasonable step created. The Supreme Court cannot override the Constitution. The Constitution cannot override Scripture.

And a culture that has proceeded as though it can, has not updated the hierarchy. It has simply ignored it. One reasonable step at a time.

What remains is the question this series has been building toward since the first page of the first booklet. If the Church is the answer — what must it actually do? And what does it have to offer that nothing else in human history has ever been able to replicate?

Chapter Seven

What the Ekklesia Was Built For

Reclaiming what was taken — and delivering what only the Church carries

The Greek word translated "church" in the New Testament is *ekklesia* — the called-out assembly. In its original meaning, the ekklesia was not a private religious gathering. It was a public, governing institution — the assembly of citizens called out to deliberate and govern the affairs of the community.

The Church was designed by God to be the ekklesia of His Kingdom in the earth. Not a social club. Not a therapy center. Not a tax-exempt nonprofit carefully avoiding anything controversial. The governing assembly of the Kingdom — called out to represent His authority, hold His standard, and speak into the affairs of human community according to His design.

> *The very system capable of correcting this nation's catastrophic failure on the issues of life, family, and children has sat on the sideline — and allowed its authority to be stolen, redefined, and overwritten until it has no recognized voice in the nation it was designed to lead. That is not the government's fault alone.*
> *It is the Church's failure to hold what it was given.*

What Standing Firm Actually Looks Like

We speak often of being His hands and feet. Yet the very hands and feet of which we speak are noted by the scars of persecution and crucifixion. If we are desiring to be the very calling of His hands and His feet, we must expect wounds and hurts from people and this world. They define us in our quest to be like Him. They become statements of uncompromise — a standard that says: I **will not bow before sin**.

If we die with Him then we are promised to rise as He did. If we claim true fellowship and a life that mirrors His walk, then we should expect hurtful piercings by this world.

The Church that cooperated with its own domestication did so because it chose to avoid those wounds. The reasonable accommodation of silence. The reasonable accommodation of softened language. The reasonable accommodation of a theological claim adjusted to remove its most costly implications. Each one avoided a wound. Each one moved the line.

And the accumulated avoidance produced a Church standing today at the sideline of the crisis it was built to solve — not because it was forced there, but because it chose, again and again, the path that cost less.

> *The scars are not evidence of failure. They are evidence of faithfulness. The Church that bears them is the Church that held. The Church that avoided them is the Church that accommodated. And the children in the first two booklets of this series are the documented cost of the accommodation.*

True Hope — What Only the Church Carries

Hope needs a basis from which it can spring. Remove the basis and what remains is a wish — and wishes, as the culture has demonstrated across every decade of the experiment, are not sufficient to hold a person, a family, or a nation together when the weight of reality presses against them.

There is a distinction between the hope the world offers and the Hope the Church was designed to deliver — and the difference between them is the difference between everything and nothing.

The hope the world provides is a "cross your fingers," "don't know if it will," "be great if it happens" type of hope. It is laced with *uncertainty*.

It comes in the form of self-help books, therapeutic frameworks, government programs, pharmaceutical solutions, and an endless succession of fads that fade in failure. Each year we are introduced to the latest insight about being human. Each year we believe it until the next new thing shows up.

Biblical Hope is categorically different — and understanding the difference requires understanding what faith actually is. Faith operates in three dimensions simultaneously:

Past Faith is the willingness to trust and believe in what God has already done — the parting of the Red Sea, the emptying of the tomb, the record of every generation that trusted Him unconditionally and watched Him move. This is the evidence on which everything else rests.

Current Faith is the willingness to trust God in the moments we are walking through right now — active, present-tense reliance on a God who has not changed between the record and this moment.

But **Future Faith** is a bit different…

> *Future Faith is the trusted willingness to be assured that God has our best interests and that what He said in His Word is true. This future faith is HOPE. Not an emotionally based feeling. Not wishful thinking. An anchor point — living in the flowing power of Jesus Christ. And if faith produces action (Hebrews 11, James 2:17) then we should be actively working toward the things God is going to do in the future of this nation.*

This three-part understanding of faith is why the youth hopelessness argument this booklet has been making is ultimately a Church failure, not a cultural one.

A young person who has never heard the evidential record has no foundation to stand on. A young person with no community walking beside them has no one to hold them when circumstances collapse. A young person with no Biblical Hope sees only as far as today — and if today is desperate, tomorrow looks the same.

The Church delivers all three simultaneously. The record preached from the pulpit builds past faith. The community of the ekklesia provides current faith. The confident expectation of what God has promised — rooted in the record, sustained by the community — produces future faith.

Real, true, meaningful, sustaining… Hope.

The kind that holds when the world pushes back and the despair is at the front door.

> *Biblical Hope is a confident expectation and desire for something good in the future — with moral certainty in it. When the Word says "Hope in God," it does not mean "Would be great." It means "Expect great things from God." Hope is faith in the future tense.*

The Bible is the record on which that Hope rests. Generation after generation has moved from a state of hopelessness to overwhelming joy of the future when they found a true relationship with God. The sheer volume of testimony on the scales of life demands that those seeking Hope seek God. You cannot dismiss easily the success rate of God giving true hope to those who earnestly seek Him. God wins overwhelmingly — year after year, generation after generation, no matter how many self-help books we publish — all of which are going to fail because they start with the same underlying premise of **self** being like God.

The war on drugs cannot be won with more drugs. The war on despair cannot be won with more programs. We need to produce Hope in people's souls — and that comes from being the hands and feet of God. If we deal with the hurt, Hope can flourish. And Hope — true, Biblical, evidence-based, Cross-rooted Hope — gives people a reason to live, a reason to feel, a reason to exist.

> *Hope is actionable Faith that makes getting out of bed worth it; serving others worth it; enduring the pains worth it; and smiling with Joy in the darkest of times worth it. This is what the Church carries that no government program, no self-help book, no pharmaceutical intervention, and no legislative mandate can replicate. This is what the silence cost. And this is what the Church returning to its voice can restore.*

The Covenant the Ekklesia Was Designed to Surround

There is one more thing the culture has systematically dismantled that the ekklesia was specifically designed to protect — and its absence is the root condition underneath every crisis this series has documented.

God looked at Adam in the garden and said: it is not good for man to be alone. This was not a comment on loneliness. It was a statement about the design. Human beings were not made for isolation. They were made for covenant — the kind of deep, committed, irreplaceable companionship that mirrors God's own covenant relationship with His people.

Marriage is the primary covenant relationship God designed for human flourishing. Not a legal arrangement. Not a social convenience. A covenant — two people walking together under His authority, sharpening each other, carrying each other's burdens, witnessing each other's calling, and raising the next generation together in the standard this series has argued for throughout. It is not incidental to the design. It is central to it.

People find Hope in God. But God Himself said it is not good for man to be alone. Hope is also found in the walk of an intimate companion — someone who knows you fully, walks beside you through the darkest of times, and whose presence in your life is a tangible expression of the God who said human beings were made for relationship.

The alienation the culture produces — isolation, the sovereign self answering to no one, identity defined by social feedback rather than covenant relationship — is not just spiritually destructive. It is the opposite of what God designed. The sovereign self has no companion. The validation economy has no covenant. The person who defines themselves by whatever produces the most consistent social affirmation has substituted an audience for a spouse — and the audience, when it stops affirming, leaves nothing behind.

Every crisis documented in this series begins with a broken covenant relationship. A birth mother without the companion who should have been there. A child without the two-parent covenant home that was designed to receive them. A foster youth who aged out without anyone who held them in the specific, irreplaceable way a covenant family holds a person. The absence of covenant companionship is not a side note. It is the root condition that produces every outcome this series has documented in numbers.

The ekklesia was designed to surround that covenant. To model it across generations so the next generation knows what they are looking for. To hold the couple accountable when it is hard. To celebrate when it holds. To receive the children it produces. And to be, for the person walking alone — who has not yet found that companion, or who has lost them, or who has never seen it modeled — the family of God, the covenant of belonging, the community that sustains them as their story unfolds and continues.

The Church that holds the covenant of marriage holds the architecture of everything else this series has argued for. And the Church that has watched that covenant be redefined, reclassified, and ultimately dismissed as one option among many — while staying largely silent — has not just lost a theological position. It has lost the foundation on which every family, every child, and every generation of Hope this booklet has been pointing toward is built.

The ekklesia is one of the key foundational points in the Entrusted Futures plan for child placement — not a footnote to the model, but the reason the model works at all.

Every safeguard in the Entrusted Score process — the pastoral endorsement, the assessment across five dimensions, the standing prayer committee — exists because a covenant family does not appear by accident. It is formed, recognized, and held accountable by a community that already understands what the covenant is for. A caseworker evaluating a household in isolation can check boxes. A church that has watched a couple's marriage for years, that has seen how they handle conflict, how they discipline, how they forgive, how they show up for each other when it costs something — that church can vouch for something a checklist cannot measure.

This is the ekklesia doing exactly what it was designed to do: surrounding the covenant so that when a child arrives, they arrive into something real, not into a household that merely passed an inspection.

This is why Entrusted Futures does not simply place children with willing families. It places them with families the ekklesia itself has already surrounded, tested, and confirmed — because the architecture this chapter has been describing is not theoretical. It is the actual mechanism by which a child who has never known stability is received into a home that already knows what stability looks like, because the community around that home has been holding it accountable to that standard long before the child ever arrived.

And the ekklesia's work does not end at placement. The cost this booklet has already named — the family whose convictions become a clipboard's risk factor, whose home is scored as deficient for the very faith that made it stable — does not arrive before the child comes. It arrives after, when the world notices what kind of family said yes. A family standing alone against that scrutiny will, eventually, stand down. A family surrounded by a community that prayed them into the placement, that knew the cost before they accepted it, and that does not disappear the moment the child arrives — that family can hold.

This is the covenant the ekklesia was designed to surround in both directions: forming the family before the child comes, and standing with that family after — not raising the child in their place, not diluting the authority God gave the parents to raise their own child, but holding up the hands of the very people God assigned that authority to, so the weight of standing firm does not fall on them alone.

What the Ekklesia Produces — Peace

There is one more gift the ekklesia was designed to deliver that the culture has quietly redefined out of existence.

> *People of the Church have come to believe that peace in the Church means learning to get along to get along. Let us be very clear — the Cross will always invite controversy and conflict, simply because good, pure, and holy cannot coexist with evil.*
> *Peace comes from change and operating under His calling and His will.*

Peace is not merely nothing bad is happening. It is everything is in its proper place under God's design. Biblical peace is therefore not dependent on external circumstances. It is the settled, ordered condition of a life fully submitted to the God who designed it. The early Church had peace while being fed to lions. The martyrs had peace on the way to the stake. The missionaries had peace in places of extraordinary hardship. Not because nothing bad was happening. Because everything was in its proper place under God's design.

This is what the ekklesia produces when it is functioning as designed: not the absence of conflict, but the presence of order — the deep, unshakeable order of people who know who they are, whose they are, what they are for, and who holds the outcome. That is the peace the world cannot give and cannot take away.

A Church operating in this peace does not need the culture's approval. It does not need the government's permission. It does not need to soften its language, adjust its theology, or silence its pulpit to maintain its standing. It stands because it stands on what does not move. And from that standing place, it speaks — clearly, with love, without apology — into a culture that has been waiting, whether it knows it or not, for something that does not move.

> *The Church that holds the covenant, produces the Hope, and carries the peace of God is not an institution fighting for survival. It is the governing assembly of the Kingdom in the earth — and it has everything it needs to do what it was designed to do.*
> *The only question remaining is whether it will.*

The answer to that question is not institutional. It is personal. It is the pastor deciding what to preach on Sunday. The family deciding whether to say yes to the process. The donor deciding what their resources are for. The individual deciding whether what they have read demands a response. The ekklesia is not an organization. It is a people. And people decide.

Seven chapters have shown what was lost and why. What remains is the decision itself — named plainly, addressed to the specific people whose decision it actually is.

Chapter Eight

The Call

What the ekklesia must do — now

Seven chapters have built the case. The government's documented sequence. The culture's sovereign self. The Church's own accommodation. The Joy that was traded for happiness. The two kingdoms. The ekklesia's design. The Hope it alone carries. The covenant it was built to surround. The peace it produces when functioning as designed.

Everything that has been documented is a description of what was lost — and a map back to where it was. This chapter is the map made practical. Not a list of institutional programs. A call to the people who hold the answer — pastors, families, and anyone who has read this far and felt the weight of it.

The Call to Pastors

If you are a pastor reading this: the Johnson Amendment did not silence you. Fear silenced you. And the fear was not unreasonable — the cultural cost of speaking plainly on the things this series addresses is real, and it is rising. This booklet is not a condemnation of the men who calculated the cost and chose, in a given moment, the path that preserved the congregation, the budget, the reputation. Those were real decisions made under real pressure.

But the people in your congregation are looking at the government and wondering where God is. And the answer — the evidential, documented, century-spanning record of what God does when His people hold — is in the Book you preach from every Sunday. They need to hear it. Not as comfort. As evidence. The kind of evidence that builds the kind of hope that holds when the world pushes back and the despair is at the front door.

> *Hope without evidence is nothing to hope on. Our hope comes in remembering and teaching what happened when people trusted God unconditionally. If this is not coming from the pulpit, we are failing a basic tenet of the Bible — and cheating God's people out of understanding how great a God we serve.*

Preach it. All of it. The cost, the obedience, the outcome. Abraham. Joseph. Moses. David. Daniel. Esther. The early Church. And the families in your congregation who are right now being asked to stand firm — on the issues of life, on the definition of family, on the Biblical standard for raising a child — in a culture that has classified those convictions as a risk factor.

Those families need to know that the God who parted the sea is the God they serve. That knowledge comes from the pulpit. Or it does not come at all.

Recover the fear of the Lord. Not as a theological abstraction — as the lived reality of a congregation that has encountered the actual holiness of God and been changed by it. The Sunday/Monday gap closes when Sunday produces something Monday cannot contain. That is what the ekklesia in full operation looks like. That is what you were called to produce. Not a comfortable hour. An encounter.

> *The Johnson Amendment gave you a reason to stay silent. Fear gave you a motivation. But the people in your pews gave up the sovereign self and the validation economy and the world's version of love to come and find something better — and if what they find is a careful, inoffensive, culturally acceptable version of the God who died for them, you have not protected them from the culture. You have handed them to it.*

To the Person in the Pew

This booklet has spoken primarily to pastors and to people who shape institutions. But there is one more reader who deserves to be addressed directly — and this section is for them.

If you are sitting in a pew — or have stopped sitting in one — because something feels hollow and you could not name what it was: this is what it was. The Church was designed to give you three things simultaneously. The evidential record of what God has done, so your hope has a foundation that does not depend on how you feel today.

A community walking beside you in the present tense, so you are not carrying alone what you were never meant to carry alone. And the confident expectation of what God has promised — not a wish, not a feeling, but an anchor point that holds when the despair is at the front door.

If the Church you have experienced did not give you those three things — if Sunday produced an hour of music and a message designed not to challenge anyone, and Monday looked exactly like it would have without Sunday — that is not a failure of your faith. It is a description of an institution that lost its way. This booklet has spent eight chapters documenting how that happened. You are not the problem.
You are the reason the problem matters.

The same Church that accommodated its way to a standing appointment with a comfortable God is the Church that was designed to hand you something the world cannot give and cannot take away. That design has not changed. The standard has not moved. The God who authored it has not revised it.

And the ekklesia that returns to being what it was built to be — that is what you have been looking for, whether you knew to name it that way or not.

The Call to the Church

Entrusted Futures is not asking the Church to start something new. It is asking the Church to do what it has always done — applied now, at the earliest possible point, to the children who need it most.

Form the families. Not just willing families — prepared ones. Families walked through what it means to receive a child who has known instability. Surround the birth mother with the infrastructure she deserves — not as a program, but as the Church's most ancient calling: to care for the most vulnerable in the most consequential moment.

And speak. From the pulpit, in the community, to the culture, to the government that has spent seventy years reclassifying the Church's voice as a private religious preference without standing in the public square.

Right Now

Somewhere, right now, a child is spending another day inside a system this series has described in numbers. Nearly sixteen thousand of them will age out this year with no one. Not someday. This year. The system named the problem and called it progress. The Church is the call to do the thing the name was never going to do on its own.

The cycle does not end without the Church. The Church was the interruption God designed. It is still the interruption He is waiting to deploy. The only question — the one this booklet has been building toward since the epigraph — is whether the Church is willing to bear the wounds that interruption will cost.

We speak often of being His hands and feet. We have been reminded throughout this booklet that those hands and feet bear scars. The scars are not accidental. They are the cost of being the instrument God chose for the work He designed.

And the work — placing a child in a home with a fixed point, surrounding a birth mother with the infrastructure she deserves, forming the family that models what every generation after it needs to see — is not finished. It has barely begun.

The 250th anniversary of this nation's founding only became possible because people with deep moral conviction crossed an ocean for freedom in Christ.
They did not come for comfort.
They came for the right to seek God without interference.
They built what they built on a foundation they could only recognize, never author. And they bore the wounds that building it required —
because they understood that the scars are not evidence of failure.
They are evidence of faithfulness.

The same posture that produced the first year — convicted compassion, an unmoving standard, the willingness to bear the wounds — is the only thing that will produce the next 250. The Church was not an afterthought in that founding. It was the point. It remains the point. And the children aging out of a system that could not give them what only the Church carries are the evidence — documented, numbered, and increasing — of what happens when the Church forgets it.

> *God's design for the family was not a suggestion. It was the architecture of human flourishing — built to transmit faith, calling, and covenant from one generation to the next. When that architecture is intact, the transmission happens. When it is broken, what we measure in its place is the evidence of what the Church's silence cost.*

The answer is not complicated. It never was. A person who knows who God is, who they are in Him, what He designed them for, and what He asks of them in return has the foundation for everything else: family, community, liberty, purpose, Hope. The government cannot give that. No program can give that. Only the God who authored it — and the Church that holds the record of what happens when His people trust it — can give that.

That is the simple answer the Church has always carried. It did not require the complexity of government to produce. It does not require the complexity of government to restore.

One more thing, before you close this book…

You have read eight chapters about what was lost. You know the sequence. You know the cost. You know what the Church carries that nothing else can replace. None of that matters if it stays information.

So do one thing today. Not someday — today. If you are a pastor, decide what you will say this Sunday that you have not said before. If you are a family, find out what the next step toward saying yes actually looks like. If you have resources, decide what you will give and when. If you are the person in the pew who finally understood what was missing, tell one other person what you just read. Not the whole argument. Just the part that landed. Let it move.

The children in this series are not waiting for a movement. They are waiting for one family, one pastor, one decision, made today, by someone who read this and did not let it stay information.

We have been given a Hope that gives life — both now and forever. If we do not deliver this to those in need, we fail at giving the very best solution for those who are hurting, those who are lost, those who are aging out of a system that could not give them what only God can.

HIS Kingdom Come.

HIS Will Be Done.

Founder, Entrusted Futures

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

entrustedfutures.com

Entrusted Futures

A different kind of adoption organization —
built on a standard the system cannot provide,
funded to last longer than any of us will

The fourth and final volume in the Overwritten series

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures · Matthew 6 Ministry · The Entrusted Futures Foundation

A Personal Word Before You Read

What this volume is — and what it is for

The three booklets that precede this one made a case. They documented what has been lost, why it was lost, and what it costs when it stays lost. And at the close of each one, they pointed toward the same answer: families, the Church, and a standard that does not move.

This volume is different. This one is not an argument. It is an introduction.

Entrusted Futures is the organization I founded to put the answer into practice — to build the infrastructure that gives a birth mother a real choice, gives a qualified family real hope, and funds the gap between the two so that money is never the reason a child does not find a loving home. The three booklets in this series explained why that matters. This one explains what it looks like.

> *We do not place a child.*
> *We participate in what God is already doing.*

If you have read the other three volumes, this one will feel like arriving somewhere. If this is the first thing you have picked up from this series, it is written to stand on its own — to introduce you to an organization, explain how it works, and invite you to be part of what it is building. Either way, welcome.

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures

Where We Started

The question that would not stop moving backward

Entrusted Futures began with a question that kept moving.

Every time we asked where we could have intervened earlier to change a child's outcome, the answer moved backward. High school pointed to junior high. Junior high pointed to elementary school. Elementary pointed to the home before school ever started. And eventually the answer arrived at the moment before the family even existed — the decision a birth mother is making right now, without the support she deserves and without a family she knows exists to receive her child.

That moment — the decision, the uncertainty, the absence of infrastructure around a woman who may want her child but genuinely does not know how to provide for them — is where Entrusted Futures chose to stand. Not because it is the easiest place to work. Because it is the earliest place where a different outcome is still possible.

> *Adoption in America costs between thirty thousand and fifty thousand dollars through a traditional agency. That price does not exist because placement is that expensive. It exists because the system was built around billing structures that pass every cost to the adoptive family. We rebuilt the model. We own the agency as a nonprofit. Our legal costs are structured differently than the traditional per-placement billing model. We draw from a permanent Foundation endowment to cover the gap between what a qualified family can contribute and what placement actually costs. The family contribution target is under ten thousand dollars.*

The barrier we removed was financial. The standard we kept.

Because the financial model is only one part of what makes this different. The other part — the part that makes Entrusted Futures unlike anything else operating in this space — is the foundation it stands on. And that foundation begins with the Church.

The Church at the Center

Why the pastor is not just a reference — and what that changes

Most adoption organizations are secular institutions that welcome families of faith. Entrusted Futures is a faith-based organization that places the Church — the local congregation, the pastor, the community of believers — at the operational center of everything it does.

That is not a statement about preference. It is a statement about design. The three booklets in this series make the case at length for why the Church is the only institution with a two-thousand-year track record of actually doing what adoption requires: forming families, holding them accountable, surrounding them with community, and transmitting the standard that gives a child a fixed point. Entrusted Futures was built to run on that track record rather than try to replicate it through secular alternatives.

How a Family Enters the Process

A family begins the Entrusted Futures process through their pastor. This is not a bureaucratic requirement. It is a theological one.

A pastor who will stand behind a family's readiness has watched that family in real life — through conflict, through hardship, through the ordinary daily faithfulness that a form cannot capture and an interview cannot verify. His endorsement is not a character reference. It is a pastoral testimony. And a family willing to begin this process through their pastor has already demonstrated something important: they understand that receiving a child is a calling, not a consumer decision.

The pastor referral is the primary and preferred entry point. But Entrusted Futures receives families, young parents, and birth mothers through any avenue that connects a child with a family prepared to receive them according to God's plan for that child's life. The Church and the pastor are the primary focus of our work — not because other paths are unwelcome, but because the pastoral connection produces the kind of preparation and accountability that no other entry point replicates.

The pastor who refers a family does not step away after the referral. He becomes part of the community that surrounds the placement — the ekklesia that was already surrounding this family before the child arrived, and does not leave when the hard days come.

The Entrusted Score — Preparation, Not Gatekeeping

After a pastoral referral, two independent assessors evaluate the family across five dimensions. This is called the Entrusted Score — and it is important to understand what it is for.

It is not a gatekeeping mechanism. It is a preparation tool. The goal is not to disqualify families. The goal is to surface what a family needs to address, grow through, or understand before a child arrives — not after. The five dimensions are:

Character and Covenant — the evidence of a life lived with integrity over time. Not perfection, but consistency. The pattern of covenant-keeping under pressure.

Financial Stewardship — not wealth, but the responsible management of whatever resources God has entrusted to this family.

Faith and Worldview — the theological foundation of the home. A family with a fixed point can give a child a fixed point. That is the standard.

Community and Church Support — not just people who know the family's name, but people who know their story. That community becomes the child's community too — the first experience of belonging to something larger than a household.

National Vision — the understanding that this placement is not only about this child. It is about the generation that child will raise, and the generation after that. Every family that says yes to this process is participating in something larger than a single placement — a generational call to re-establish the Church, the Church body, and the Biblical principles that gave this nation its foundation. A family that grasps that scope approaches the calling differently than a family thinking only of the immediate. They are not just opening a home. They are planting something that will grow past every horizon they can see from here.

Two independent assessors means no single perspective controls the outcome. Where assessors agree, the process moves forward. Where they differ, conversation deepens. The Entrusted Score is honest because it has to be — a family that is not ready is better served by knowing that before a child arrives than after.

The Prayer Committee — Where Human Process Yields

When a potential match between a child and a family is identified, it does not go immediately to a decision. It goes first to a standing prayer committee — a group of people whose sole purpose is to seek divine confirmation of a specific match.

This is not a selection committee. It does not weigh options or rank candidates. It prays. It seeks the confirmation that no human process, however thorough, can substitute for.

> *We do not select a match. We confirm one. The difference is the difference between a placement made by the best available human judgment and a placement made in submission to the God who was already writing this child's story before any of us were in the room.*

The pastoral foundation, the Entrusted Score, the prayer committee — together they produce something the existing system cannot: a family that has been genuinely prepared, genuinely confirmed, and genuinely surrounded. That is what the child arrives into.

What a Placement Actually Is

The human reality underneath the process

The process described in the previous section is accurate. But process language can make something profoundly human sound technical. So let us set the steps aside for a moment and talk about what is actually happening.

A birth mother is making a decision right now. Not in the abstract — right now, today, somewhere, a woman is carrying a child she does not know how to provide for, in circumstances she did not fully choose, wondering whether there is any path forward that is not simply loss.

Entrusted Futures places itself in that moment. Not to pressure. Not to persuade. To offer what was not there before: a real family, genuinely prepared, prayer-confirmed, waiting — a family that was not assembled for this moment but formed by years of faithful living in a community that already knows them.

> *When a birth mother chooses placement through Entrusted Futures, she is not handing her child to a system. She is entrusting her child to a family that a pastor vouched for, that two independent assessors evaluated, that a prayer committee confirmed. A family that will introduce this child to the God who knew them before they were born.*

And then there is the child.

God placed a calling in that child before they were formed. Not a vague potential, but a specific purpose written before a name was given — a calling the world was not finished needing yet. That calling needed a life through which God's will could be spoken.

And it required the right environment: a family, a community, and a God introduced not as an abstraction but as the daily reality of the home they live in, to give that calling the conditions it needs to emerge and grow.

This is what is at stake in every placement. Not just a life preserved — a calling God already spoke, given the home it needs to become what God intended it to be. This is what abortion takes away.

And this is what Entrusted Futures is building toward: not simply the rescue of a life, but the restoration of a purpose the world has not yet finished receiving.

A child placed through Entrusted Futures does not simply find a house. They find a home where the standard does not shift with the culture, where Biblical manhood and womanhood are modeled in daily life, where conflict is resolved rather than abandoned, where failure is met with repentance rather than denial, where God is not an abstraction but the operating reality of the household they now belong to.

That child wakes up every morning with a fixed point. They grow up seeing what a covenant family looks like from the inside. And when the time comes for them to build a family of their own, they know what they are looking for — not because someone handed them a checklist, but because they lived inside the standard long enough for it to become the expectation they carry into every relationship that follows.

Their children will never know the inside of a foster care system. The generation after that will not either. The cycle that was broken before this child was born does not continue.

The three booklets that precede this volume each defend one of the three rights the Declaration names. Life — the calling God authored in the womb. Liberty — the freedom of the family to pursue that calling without a state that did not author it claiming the authority to override it. And Happiness — the pursuit of divine calling, the freedom to walk in step with the God who made you, available only when the Church is free to speak and the family is free to hold the standard. What Entrusted Futures builds is the infrastructure through which all three become possible for a child who would otherwise have had none of them. A child placed through this process does not merely find a home. They find the conditions for the Life God authored, the Liberty to pursue it, and the Happiness — the divine calling — that gives every other thing its meaning.

The goal was never to find a child a house. The goal was to find a child a family that will hand them the one thing that gives every other thing meaning — the unchanged standard, the Word that does not return void, the God who is still writing long after every reasonable justification has been offered and accepted and proven insufficient and offered again.

> *The placement is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of a different story — one that runs forward through every generation that family produces, long after any single donor has given, any single pastor has referred, any single chapter of this series has been read and set down.*

The Endowment

What a gift to the Foundation actually does — and why it lasts

Most charitable giving works the same way: you give, a program spends what you gave, the program produces a result, and next year the same need requires the same gift again. The giving is good, helpful and very often producing amazing results. But it does not compound. It does not outlast the giver and it does have a finite point.

The Entrusted Futures Foundation endowment model works differently. Permanently differently.

The Principal Never Leaves

A gift to the Foundation endowment becomes permanent capital. The gift itself — the principal — is never spent. It is invested. Only the earnings generated by that investment fund placements. Which means the gift does not produce one result and disappear. It produces results every year, indefinitely, for as long as the Foundation exists.

1.33

placements funded every year for every million dollars held in the endowment — not spent, only earning — in perpetuity

Entrusted Futures Foundation · endowment model

A million dollars placed in the Foundation today funds 1.33 placements this year. And 1.33 more next year. And 1.33 more in twenty-five years. And 1.33 more long after the donor who gave it has gone home to the God they gave it for. The principal stays. The earnings fund children's placement. The work continues without end.

The Parable That Is Not a Metaphor

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus told the parable of the talents — a master who entrusted his servants with resources before departing, and returned to find that some had put those resources to work while others had buried them. The master's response to the ones who invested was the same: "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much."

The parable is not a metaphor about attitude. It is an operational model for the stewardship of real resources in a Kingdom that actually expects a return. The question it asks is not how much you have. It is what you do with what is already in your hands.

The Business of the Kingdom, is Kingdom Business

> *A gift to the Entrusted Futures Foundation endowment is exactly the return the parable describes. Resources put to work immediately. Compounding across generations. Producing a return that outlasts the giver — because the principal never leaves, and the work never stops.*

Any Gift, Every Year

There is no gift too small to matter here — and no gift too large to be needed.

Every dollar placed in the Foundation endowment begins working immediately. Not toward a fraction of a single placement that disappears when the work is done, but toward a permanent, compounding contribution to the work that continues every year the Foundation stands. The person who gives ten dollars and the person who gives ten million are participating in exactly the same thing — they are simply entering the work at different scales. Both gifts outlast the giver. Both keep working. Both fund children who will grow up and raise families who will never know the crisis their placement interrupted.

We are not asking anyone to solve the problem alone. We are asking everyone to carry the portion God has placed in their hands — because the portion in your hands is not an accident, and neither is the moment you are reading this.

The person who writes a check for a hundred thousand dollars is not more important to this work than the person who gives ten thousand. What matters is not the amount. What matters is the faithfulness — the decision to put what is already in your hands to work, immediately, in the direction of something that will outlast all of us.

The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) was not a story about the servants who had the most. It was a story about what each servant did with what they were given. The master's response was the same to both who invested — not "well done, you gave the most," but "well done, good and faithful servant." Faithful. That is the standard. Not large.

We are building this permanently.

We are asking you to build it with us — with whatever is already in your hands.

Four Doors

What your yes looks like from where you are standing

This volume has described what Entrusted Futures is, how it works, what a placement means in human terms, and what a gift to the Foundation actually does. Now I simply want to speak directly to you — to the specific person holding this page, with the specific capacity you are holding it with.

There are four doors into this work. One of them is yours.

If You Are a Birth Mother

You may be in the middle of an impossible moment, or you may know someone who is. Either way, this is the most important thing this page will say: **you are not alone, and there is real care on the other side of a real decision.**

Entrusted Futures exists to give you what the system rarely provides — a real family, genuinely prepared and prayer-confirmed, waiting for the child you are carrying. A process that may cost you nothing financially. A community that will not disappear after the placement is made. And a God who knew this child before either of you did, and has not stopped working on their behalf.

The first step is simply a conversation. Nothing more is asked of you than that. We are here. entrustedfutures.com

If You Are a Family

You have felt something — a pull, a question you keep returning to, a conversation with your spouse that has never quite resolved. Maybe you have talked about adoption for years without knowing where to start. Maybe the cost seemed like a door that was closed. But you are still thinking about it. That matters.

God does not place a longing in a heart without a reason. The pull you have felt — however long you have carried it, however many times you have talked yourself out of it — is worth taking seriously. Not because every feeling is a calling, but because this one has not gone away. And the God who places callings also prepares the people He places them in.

Begin with your pastor. That is the first step — not a form, not an application, not a fee. A conversation with the person who already knows you, whose endorsement opens the process and

whose community will surround you through it. The family contribution target is under ten thousand dollars. The Foundation seeks to carry the rest. The preparation is real, the confirmation is prayerful, and the placement is permanent.

Talk to your pastor. Ask him to reach out to us on your behalf.

If You Are a Pastor

You have sat across from families who were ready for something more. You have watched marriages that model what a covenant home looks like. You have seen people in your congregation who have the character, the faith, the community, and the capacity to receive a child and give them a fixed point — and you have wondered whether there was a pathway worthy of what you have seen in them.

Entrusted Futures is asking for your partnership in the most direct sense: your testimony on behalf of families you know. Not a generic endorsement of an organization — a specific pastoral witness to a specific family's readiness. Your referral is a key entry point. Your community becomes the ongoing support. Your voice is not a formality in this process. It is foundational to it.

We would welcome the chance to explain the process, answer your questions, and talk about what this kind of partnership could look like in your specific context. entrustedfutures.com

If You Are a Donor

You have resources and you are asking what they are for. That question — asked honestly, without the answer already assumed — is exactly where faithful stewardship begins.

A gift to the Entrusted Futures Foundation endowment does not fund a program for a year. It funds placements in perpetuity — children placed, every year, long after you are gone. The principal stays. The earnings fund Kingdom effort. Your gift keeps working here after your first breath in Heaven, after the generation you belonged to has passed to the next, after the world has moved on in ways none of us can predict.

We are building this permanently. We are asking you to build it with us. The return the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) describes is not a metaphor. It is an invitation — to put what is in your hands to work, immediately, in the direction of something that will outlast all of us. All of what you leave behind remains actively working for a nation, a family, and a child.

Somewhere, right now, God is fearfully and wonderfully knitting together child – who has a calling and a destiny written into their soul waiting for the moment to live out that purpose. Somewhere, right now, a God-fearing family is on their knees asking God for the miracle of life to be added to their lives and complete the calling they seek…
Entrusted Futures exists for those two stories to meet.

We do not place a child.
We participate in what God is already doing.

HIS Kingdom Come.

HIS Will Be Done.

Founder, Entrusted Futures

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

entrustedfutures.com

THE UNBROKEN LINE

From Genesis to the Founding Documents —
the theological and historical record of freedom in America

A Freedom Addendum to the Overwritten Series

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures · Matthew 6 Ministry · The Entrusted Futures Foundation

The Statement

Four words that carry six thousand years

In 1776, a committee of five men produced a document that would change the world. They had debated and revised and argued across weeks of summer heat in Philadelphia. And when they were done, the argument they had built — the reason a people had the right to separate from the most powerful empire on earth, to form their own government, to declare themselves free — came down to four words.

Endowed by their Creator.

Not granted by a government. Not created by legislation. Not recognized by a court. Not established by a revolution. Endowed — breathed in, stamped on, written into the nature of every human being by the God who made them.

These four words are not decorative language. They are the entire legal argument in compressed form. The reason the rights being declared cannot be revoked: because no government was their source, no government has the authority to take them back.

The question this document exists to answer is where those four words came from. Not rhetorically. Historically. Theologically. What is the documented chain of conviction and sacrifice that carried the idea of God-given freedom from its origin to Jefferson's pen? What did it cost those who carried it? Who tried to stop it? How did God use the resistance? And why does it matter — now, in this generation — that the Church understands what it has been carrying and what it is being asked to carry still?

This is not the story of a human tradition. Human traditions develop, drift, and die. What this document traces is something different: God's original design for His people, pressed forward through six thousand years of opposition, arriving at its fullest political expression in documents that not one single founding figure ever used to contradict the existence of God or His design for mankind. Not one.

The people who carried this design across the centuries did not invent it. They received it. Recognized it. And paid, in many cases, everything they had to pass it forward.

The line begins at creation. Before any king. Before any law. Before any document. In the moment when God breathed into man the one thing that made every other thing possible.

Design

What God built before any government existed

In the Beginning

Genesis 1:26-27 · Genesis 2:7

God creates man in His own image. Not as a subject. Not as a resource. As an image-bearer. That single act of creation is the first and most fundamental statement of human dignity and freedom ever made — not because man earned it, not because a government granted it, but because God made him that way.

A God who wanted genuine fellowship with the beings He created had to make them free. Free enough to choose. Free enough to refuse. Free enough to love rather than merely to obey. You cannot love what you cannot choose. You cannot choose what you are not free to refuse. The freedom God built into man at creation was not an accident or an afterthought. It was the design — the necessary condition for the relationship God was building toward from the first breath He breathed into Adam.

Rights are not a human invention. They are a divine endowment. They were not discovered by philosophers, established by charters, or conferred by revolutions. They were spoken into existence at creation and stamped onto every human being made in God's image. Before any king sat on a throne. Before any court convened. Before any nation was founded. The freedom of the people who eventually signed the founding documents of America was already settled — before any of those documents existed, before any of those people were born, before any nation on that continent had been imagined. God had already spoken it into existence.

Freedom is not a political invention. It is a divine attribute. God built freedom into the beings He made in His image because genuine love requires freedom. That is where this story begins. Everything that follows is the long account of what happened when that freedom was exercised, abused, lost, recovered, carried, and finally expressed in the documents the whole world now calls the foundation of human rights.

Why Liberty — The Nature of What God Was Building

2 Corinthians 3:17 · Galatians 5:1 · Romans 8:2 · Isaiah 61:1 · Luke 4:18 · Leviticus 25

The question the history cannot answer by itself is the one that must be answered first.

Not that God granted liberty to His creation. The historical record documents that with precision across six thousand years. The question that precedes the history is why. Why is liberty God's design rather than a concession He made, a political arrangement He blessed, or a human idea He decided to work with? Why does it keep asserting itself through every attempt to suppress it — through kings and institutions and fires and leaking ships — as though something in the fabric of creation itself refuses to let it stay buried?

The answer is not found in political philosophy. It is found in the nature of what God was building from the first breath He breathed into Adam.

What God Was Building Toward

God was not building a performance system. He was not constructing a program that would produce correct outputs if the right inputs were applied. He was not designing subjects who would comply, servants who would execute, or mechanisms that would function. He was building toward something that required something none of those things can produce.

He was building toward love.

And love — genuine love, the kind the Scripture describes from beginning to end — cannot be produced by compulsion. It cannot be commanded into existence. It cannot be manufactured by the right conditions, incentivized by the right rewards, or enforced by the right authority. God was not building toward a locked room and calling it fellowship. He was building toward a relationship that could be walked away from — because only that kind of relationship, freely chosen and freely sustained, is the one He was after from the beginning.

This is not a theological abstraction. It is the most practical reality in the nature of relationship. God was not building toward compliance — He was building toward response. And genuine response requires genuine freedom. The son who returns because the door was always open means something the son who was never permitted to leave cannot. The worship that costs something — that is chosen over alternatives the worshiper genuinely has — is the worship that reaches the heart of God. He did not design a locked room and call it fellowship. He designed a relationship that could be walked away from — because only that kind of relationship, freely chosen and freely sustained, is the one He was after from the beginning.

Liberty is not what God gave His creation in addition to everything else. It is the condition without which everything else collapses. You cannot have genuine love without freedom to choose. You cannot have genuine worship without freedom to refuse. You cannot have genuine covenant without two parties who are genuinely free to enter it — or walk away. God built liberty into His creation because He was building toward a relationship that required it.

The Image and the Attribute

When Genesis says God created man in His image — imago Dei — it is saying something more specific than that man resembles God in some general way. It is saying man participates in the attributes that make God who He is. Not all of them. Not equally. But genuinely. Man thinks because God thinks. Man creates because God creates. Man loves because God loves. Man chooses because God chooses.

And God chooses freely.

That is the attribute at the center of everything. God is not constrained by His own creation. He is not subject to forces outside Himself. He acts from the fullness of His own nature — from love, from purpose, from will. And He stamped the genuine freedom to choose — and the dignity of being accountable for what was chosen — in a created, finite, derivative form — onto every human being He made in His image.

This is why liberty is not a human invention that God blessed after the fact. It is the genuine freedom to choose — and the dignity of being accountable for what was chosen — that God built into His creation because He was making image-bearers, not mechanisms. The freedom that belongs to God by nature belongs to man by design — not equally, not without limit, not without accountability — but genuinely, really, and inseparably from what it means to bear the image of the God who made him.

To suppress the liberty of a human being is therefore not merely a political offense. It is an assault on what God put there. It is an attempt to unmake what God made — to reduce an image-bearer to a mechanism, to take what was designed for love and force it into function. Every tyrant who has ever lived has been doing the same thing. Every institution that has ever suppressed the freedom of conscience has been doing the same thing. Every system that has ever treated human beings as resources rather than image-bearers has been doing the same thing. Not merely

committing a crime. Committing a blasphemy. Attempting to erase from a human being the capacity God placed in him at creation.

Where the Spirit of the Lord Is

The apostle Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, makes the connection explicit that the history of freedom keeps implying: "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

This is not a verse about political freedom. It is a description of what the presence of God produces. Where God is genuinely present — not merely referenced, not merely invoked as decoration — liberty follows. Not as a consequence He adds. As a characteristic He carries. As the atmosphere that the presence of the living God naturally creates because liberty is native to His nature and restoring it is native to His mission.

Paul makes the same point in Galatians with unmistakable directness: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1). Not for improved behavior. Not for religious compliance. Not for social order. For freedom. The purpose of the liberation is the liberty itself — because the liberty is the restoration of the image, the recovery of the relationship, the return to the condition God designed from the beginning.

And in Romans, Paul names the interior reality that political liberty alone can never reach: "The law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). The bondage Paul has in mind here is not a king or an institution. It is the bent nature — a will turned inward toward self rather than outward toward God, that cannot consistently choose what it knows is true. Sin does not only produce bad behavior. It produces a person who is not fully free — who knows the good and cannot reliably choose it, who is pulled toward what destroys rather than what restores. What Christ liberates is not merely the record of guilt. It is the nature itself. The genuine capacity for genuine choice — restored. The image — renewed. The relationship — rebuilt.

This is why the Cross is the theological center of everything the historical chain in this document traces. The political expressions of liberty — the charters, the translations, the declarations — are all downstream of what the torn veil declared. God reaching down. The barrier removed. Access restored.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." That is not a political slogan. It is a description of what the presence of God produces wherever He arrives — because liberty is native to His nature, and restoring it is native to His mission. Every expression of genuine freedom in human history is downstream of this reality. The Spirit moves. The liberty follows.

That is the pattern six thousand years of history confirms.

God Built It Into the Calendar

One of the most remarkable and least remembered expressions of God's commitment to liberty is that He built it into the rhythm of time itself.

In Leviticus 25, God gives Israel a structure unlike anything in the ancient world. Every seventh year — the Sabbath year — the land rests, debts are released, and slaves go free. Every fiftieth year — the Year of Jubilee — everything resets. Land returns to its original families. Slaves are released without condition. Debts are cancelled. The economic and social accumulations of half a century are unwound and the whole order is restored to its original design.

This is not social policy. This is theology expressed as calendar. God was declaring — with a precision that left no room for misunderstanding — that no human system of bondage is permanent. Liberty is the baseline condition He intends for His people. The tendency of human systems to accumulate power, concentrate wealth, and reduce human beings to economic units is a drift away from His design that He will not allow to become final. The Jubilee was God's built-in resistance to the Fall's tendency to produce hierarchy, exploitation, and bondage.

The trumpet that announced the Jubilee was blown on the Day of Atonement. That is not coincidence. Forgiveness and freedom arrive together. Atonement and liberty are part of the same movement of God toward His creation. The year of the Lord's favor begins when the debt is cancelled and the captive goes free.

The Mission of God Expressed in the Person of Christ

Jesus stands in the synagogue at Nazareth — at the very beginning of His public ministry, before any miracle, before any sermon — and opens the scroll of Isaiah to a specific passage. He reads it aloud. Then He sits down and says four words that shake the room: "Today this is fulfilled."

The passage He chose was this: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18–19, from Isaiah 61:1–2).

He was claiming the Jubilee mantle. He was announcing that what the trumpet had declared every fiftieth year in Israel — freedom, restoration, the year of the Lord's favor — was now arriving in its fullest and final form in His person and His mission. The liberty God had been building toward since the first breath in Eden, had been declaring through the prophets, had been building into the calendar at Sinai — was now standing in the synagogue in Nazareth in human flesh, announcing that the wait was over.

This is not a chapter in the history of freedom. It is the source of it. The one in whom all the previous expressions of God's commitment to liberty were moving toward, and from whom all subsequent expressions flow. The torn veil is the completion of this announcement. The early Church working out the implications of equal access to God is the application of it. Tyndale dying so the Word could reach ordinary hands is a distant echo of it. The Pilgrims crossing an ocean to worship without a crown's interference is a downstream ripple of it.

Liberty is not a political tradition that God happened to bless. It is the mission of God — announced at creation, sustained through the prophets, built into the calendar, fulfilled at the Cross, and pressed forward through every generation since by the Spirit who brings it wherever He goes.

The year of the Lord's favor was not a Levitical tradition. It was a promise. And when Jesus stood in Nazareth and said "today this is fulfilled" — He was not announcing a political program. He was announcing the arrival of the one in whom every previous expression of God's commitment to liberty had been pointing. The freedom the Pilgrims crossed an ocean for, the freedom the Founders called unalienable, the freedom six thousand years of documented history has been pressing toward — it was always His to give. He gave it at the Cross. Everything else is the world working out what that means.

The Bondage Liberty Rescues From

One final piece of the foundation matters before the history begins — what liberty actually rescues from.

Political freedom matters enormously. The history that follows documents what it costs and what it produces when it is honored and when it is suppressed. But political freedom alone has never been enough. A people who are politically free but inwardly enslaved will use their freedom to rebuild the very bondages they escaped from. The history of every revolution that produced a new tyranny is the history of people who achieved political liberty without the interior liberty that only the Spirit of God produces.

This is why the Church is the essential institution in the history of freedom that this document traces. Not because it holds political power — often it has held none. But because it carries the only thing that produces genuine interior liberty: the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which restores the image, renews the will, and releases human beings from a nature bent toward self into the freedom of a nature redirected toward God and toward the relationship He designed from the beginning.

The freedom God has been pressing forward through six thousand years of history is not finally about charters or constitutions or declarations. Those are the political expressions of something that begins further back and reaches further forward. It begins in the nature of the God who made man in His image and refused to be satisfied with anything less than genuine love freely given. It reaches forward to the ultimate freedom — the fellowship of eternity with the God who paid everything to make it possible.

Every expression of liberty documented in this addendum is a signpost pointing in that direction.

Liberty survives every attempt to suppress it because it is not a human tradition. It is a divine design. It keeps asserting itself through kings and institutions and fires and leaking ships because the God who designed it has not changed His mind about what He was building toward. He was building toward love. Freely given. Genuinely chosen. Eternally sustained. That is where the line has always been going. And it is not finished yet.

The Fall — Freedom Misused, Not Abandoned

Genesis 3

Man chose the sovereign self over the Creator. The image was marred but not destroyed. The freedom God gave was exercised in the wrong direction — not toward fellowship but toward independence, not toward the God who made them free but toward the one who promised they could be their own gods. That promise has been made to every generation since. It is the oldest lie in human history. And it has been accepted, in one form or another, by every generation that forgot where its freedom came from.

God did not abandon what He had built. He did not revise the design. He set out to restore it — through covenant, through the prophets, through sacrifice, through the Cross — paying at every step a higher price than the step before, until the price required was everything. The entire arc of Scripture from Genesis 3 forward is that pursuit. Not God adjusting to a setback. God recovering what was His.

Every government in human history is, in some sense, a response to the *Fall*. Structures of law and order exist because fallen man, left to his own devices, will consume his neighbor. But government is not the source of freedom or rights. Government is the evidence of the *Fall*. Freedom is the evidence of creation. And the moment any government claims to be the source of the rights it administers — the moment it acts as though freedom is its gift to give or withhold — it has confused the Fall with creation. It has placed itself in the position of the God it was created to serve under.

The Covenant — God Builds the Framework

Exodus 19-20 · Genesis 9, 12, 15, 17 · 2 Samuel 7

Through a series of covenants — with Noah, with Abraham, with Moses, with David — God builds the framework of rights, responsibilities, and accountability that governs human community. These are not merely religious arrangements. They are the documented record of God constructing, across centuries, the moral and legal architecture on which every just civilization in human history has since been built.

Consider who received the Law at Sinai. Not a nation of nobles. Not a nation with legal standing in any court in the ancient world. A nation of former slaves — people who had been property, people whose children had been killed by decree, people who had spent four hundred years being told that their lives had no inherent value beyond what they could produce for Pharaoh. And God gave

them a framework of protections so radical that no government in the ancient world had conceived of anything like it. Not because they had earned it.

Because He had made them in His image — and the image did not disappear simply because Pharaoh had spent four hundred years pretending it had.

The ten commandments are noted here in their full form. The work of this document is to show how they function not merely as religious obligations but as a comprehensive declaration of rights — the most radical such declaration the ancient world had ever seen. Those carrying the greatest weight for the argument of this series are developed fully. All ten belong.

I. You shall have no other gods before Me

The authority of God placed above every human institution, every government, every king, every court that has ever convened or ever will. There is a law above your law. A standard above your standard. An authority you do not have the standing to overrule. Every document in the chain this addendum traces rests on this commandment.

II. You shall not make for yourself an idol

The prohibition against placing any institution, any government, any ideology in the position that belongs to God alone. The totalitarian regimes of the 20th century violated this commandment. They made the state a god. And this commandment had always named what follows when that occurs.

III. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain

The sanctity of oath, covenant, and word. Rights issued by the state and then revoked by the state are oaths taken in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath

The right of every person to rest, to exist outside of economic productivity, to be more than what they can produce. This commandment declares that a human being's worth is not determined by output. It is the direct theological refutation of every argument that assigns value to a human life based on usefulness — the utilitarian logic that underlies abortion, the foster care incentive structure that rewards failure, and the euthanasia argument that measures life by quality of production. God commanded rest because He was declaring that image-bearers are not defined by what they produce.

V. Honor your father and your mother

The authority of the family placed above the authority of the state. The parent's authority over their child recognized as pre-political and therefore beyond the reach of any legislature.

VI. You shall not murder

The right of every person not to be killed, regardless of their usefulness to the state, their productivity, their age, or their stage of development.

The Hebrew word ratsach {רָצַח}covers the deliberate, unauthorized taking of any human life. The commandment does not qualify by age. It does not qualify by stage of development. It does not qualify by whether the life is wanted or convenient or viable by someone else's definition. Every image-bearer is covered. The American legal system's entire structure of murder statutes — degrees of murder, premeditation, intent, the presumption of innocence, the protection of the innocent from the powerful — traces directly to this commandment. Abortion is the powerful deciding the innocent does not qualify. The commandment does not grant that authority to anyone.

VII. You shall not commit adultery

The sanctity of covenant relationship and the integrity of the family unit the fifth commandment established as primary.

VIII. You shall not steal

The right of every person to the fruit of their own labor, their own property — a right no king and no government granted and therefore no king and no government can revoke.

IX. You shall not bear false witness

The right of every person not to be destroyed by lies, not to be convicted on fabricated testimony. This is the foundation of due process, the presumption of innocence, and the right to a fair trial — every procedural protection codified in the Massachusetts Body of Liberties in 1641 and the Bill of Rights in 1791.

X. You shall not covet

Rights are not contingent on the desires of the powerful. A man's right to what he built exists regardless of how much someone more powerful wants it. There is also a governmental application worth naming: when the state cultivates the desire for what others have built as the justification for taking it, it has made covetousness into public policy. The commandment addresses the desire that produces theft. A government that institutionalizes that desire and then uses legal process to act on it has not escaped the eighth commandment by changing the name of what it is doing.

These protections exist because God established them — not because any government recognized them. The men who wrote the Declaration of Independence did not invent the idea that rights exist above the authority of the state. They acknowledged a framework God had built at Sinai

three thousand years earlier. "**Endowed by their Creator**" is a direct citation of the source. And the source had been speaking for three millennia before Jefferson picked up his pen.

The commandments are not restrictions on human freedom. They are the declaration of it. Each one protects something God built into creation that no government ever had the authority to define, issue, or revoke.
*The Law given at Sinai is **not** the beginning of religious obligation.*
It is the beginning of the documented rights tradition — given to slaves, because God has always known that the people most in need of a declaration of rights are the people that power has decided don't have any.

The Prophets — Rights Defended Against Power

2 Samuel 12 · 1 Kings 21 · Amos 5:24

Before any charter. Before any court. Before any baron stood before any king and demanded he *acknowledge* a standard above his own will — the prophets of Israel were doing exactly that. Eight hundred years before Runnymede. In the throne rooms of the most powerful kings in the ancient world. Without armies. Without legal standing. With nothing but the Word of God and the conviction that it superseded the word of any king.

Nathan walked into the court of David and said plainly: what you did was murder and theft, and you are not above God's law. Elijah walked into the court of Ahab and said: you cannot take Naboth's vineyard. That man's right to what he built exists above your desire for it. A verdict produced by corrupt process does not become legitimate simply because it was officially pronounced.

Amos preached to a prosperous northern Israel that had made the oldest mistake available to a religious nation — it had confused God's patience with God's approval — that religious observance meant God's blessing. The sacrifices were being offered. The feasts were being observed. The songs were being sung. And the poor were being sold for a pair of sandals while justice was being perverted at the city gate.

God's response through Amos was not a call to balance the worship with a little more justice. It was a rejection of the worship entirely. "I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies."

The ritual without the righteousness was not imperfect worship. It was an offense. "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24) was not an invitation. It was an indictment of a nation that had learned to perform religion while abandoning the God it claimed to serve. God found it intolerable.

This was not the first time God made the same indictment — and it would not be the last. Eight hundred years after Amos, Jesus walked into the Temple courts in Jerusalem and found the same substitution in progress. The sacrifices were being offered. The feasts were being observed. And in the outer courts of the house of God, the poor were being charged exploitative rates to exchange their currency and purchase their sacrificial animals — the religious system extracting profit from the very people it was meant to serve.

Jesus did not offer a measured critique. He overturned the tables. He drove out the moneychangers. He quoted Isaiah: "My house shall be called a house of prayer — but you have made it a den of thieves."

The form of religion was intact. The substance had been hollowed out and replaced with commerce.

God found it intolerable in the eighth century BC when Amos named it.

He found it equally intolerable in 30 AD when He walked into the Temple and dealt with it Himself.

The pattern is not a historical curiosity. It is a warning to every religious institution in every generation that mistakes the performance of faith for its substance — and uses the language of God to protect interests that have nothing to do with Him.

And the prophets who preceded Him were doing the same work in the same Spirit. Nathan before David. Elijah before Ahab. Amos before a prosperous nation that had confused God's patience with God's approval. Each one standing before power with nothing but the Word of God and the conviction that it superseded the word of any king, any institution, or any religious establishment that had learned to serve itself in God's name.

The prophets were the earliest documented practitioners of the principle the barons would invoke at Runnymede and the Founders would invoke in Philadelphia: holding power accountable to a standard that power did not set and cannot revoke. They were not social activists. They were the

Church doing its most ancient work. And the kings who ignored them are remembered as the kings whose kingdoms fell.

Eight hundred years before Magna Carta, men with nothing but the Word of God were standing in throne rooms and telling kings they were wrong.
That is not a historical curiosity. That is the Church's oldest calling.
And it has never been rescinded.

For eight hundred years the prophets held the line. Then God did something no prophet had the authority to do. He did not send another messenger. He came Himself. And He removed the barrier entirely.

Defense

How God pressed His design forward through every attempt to stop it

The Cross & the Torn Veil

Matthew 27:51 · Acts 5:29 · Galatians 3:28

When Christ died on the Cross, the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom. Not from bottom to top — as a man would tear it. From top to bottom. By God. The barrier between fallen man and the holy God — the barrier that had required priests, sacrifices, and institutional mediation since Sinai — was removed. Not by man reaching up. By God reaching down.

That is not merely a religious event. The torn veil was a declaration about the basis of relationship between man and God. Access to God was now direct. Not earned through ritual. Not mediated through institution. Not granted by any human authority and therefore not revocable by any human authority.

The New Covenant fulfilled what the Old had pointed toward — and in fulfilling it, established that no king, no institution, and no court holds the authority to stand between a human being and the God who made them. That is the theological root of everything this document is tracing. Everything downstream of the Cross — the charters, the translations, the Compact, the Declaration — is an echo of what the torn curtain declared.

The early Church began working out the implications immediately. "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" — the most precise statement of the boundary between governmental authority and divine authority ever compressed into a single sentence. Caesar does not get what belongs to God.

And every human being, bearing God's image, belongs first to God. The early Church established a domain the state cannot enter. Not because the Church was politically powerful — it was not. Because every person bears the image of **THE** God whose authority supersedes Caesar's.

That is the theological root of political freedom. And "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female" (Galatians 3:28) — the most radical rights statement in the ancient world, abolishing every hierarchy the ancient world used to determine who counted and who did not. Not by legislation. Not by revolution. By declaration. This sentence anticipated the Declaration of Independence by seventeen hundred years.

The veil was not torn by man reaching up. It was torn by God reaching down. The barrier the Fall had erected was removed. Not earned. Not mediated. Not granted by any institution and therefore not revocable by any institution. Every person. Direct access. On the same terms. That is not a political statement. It is the most radical relational declaration ever made. And every political expression of human freedom that followed is downstream of it.

From the Church to the Charters

Charter of Liberties, 1100 · Magna Carta, 1215

For a thousand years the Church carried the conviction the Cross had established — through the fall of Rome, through the rise of medieval kingdoms, through every negotiation between the authority of God and the authority of kings. In 1100, that conviction produced its first English legal document.

King Henry I seized the throne after his brother's sudden death. His claim was contested. The barons did not accept him. The Church, under Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury, was hostile — not from institutional self-interest but from theological conviction rooted in Augustine's framework: *earthly authority is real but derivative, delegated from God and conditional on operating within His moral order*. There is a law above the king's law. The Church exists to hold that standard especially when the king would rather it did not.

King Henry issued the Charter of Liberties to secure his throne. A calculated political maneuver by a frightened king. And yet — God used it. The principle the Church had been carrying since the Cross had found its way, through political necessity and a frightened king, into the first English legal document to acknowledge that even a king answers to a higher standard.

One hundred and fifteen years later, King John of England — who had lost Normandy to France, quarreled with the Pope, been excommunicated, and exhausted the patience of every powerful man in England — was forced to a field at Runnymede by barons who had seized London and would accept nothing less than his seal on a document they had already written.

The barons were not inventing new rights. They were invoking the Charter of Liberties as existing precedent — recognition, not invention — and demanding that John acknowledge in writing what every king had always been bound by whether he acknowledged it or not.

What the Magna Carta established was not a list of new protections but the first formal acknowledgment in English law that the king himself is subject to the law.

No free man shall be seized, imprisoned, stripped of his rights, outlawed, or exiled except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land. To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice. These were not requests. They were declarations — that rights exist above the king's will, that justice is not the king's to withhold, that the powerful cannot simply take what they want from the powerless and call it governance.

The Church had been preaching this since the Cross. The prophets had been enforcing it since Sinai. Magna Carta was the moment it became English law.

John sealed the document on June 15, 1215. The same day he sent a message to Pope Innocent III asking him to annul it. The Pope called it "shameful, demeaning, illegal and unjust." John died the following year. His regents reissued it to end the civil war that followed. The document survived its author's attempt to destroy it because it acknowledged something true that outlasted the man who signed it.

This is the pattern God was working through every step: a king under pressure acknowledging a standard he did not create. No one in that field at Runnymede was thinking about a declaration to be written five centuries later in Philadelphia. But God was building the chain link by link, using frightened kings and their political calculations to advance what none of them fully understood they were acknowledging.

William Tyndale — The Word Reaches Ordinary Hands

1526 English New Testament · 1528 Obedience of a Christian Man · 1536 Martyrdom

The charters held the principle in law. But a principle in a document is only as free as the people who can read the source behind it. The Scripture itself was locked in Latin. Controlled by institutions. Available only to those the institutions chose to permit. Then God raised up a man who decided that was going to change. And the institution called it heresy.

William Tyndale produced the first printed English New Testament translated directly from the Greek in 1526. The institutional Church's reaction was immediate: copies were burned publicly,

Tyndale was hunted across Europe. The word deployed against him — heresy — was not a theological conclusion. It was a control mechanism.

The institutional word for a simple and terrifying reality: if ordinary people can read the Scripture in their own language, they can compare what the institution says with what the text actually says. "Heresy" was the charge that kept the monopoly intact. The same pattern by which kings had suppressed the barons was being run inside the Church itself. Power protecting itself by obscuring the thing that threatened its control.

In 1528, Tyndale argued in *The Obedience of a Christian Man* that the king, not the Pope, should head the national Church. His argument was specific and bounded: temporal authority belongs to temporal rulers, not to Rome. He was not granting kings unlimited authority over doctrine or conscience. He was pushing back against Rome's overreach into English political life. Henry VIII read it and misused it to break from Rome and establish himself as Supreme Head of the Church of England. Henry loved Tyndale's theology when it served his purposes.

But Henry overinterpreted Tyndale's language catastrophically — expanding "the king governs the civil realm" into "the king governs everything, including what Scripture requires of him personally." This was not what Tyndale argued, intended, or would sanction. When Henry demanded the Church validate his annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon — a demand that required Scripture to mean something it clearly did not say — Tyndale refused. Because Tyndale's argument had never been that the king can do whatever he wants. It had been that the king governs under God.

The moment the king decided he governed above God, Tyndale's own argument required him to say no. This is 1 Samuel 8 in real time: God warned Israel that kings will take what serves them and call it governance. Henry took Tyndale's theology, used it to consolidate power, and then hunted the man whose theology he had weaponized.

Tyndale was betrayed by a man he trusted, arrested in Antwerp, imprisoned for sixteen months. In October 1536 he was strangled and burned at the stake. The strangling was botched. He was alive when the fire was lit. His last recorded words were a prayer spoken toward heaven: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

The institution called it heresy. God called it the plan. Within three years of Tyndale's execution, an English Bible based substantially on his translation was ordered placed in every church in England.

The king who had hunted him to death mandated that his work be read aloud to every English congregation. Providence does not require willing participants. It only requires the work to be done.

Before Tyndale, the freedom of God's design was carried primarily by institutions. *After* Tyndale, it could be carried by ordinary people with a Bible in their own language. The institution tried to stop the thing that would democratize it. God used the institution's opposition to produce something more powerful than the institution could contain. When ordinary people can read the Word for themselves, the entire argument of this document becomes self-evident. Tyndale understood this. The institution understood this. Only one of them was willing to die for it.

The Geneva Bible & the Groundswell

Geneva Bible, 1560 · Hampton Court Conference, 1604 · King James Bible, 1611

The Geneva Bible of 1560 was produced by Protestant reformers exiled from England during Mary Tudor's Catholic reign. They produced the first English Bible with numbered verses — making specific passages easy to locate, cite, teach, and memorize. And they filled its margins with notes that were not commentary but declarations. The note on Exodus 1 stated plainly that civil disobedience is justified when government commands violate God's law. The notes on Revelation placed God's authority explicitly above the crown's. For the first time, the ordinary English reader held Scripture annotated by scholars who had already worked out its implications for how kings may and may not treat the people God made.

But something more significant than the notes was happening. Tyndale's translation had put the Word in ordinary hands. The Geneva Bible's numbered verses made it searchable, quotable, teachable. And ordinary people were reading it. In their homes. In their congregations. By firelight. **And they were reading 1 Samuel 8.**

In 1 Samuel 8, the elders of Israel come to Samuel and demand a king "like all the nations." Samuel is displeased. God tells him plainly: they have not rejected you, they have rejected Me as their king. God then warns them through Samuel exactly what a king will do: take your sons for his army, take your daughters for his household, take the best of your fields and vineyards, take a tenth of your grain and flocks. He describes, with precision, what state power looks like when it

fills the vacuum left by rejecting God's direct governance. And then: when that day comes and you cry out because of the king you chose, I will not answer. Israel demanded a king anyway.

Now ordinary English men and women were reading this passage for themselves. In their own language. For the first time. And the implication was not subtle: God never wanted kings over His people. He allowed them because His people demanded them. And He warned exactly what kings do. Every person who had ever watched a king take their sons, their grain, their freedom — and then read 1 Samuel 8 in English — understood that God had seen this coming three thousand years ago and had warned against it from the beginning.

Kings do not fear rebels. Rebels can be crushed. Kings fear people who have read 1 Samuel 8 in their own language and understood that the entire royal project was something God warned against from the beginning. This is why King James I called the Geneva Bible's marginal notes "*very partial, untrue, seditious, and savoring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits.*" He was not wrong about what they meant. They placed God's authority above the crown's. They were in the hands of millions of his subjects. And they were producing a groundswell that no institution could stop.

The Geneva Bible's reach was not limited to England. It had crossed into Scotland, into the Netherlands, into the communities of English exiles and dissenters across Europe. It was the Bible of the **Puritans** — the people James I had the most reason to be concerned about, the people who believed most deeply that God's authority superseded the crown's, the people whose theological convictions were producing exactly the kind of citizens that make kings uncomfortable. James had watched the Scottish Presbyterians challenge his authority in Scotland. He understood, with the clarity of a man who had been on the receiving end of it, what a population reading the Geneva Bible's marginal notes was capable of concluding about the divine right of kings.

In January 1604, James convened the Hampton Court Conference, ostensibly to address Puritan grievances against the Church of England. The conference was James's attempt to manage the theological energy of the Puritans — to give them enough to feel heard without giving them the thing that actually mattered, which was the Geneva Bible's authority.

On the second day, Puritan scholar John Reynolds made the mistake of suggesting that bishops and congregations work together in a presbytery — a word that immediately reminded James of the Scottish Presbyterian Church that had spent years making his life in Scotland extremely difficult. The king's mood shifted instantly. The room turned hostile. Reynolds, sensing he had lost the king entirely, changed course and raised a different issue: Puritan objections to the existing Bishops' Bible, which they found inadequate, and their preference for the Geneva translation.

King James was now caught in a trap of his own priorities. He could not authorize the Geneva Bible — its marginal notes were the problem he had convened the conference to contain. But he could not defend the Bishops' Bible, which was demonstrably inferior scholarship. Reynolds had handed him the solution to both problems simultaneously: commission an entirely new translation, built on the best available scholarship — which meant Geneva and Tyndale — but with no marginal notes. No annotations. No declarations about what the text meant for the authority of kings. Just the Word itself, presented clean, in the king's name, under the king's authority.

King James commissioned it immediately and with enthusiasm. For the first time in the entire story of the English Bible, a king was not trying to suppress a translation. He was sponsoring one. Because this time, he believed, the translation would serve him.

The King James Bible was published in 1611. Its translators drew more heavily on the Geneva Bible's scholarship than on any other source except Tyndale's original — the very translation that had been produced by the people James was trying to outmaneuver, built on the work of the man who had been burned at the stake eighty-five years earlier. The irony runs deep enough to be called providence: a king who despised the Geneva Bible produced the most widely distributed English Bible in human history by commissioning a replacement built substantially on the Geneva Bible's work.

King James succeeded in removing the notes. He failed entirely at removing the conviction — because the conviction was not in the notes. It was in the text. And Tyndale had died to make sure the text was accurate. And the Geneva scholars had died in exile to make sure it was accessible. And now it was in the hands of everyone — in the king's own name, distributed by the king's own authority, to every church in England. God had used a king's attempt to contain the Word to produce the widest distribution of the Word in the history of the English language. The pattern holds. It always holds.

King James removed the notes. He could not remove 1 Samuel 8. He could not remove the Exodus account of a God who heard the cry of slaves and acted. He could not remove the prophets. He could not remove the torn veil. The conviction that God never wanted kings over His people — that the freedom He designed into creation was meant to be lived in His presence, not mediated by a crown — was now available to every person in England who could read.

And a growing number of them had decided they were going to live as if it were true.

**There is a footnote to this story that carries its own irony. The colonists who carried the Geneva Bible to America did not abandon it willingly. As late as 1620 the Pilgrims brought it on the Mayflower, choosing it over the King James Bible that had been available for nine years — because the KJV was the king's Bible, the Anglican church's Bible, the Bible of the very establishment they had crossed an ocean to escape.

But across the mid-1600s, as English religious and political influence reasserted itself through the Church of England's colonial networks, and as the Geneva Bible's last printing in 1644 ended its availability, the KJV gradually displaced it in the American colonies. The colonists who had fled the church's authority ended up reading the church's Bible — not by choice but by attrition.

The Geneva Bible was replaced in America the same way it was replaced in England: not because the people preferred the alternative but because the institution controlled the supply. The conviction, however, traveled in both.

The irony compounds further when you follow the Bible's story into the founding era itself. During the Revolutionary War, trade with Britain was severed and Bibles became nearly impossible to obtain. And yet the demand for them never stopped. People still wanted the Word of God — more, perhaps, in the darkness of war than in the comfort of peace. The persistent hunger drove Robert Aitken, a Scottish immigrant printer in Philadelphia, to petition Congress in 1781 to print an American edition of the Holy Scriptures — specifically, he said, "**for the use of schools**."

Congress appointed a committee of Founding Fathers including John Witherspoon — the only active clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence — to oversee the project. Congressional chaplains reviewed it for accuracy.

And on September 12, 1782, the United States Congress passed a formal resolution: "The United States in Congress assembled highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the interest of religion… and recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States."

The endorsement was signed by Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress — the man whose name and attestation appear on the Declaration of Independence itself, though as its recorder rather than its signatory.

It is the only edition of the Bible in American history to receive a congressional endorsement — and it predates the First Amendment by nine years.

The men who endorsed it were the same generation who would soon write that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.

They saw no contradiction between endorsing the Bible as foundational to the republic and prohibiting the government from establishing a state church. Because there was none.

They were not separating God from government. They were protecting the freedom to seek God from government interference — the same freedom the torn veil had declared, the same freedom the Pilgrims had crossed an ocean for.

By the way…Aitken's specific petition — **Bibles for the use of schools** — was not incidental.

It was the founders' understanding made explicit: you cannot produce citizens capable of self-governance without the moral and theological foundation the Word of God provides.

The Puritans had established Harvard in 1636 for exactly the explicit purpose of training ministers and ensuring that the next generation would not be left with "an illiterate ministry."

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 declared that "religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

The New England Primer — the most widely used educational textbook in colonial America — taught children to read using Scripture.

The founders did not separate the formation of citizens from the formation of faith. They understood that one produced the other. When Robert Aitken asked Congress to print Bibles for schools, Congress said yes — because the answer was obvious to men who had built a nation on the conviction that freedom without the God who designed it cannot sustain itself.

One hundred and eighty years later, the Supreme Court removed prayer from those same schools. The Aitken Bible and Engel v. Vitale are not unrelated events separated by history. They are the beginning and the near-end of the same argument — one nation's long journey from

understanding that the Word of God belongs in the formation of its children, to being told by its own courts that it does not.

The chain this document has traced did not break at Plymouth Rock or at the Bill of Rights.

Certainly, clearly, it is being tested now. In the schools. In the courts. In the silence from pulpits that were built to speak.

Crossing

What it cost to carry it to a new shore

The people who gathered at Delfshaven in the Netherlands on July 22, 1620 were not adventurers. They were not entrepreneurs. They were not refugees fleeing poverty. They were the living expression of the groundswell that had been building since ordinary people first read 1 Samuel 8 in their own language. They had read the Word. They had understood it. And they had arrived at a conclusion that centuries of kings and institutions had spent enormous effort to prevent them from reaching: that the freedom God designed into creation at Genesis was not meant to be lived under a crown.

It was meant to be lived in the presence of the God who gave it. And there was a new world where they could try.

They had already paid an enormous price before a single wave hit the bow. They had purchased their ship by selling their own belongings. They had spent twelve years in exile in Leiden, in a country whose language was not theirs, working at trades far below what many had known in England. They had left behind their pastor, John Robinson, who would die in Leiden in 1625 never having reached the New World he had prepared his congregation to build.

They were a congregation of sacrifice before they were a congregation of pioneers.

Their ship, the Speedwell, was supposed to carry them to freedom. Instead it leaked. Twice they returned to port. Each time they sold more provisions to pay the fees — food, stores, the margin between survival and death across an ocean. Captain Reynolds, recorded by William Bradford as having deliberately overmasted the ship to void his contract and keep his pay, robbed them of the vessel they had bought with their own belongings. The Speedwell was abandoned.

Eighteen passengers gave up and went home. Families were separated on the pier in Plymouth — divided not by choice but by the failure of the ship they had sacrificed everything to buy, with no room on the Mayflower for everyone who had come to sail.

One hundred and two passengers boarded the Mayflower — a cargo ship designed for wine barrels, not people. September. The North Atlantic. The height of storm season. Sixty-six days at sea. A main beam cracked in a storm. A man swept overboard caught a trailing rope. A baby was born at sea and named Oceanus.

They arrived in November and sat at anchor for weeks in the cold harbor, rowing ashore each day to build shelter, rowing back at night. Two or three died each day during the worst of winter. Of the one hundred and two who had crossed, fifty-two were alive when spring came.

Half of them. Gone.

When the Mayflower's captain offered free passage back to England for anyone who wanted to return — not one of them took it. Not one. They had not crossed for comfort. They had crossed because what they were carrying was worth more than their lives. The death of half their number had not changed that. If anything it had clarified it.

They carried the Geneva Bible — the very Bible whose marginal notes James had tried to remove because they placed God's authority above the crown's. Robert Weir's 1843 painting "Embarkation of the Pilgrims," commissioned for and hanging today in the United States Capitol Rotunda, captures this moment: Elder William Brewster holds the open Geneva Bible at the center of the composition, the words "*The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*" visible on the open page, while pastor John Robinson and the congregation gather in prayer. The sail above them reads: God with us. The Bible James called seditious now hangs at the center of the seat of the government the people who carried it helped produce.

Before stepping ashore they wrote the Mayflower Compact. Not a political document. A covenant. It begins with God: "Having undertaken, for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith… do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, Covenant and Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic."

Authority flowing from God to the community. Not from a crown downward. Not from an institution outward. This was not a new political theory. This was 1 Samuel 8 finally being answered correctly: we will not have a king like the other nations. We will have the Lord our God.

The first step on that shore was not the beginning of the story. It was the moment a six-thousand-year thread — from the breath of God in Eden to the torn veil to the prophets to the charters to Tyndale's fire to the Geneva Bible to the Mayflower — reached a new shore. The people carrying it had already given everything they had to carry it there. And God had pressed it forward through every attempt to stop it. Not one link in that chain broke. Not one.

Expression

God's design arriving at its fullest political form

The Mayflower Compact was a beginning, not an endpoint. In the hundred and fifty-six years between 1620 and 1776, the conviction it expressed was tested, documented, challenged, defended, and refined across every colony in the new world. God's original design — freedom in His presence, authority flowing from Him to the community, every person bearing an image no government can revoke — was being worked out on American soil, document by document, covenant by covenant, congregation by congregation.

In 1639 the Puritans of Connecticut, under the theological influence of the Reverend Thomas Hooker, produced the **Fundamental Orders of Connecticut** — the first written constitution in the Western world. It established a complete framework of government based on the rights of individuals and the consent of the governed. It made no reference to the British crown.

In 1641, Puritan minister Nathaniel Ward produced the **Massachusetts Body of Liberties** — the first modern bill of rights in human history, ninety-eight enumerated individual rights, its opening sentence invoking "humanitie, Civilitie, and Christianitie" as the source of rights, its first article citing both Magna Carta and "the word of God" as its twin foundations. Due process. Trial by jury. Protection against cruel punishment. Freedom of speech. Rights for women, children, servants, and foreigners. One hundred and fifty years before the Bill of Rights. Written by a Puritan minister. From the Word of God.

Not a single founding document of America — or any document preceding it on American soil — ever contradicted the existence of God or His divine design for mankind and freedom. Not one.

This is not a coincidence. This is a design asserting itself through every person who received it, read it, and built from it. The **Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776)**, written by George Mason weeks before the **Declaration of Independence**, declared that "all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights."

Jefferson drew from Mason directly: "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." The language had been carried to Jefferson's desk by a hundred and fifty years of colonial documents, each one grounded in the same theological conviction, each one acknowledging the same source.

Jefferson did not invent "endowed by their Creator." He recognized it.
He was surrounded by men formed by churches that preached it, educated in institutions that taught it, shaped by a colonial tradition that had been documenting it since before any of them were born.
He was not codifying a human tradition.
He was acknowledging God's original design.
There is a difference.
A tradition is something humans develop and pass down.
A design is something God authored that humans keep rediscovering.

Endowed by Their Creator

Declaration of Independence, 1776 · Bill of Rights, 1791

On August 2, 1776, fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence. The four words "endowed by their Creator" carry inside them everything that came before them: the breath at Genesis, the commandments at Sinai, the prophets in the throne rooms, the torn veil, the charters wrested from frightened kings, Tyndale dying in the fire, the Geneva Bible's marginal notes, the Pilgrims who sold everything and buried half their number and refused to go back, the Mayflower Compact, the first constitution, the first bill of rights, the Virginia Declaration. All of it compressed into four words by men who had been reading that chain in their own language — because Tyndale made it possible for them to read it.

The Bill of Rights, ratified in 1791, completed the work. Ten amendments that do not grant new rights but **prohibit the government from overwriting the rights God had already established**.

The First Amendment is the torn veil expressed in constitutional law: the government may not place itself between a person and their God, may not silence the voice that holds it accountable, may not prevent the assembly that keeps it honest. Each subsequent amendment protects something God protected at Sinai, something the prophets defended in the throne rooms, something the charters acknowledged under pressure from frightened kings.

The design had been asserting itself so consistently, across so many documents and so many centuries and so many different people in so many different circumstances, that it is worth stating the conclusion plainly: the founding documents of the United States are not the origin of the

freedom God designed into creation. They are its fullest political expression. And the God whose design they expressed had been pressing it forward for six thousand years before they were written.

Notably — the design continued to assert itself even in the moments of America's greatest moral failure. The Confederate Constitution of 1861, written nearly a century after the original, invoked God in its preamble as the basis of its formation: "*We, the people of the Confederate States, each State acting in its sovereign and independent character, invoking the favor and guidance of Almighty God.*" Even in the document that sought to preserve slavery — the most profound contradiction of the freedom God designed — the men who wrote it still acknowledged the God whose standard they were violating. The design was so embedded, so inescapable, that even those who contradicted it could not write a governing document without naming the God they were accountable to. That is not a tradition. That is a design that will not be suppressed.

From the Mayflower Compact (1620) to the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639) to the Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641) to the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776) to the Declaration of Independence (1776) to the Bill of Rights (1791) — one hundred and seventy-one years of American documents, every one of them grounded in the same source. Not one contradicting the existence of God.
Not one claiming rights originate with the state. Not one.

Assurance

What six thousand years of evidence means for today

You have just followed a chain that runs six thousand years. From the breath of God in Eden to the commandments given to slaves at Sinai to the prophets in the throne rooms of Israel to the Cross and the torn veil to the charters wrested from frightened kings to Tyndale dying in the fire praying for the King of England's eyes to the Geneva Bible's marginal notes to the Pilgrims who sold everything, crossed a winter Atlantic, buried half their number, and refused to go back — to the Mayflower Compact to the first constitution to the first bill of rights to the Virginia Declaration to the Declaration of Independence to the Bill of Rights.

At every step, the freedom God designed into creation was being carried forward by people who served a God whose authority they believed superseded every earthly power. At every step, that

conviction was contested by kings, courts, institutions — including the institutional Church itself — that wanted to claim for themselves what God had established.

And at every step, God used the resistance — the political necessity, the frightened king, the heresy accusation, the sabotaged ship, the winter graves, the accidental insult at Hampton Court — to advance what none of the human participants fully understood they were carrying.

This is the record. Six thousand years of it. And the record has one consistent finding: the forces arrayed against God's design have a perfect record of failing. Every single time. The institution that burned Tyndale's translations within three years had his Bible in every church in England.

The king who commissioned a Bible without the seditious notes produced the most widely distributed Bible in human history.

The court that told the Church to stay inside its building is operating in a nation whose founding documents it cannot explain without the God it has been removing from the public square.

The Evidence of Outcomes

What happens when the foundation is removed

The historical argument of this document requires no faith to follow. But there is a second level that requires only the ability to read history and follow its consequences. What happens when the Biblical foundation for human rights is removed?

The French Revolution removed God from the rights framework. Rights, it declared, originate with the nation. Within five years the architects of that declaration were feeding each other to the guillotine. The Terror killed an estimated 40,000 people in one year.

The Soviet Constitution of 1936 guaranteed more rights on paper than the American Bill of Rights — freedom of speech, assembly, religion, all enumerated, all guaranteed, none real. Because rights issued by the state can be revoked by the state. The state that issued the 1936 Constitution built the Gulag and oversaw the deaths of tens of millions.

Nazi Germany, Maoist China, Pol Pot's Cambodia — every totalitarian system of the 20th century built its authority on the premise that the state defines what human beings are worth. Between 100 and 170 million people killed under systems explicitly built without the Biblical foundation.

The Biblical foundation is the only foundation that has ever successfully protected human dignity over time.

Not perfectly. Not without failure. But consistently and durably in a way no alternative has ever matched. The 20th century alone settled the empirical question with a hundred million lives.

Remove the foundation and the building always falls.
Every system that has tried to build freedom without the God who designed it has demonstrated, without exception, what the Biblical framework had always warned: a standard above the state is the only standard that protects the people from the state. The data is not ambiguous. The outcomes are not disputed.
The conclusion writes itself.

The Three Rights the Declaration Names

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness — the three rights the Declaration names — are not political concepts. They are theological ones.

Life is the calling God spoke over every person before they were formed.

Liberty is the freedom to pursue that calling without institutional interference — the same freedom the torn veil declared, the same freedom the First Amendment protects.

And Happiness, in its original founding understanding, is not the pursuit of pleasure or comfort. It is the pursuit of divine calling. The ability to live out what God placed in you before you were formed. The freedom to walk in step with the God who made you.

These are not three separate ideas. They are one idea expressed three ways. You cannot pursue Happiness — your calling — without the Liberty to seek God on His terms. You cannot have that Liberty without the Life in which to exercise it. And the Life, the Liberty, and the Happiness are all meaningless without the God who authored the calling, granted the freedom, and gave the life in the first place. "Endowed by their Creator" is not just the source of the rights. It is the condition for their meaning.

America was not founded on political ideas. It was founded on the conviction that every person arrives in this world with a calling God authored, a liberty God designed, and a happiness God defined. The Declaration did not create those three

things. It acknowledged them. And the entire chain this writing has traced is the record of God making sure that when the moment came to write them down, the people holding the pen understood where they came from.

The Church Was Always the Carrier

The freedom documented in this addendum did not travel through history by accident. It traveled through the Church. Every link in the chain was held by men and women who understood themselves to be serving a God whose authority superseded every earthly power. The prophets. The early martyrs who refused to say Caesar is Lord and died for it. Archbishop Anselm, who stood against Henry I. Tyndale, who died praying for the king's eyes to be opened. The Geneva Bible scholars, annotating in exile. The Pilgrims, who buried half their number and refused to go back. The Puritan ministers who wrote the first bill of rights in human history from the Word of God. The Founders who wrote "endowed by their Creator."

The Church was not one institution among many that happened to care about freedom. It was the custodian of the only framework in human history that grounded freedom in something no government can revoke. And when the institutional Church itself tried to suppress the thing that would most powerfully spread it — calling Tyndale a heretic, burning his translations — God worked through the opposition to produce something more powerful than the opposition could contain. This is the consistent finding of six thousand years: God uses the resistance. Every time.

The history of American freedom has been systematically removed from the curriculum. This is not accidental. You cannot teach the founding documents honestly without arriving at God. You cannot teach the Pilgrims honestly without arriving at the Geneva Bible. You cannot teach the Geneva Bible without arriving at Tyndale. You cannot teach Tyndale without arriving at the institutional suppression of the Word. The history makes the argument on its own. Which is precisely why it has been removed. The people who removed it understood, correctly, that the history is the argument.

The Church needs to understand this. And preach it anyway. Not as political activism. As faithfulness. The pulpit is where the standard is held.

The pulpit is where the line is named when it is crossed — when power overreaches, when the powerful decide that the innocent do not qualify, when the state claims authority it was never given.

Nathan walked into David's throne room. Elijah walked into Ahab's court. The apostles stood before the Sanhedrin. The Church today does not need a new posture. It needs to recover an ancient one.

The Church does not evaluate leadership to win elections. It evaluates leadership because it has always been called to hold power accountable to the standard established before any power existed. That is not political activism. It is the oldest function of the Church. And it is the one thing the systematic silencing of the Church's voice has made impossible — which is precisely why that silencing was worth pursuing.

The Close — Choose This Day

> *Every generation that has understood what freedom is and where it comes from has also understood that the next generation must be given **it** before something else fills the space. The carriers change. The chain does not.*

The freedom God designed into creation has always required carriers — people who understood what was being lost and gave their work, their resources, or their lives to stop the losing. Tyndale died to translate the Word. The Geneva Bible scholars annotated in exile. The Pilgrims paid with everything they had. The Puritan ministers encoded the rights tradition in the first bill of rights in human history. The Founders put it into the founding law of a new nation.

The historical record shows God's providence and guidance in some very dark days — the Pilgrims' crossing, the nearly impossible survival of that first winter, the against-all-odds military victory of the Revolution — without having to argue for it, because the history makes the argument on its own.

And in our generation, the hunger for the real story has been documented in the most straightforward way possible: in what parents have chosen to put in their children's hands when the school curriculum offered them something else.

Rush Limbaugh understood something this document has been arguing across every section: the chain from the Mayflower Compact to the Declaration of Independence was being deliberately obscured from the children who needed to inherit it. His five-volume Rush Revere series, written with his wife Kathryn Adams Limbaugh, became a multi-million-copy #1 New York Times bestseller and won the Children's Choice Award — not because of marketing but because parents across America were hungry for the actual story of how this nation was built, what it cost, and why it was worth building.

That millions of families bought these books is not a political statement. It is a hunger statement. Parents recognized that what their children were being taught was not the full account — and they reached for something that was. The tradition of passing the story to the next generation before the revisionist framework is installed — the tradition Tyndale died for, the Pilgrims paid for with everything they had — is not finished. It simply looks different in each generation.

The Carriers — Every Generation Must Pass It On

Joshua stood before Israel at the end of a long journey and said: "Choose this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15). Not as a threat. As a recognition that freedom requires choice, and that the choice in front of every generation is the same: the God who made you free, or the gods that will tell you what to do.

The Church in America stands at that choice today. And the people of God in America stand at it with the Church. Not in the abstract. In the specific, documented, historical reality that the institution designed to carry the freedom God authored has been systematically persuaded to stand down from the public square that freedom was built to occupy.

But here is what six thousand years of evidence says to this moment: God has not changed His mind. He has not run out of tools. He has not been surprised by the courts or the curriculum or the culture. The same God who used a botched strangling and an accidental insult at Hampton Court and a sabotaged ship and fifty-two graves in a New England winter to press His design forward is watching this moment with the same patience and the same persistence He has brought to every moment in the chain.

The forces arrayed against His design have a perfect record of failing. Every single time. There is no reason to believe this generation is the exception.

Stand on this. The foundation is six thousand years deep. The design is God's own. The chain has never broken — not through fires, not through kings, not through institutions, not through leaking ships or winter graves. And the march forward does not end at the Bill of Rights. It does not end at any document any human being has ever written.

The entire arc of this document — from Genesis to the founding documents — is pointing toward something the founding documents themselves could only approximate: the ultimate freedom of fellowship with God in eternity, the full restoration of what the Fall broke, the completion of what the Cross purchased. Every freedom fought for in every document in this chain is a faint echo of what God promised His people at the end of the age.

If God pressed His design through six thousand years of opposition to produce the founding documents of a nation, how much more assured can we be that He will fulfill every promise He has made?

The march does not end here. God is not finished. He was not finished when they burned Tyndale. He was not finished when half the congregation died in a New England winter. He was not finished when the courts told the Church to go inside. He is not finished now.

From the first breath God breathed into Adam to the last line of the Bill of Rights — one unbroken line. The Church was its carrier. The Cross was its source. Tyndale paid for it with his life. The Pilgrims paid for it with half their number. And the God who pressed His design through six thousand years of kings and institutions and fires and leaking ships has not changed His mind about His people, His design, or His promise. The march continues.

Honor what was paid to carry it here. And carry it forward.

HIS Kingdom Come.
HIS Will Be Done.

Reverend J. Scott Gardiner

Founder, Entrusted Futures

entrustedfutures.com

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Supporting Documents

The following documents and reference were made in the Freedom Addendum

Biblical References

Genesis 1:26-27 & Genesis 2:7 — Account of Creation and man made in God's image.

Genesis 3 — The Fall.

Genesis 9, 12, 15, 17 — Covenants with Noah and Abraham.

Exodus 19-20 — The Ten Commandments (Law at Sinai).

2 Samuel 7 — Covenant with David.

2 Samuel 12 — Nathan confronting David.

1 Kings 21 — Elijah confronting Ahab over Naboth's vineyard.

Amos 5:24 — Prophetic call for justice.

Matthew 27:51 — The torn veil at the Crucifixion.

Galatians 3:28 — "Neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free..."

Early Historical Documents

Charter of Liberties (1100) — Issued by King Henry I of England.

Magna Carta (1215) — Signed by King John at Runnymede.

Tyndale's English New Testament (1526) — First printed English translation from the Greek.

The Obedience of a Christian Man (1528) — By William Tyndale.

Geneva Bible (1560) — With marginal notes; produced by English exiles.

King James Bible (1611) — Commissioned by King James I.

Mayflower Compact (1620) — Covenant signed by the Pilgrims.

Colonial American Documents

Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639) — First written constitution in the Western world.

Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641) — First modern bill of rights in human history; authored by Puritan minister Nathaniel Ward.

Northwest Ordinance (1787) — Encouraged religion, morality, and education.

Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776) — Written by George Mason.

Declaration of Independence (1776) — "Endowed by their Creator" language.

Aitken Bible (1782) — First American-printed Bible, endorsed by the Continental Congress.

Later American Documents

Bill of Rights (1791) — First ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Confederate Constitution (1861) — Preamble invoking "Almighty God."

Key Historical Documents - Reprints

The following documents are reprints of key historical documents rewritten {source cited} in a more standardized English translation. All texts are public domain.

1. Charter of Liberties of Henry I, 1100

Source: Fordham University Medieval Sourcebook (standard English translation).

Henry, king of the English, to Bishop Samson and Urso de Abetot and all his barons and faithful, both French and English, of Worcestershire, [copies were sent to all the shires] greeting.

Know that by the mercy of God and the common counsel of the barons of the whole kingdom of England I have been crowned king of said kingdom; and because the kingdom had been oppressed by unjust exactions, I, through fear of God and the love which I have toward you all, in the first place make the holy church of God free, so that I will neither sell nor put to farm, nor on the death of archbishop or bishop or abbot will I take anything from the church's demesne or from its men until the successor shall enter it. And I take away all the bad customs by which the kingdom of England was unjustly oppressed; which bad customs I here set down in part:

If any of my barons, earls, or others who hold of me shall have died, his heir shall not buy back his land as he used to do in the time of my brother, but he shall relieve it by a just and lawful relief. Likewise also the men of my barons shall relieve their lands from their lords by a just and lawful relief.

And if any of my barons or other men should wish to give his daughter, sister, niece, or kinswoman in marriage, let him speak with me about it; but I will neither take anything from him for this permission nor prevent his giving her unless he should be minded to join her to my enemy. And if, upon the death of a baron or other of my men, a daughter is left as heir, I will give her with her land by the advice of my barons. And if, on the death of her husband, the wife is left and without children, she shall have her dowry and right of marriage, and I will not give her to a husband unless according to her will.

But if a wife be left with children, she shall indeed have her dowry and right of marriage so long as she shall keep her body lawfully, and I will not give her unless according to her will. And the guardian of the land and children shall be either the wife or another of the relatives who more justly ought to be. And I command that my barons restrain themselves similarly in dealing with the sons and daughters or wives of their men.

The common seigniorage, which has been taken through the cities and counties, but which was not taken in the time of King Edward I absolutely forbid henceforth. If any one, whether a moneyer or other, be taken with false money, let due justice be done for it.

I remit all pleas and all debts which were owing to my brother, except my lawful fixed revenues and except those amounts which had been agreed upon for the inheritances of others or for things which more justly concerned others. And if any one had pledged anything for his own inheritance, I remit it; also all reliefs which had been agreed upon for just inheritances.

And if any of my barons or men shall grow feeble, as he shall give or arrange to give his money, I grant that it be so given. But if, prevented by arms or sickness, he shall not have given or arranged to give his money, his wife, children, relatives, or lawful men shall distribute it for the good of his soul as shall seem best to them.

If any of my barons or men commit a crime, he shall not bind himself to a payment at the king's mercy as he has been doing in the time of my father or my brother; but he shall make amends according to the extent of the crime as he would have done before the time of my father in the time of my other predecessors. But if he be convicted of treachery or heinous crime, he shall make amends as is just.

I forgive all murders committed before the day I was crowned king; and those which shall be committed in the future shall be justly compensated according to the law of King Edward.

By the common consent of my barons I have kept in my hands forests as my father had them.

To those knights who render military service for their lands I grant of my own gift that the lands of their demesne ploughs be free from all payments and all labor, so that, having been released from so great a burden, they may equip themselves well with horses and arms and be fully prepared for my service and the defense of my kingdom.

I impose a strict peace upon my whole kingdom and command that it be maintained henceforth.

I restore to you the law of King Edward with those amendments introduced into it by my father with the advice of his barons.

If any one, since the death of King William my brother, has taken anything belonging to me or to any one else, the whole is to be quickly restored without fine; but if any one keep anything of it, he upon whom it shall be found shall pay me a heavy fine.

Witnesses: Maurice bishop of London, and William bishop elect of Winchester, and Gerard bishop of Hereford, and earl Henry, and earl Simon, and Walter Giffard, and Robert de Montfort, and Roger Bigot, and Eudo the steward, and Robert son of Hamo, and Robert Malet. At London when I was crowned. Farewell.

2. Magna Carta (1215)

The full 1215 version is very long (63 clauses). Here is the standard modern English translation (excerpted key preamble and selected enduring clauses; full versions are available from sources like the UK National Archives or Avalon Project).

Preamble:

JOHN, by the grace of God King of England, Lord of Ireland, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou, to his archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justices, foresters, sheriffs, stewards, servants, and to all his officials and loyal subjects, Greeting.

KNOW THAT BEFORE GOD, for the health of our soul and those of our ancestors and heirs, to the honour of God, the exaltation of the holy Church, and the better ordering of our kingdom, at the advice of our reverend fathers... [list of advisors]...

(1) ...We have granted to God, and by this our present charter confirmed for us and our heirs forever that the English Church shall be free, and shall have her rights entire, and her liberties inviolate...

(39) No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land.

(40) To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.

[Subsequent clauses address feudal rights, justice, forests, merchants, etc. The document ends with witnesses and the date at Runnymede, June 15, 1215.]

For the complete clause-by-clause text, reliable public sources include the UK National Archives or Liberty Fund editions.

3. Mayflower Compact (1620)

Full Text (standard version from the Avalon Project):

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c. Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the first Colony in the northern Parts of Virginia; Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually, in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid: And by Virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions, and Officers, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general Good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due Submission and Obedience. IN WITNESS whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape-Cod the eleventh of November, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France, and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth, Anno Domini; 1620.

Signers (partial list from sources; 41 total signers):

Mr. John Carver, Mr. William Bradford, Mr Edward Winslow, Mr. William Brewster, Isaac Allerton, Myles Standish, John Alden, John Turner, Francis Eaton, James Chilton, John Craxton, John Billington, Joses Fletcher, John Goodman, Mr. Samuel Fuller, Mr. Christopher Martin, Mr. William Mullins, Mr. William White, Mr. Richard Warren, John Howland, Mr. Steven Hopkins, and others (full list includes Edward Tilly, John Tilly, Francis Cooke, Thomas Rogers, etc., up to Edward Liester).

4. The Bill of Rights

Here is a compact version of the Bill of Rights (the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution, ratified December 15, 1791). I've included the official text for each amendment along with a brief plain-English summary.

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

- Summary: Protects freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and the right to petition the government.

Amendment II

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

- Summary: Protects the right to keep and bear arms.

Amendment III

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

- Summary: Prohibits quartering soldiers in private homes without consent (in peacetime) or proper legal authorization (in wartime).

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

- Summary: Protects against unreasonable searches and seizures; requires warrants based on probable cause.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

- Summary: Rights in criminal cases (grand jury, no double jeopardy, no self-incrimination, due process) and just compensation for takings.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.

- Summary: Rights of the accused in criminal trials (speedy/public trial, impartial jury, notice of charges, confrontation of witnesses, counsel).

Amendment VII

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Summary: Preserves the right to a jury trial in civil cases exceeding $20.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

- Summary: Prohibits excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishment.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

- Summary: States that listing certain rights does not deny other rights retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

- Summary: Reserves powers not given to the federal government to the states or the people.

Be very clear… The Bill of Rights does not create rights. It prohibits the federal government from infringing upon rights that already existed prior to the Constitution — rights whose ultimate source is the Creator, not the state. These amendments were added to limit federal power and protect individual liberties. The full official transcription is available from the National Archives.