

**An excerpt from writer Parker Hudson in his book *The President*.
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The year is in the future and the President of the United States is ready to deliver his State of the Union address. However, at the last minute he throws away the script and speaks from the heart. He has decided to put everything on the line and challenges his fellow Americans to decide the fate of the country by using their vote to determine if their leaders will be people guided by God's laws (*God's World View*) as supported by the founding fathers) or to continue on the path of a nation guided by man's law (*Mans' World View*). Although it is lengthy, try to imagine making these choices. So much of what the author presents in his book (written in 1995) has become headlines in our daily newspapers. What would you do? How would you vote? Remember this is a fictitious President of the United States in a fictitious speech before Congress.

Here is his speech:

“Ladies and gentlemen of the Senate, members of the House of Representatives, justices of the Supreme Court, members of the Cabinet, distinguished foreign guests, and citizens of our nation, it is our custom every year at this time for the president to give his assessment of the state of our historic union and to use this occasion to chart a course for the following year.

In this age of media-defined reality, of image over substance, of positive projection for favorable instant polls, and of instant solutions to oversimplified problems, we are tonight going to try something different. We're going to travel a different, more traditional road not seen in this setting for many years- a road of truth over image, honest assessment over impossible promises, and long-term cures for long-term, complex problems. We are, in short, going to give you a *real* state of the union, focusing unfortunately on our problems, because they could shortly overwhelm us, but then also offering a specific program of workable but difficult solutions, and leaving the outcomes where it always belongs-with you, the people.

If you listen closely tonight, no matter what your political persuasion, you will undoubtedly find one or two subjects in this assessment not to your liking-you'll probably disagree with them. I can't help it. I believe with all my heart that what we are going to lay before you tonight is the absolute truth. I'm at peace that we must face these issues now, today, if our nation is going to survive. I don't use that overworked term lightly. I mean it quite literally-if we are to survive much longer in this world as a nation of free people with free institutions blessed by the God who made us, you will have to decide, as will every other American, whether the truth we lay before you tonight is worth accepting for our nation's sake, even when it is personally unpleasant or temporarily inconvenient. Please listen, wait, and see.

Before we really start, let me apologize to those of you with an advance copy of the anticipated text of this speech. We won't be using it and you can turn off the Teleprompter. Those words don't address the real state of our union. Listen carefully, and I'll tell you the truth here. Then we'll make copies available tonight for your review. I'm sorry for the inconvenience, but the road we are going to outline begins now.

We've got a lot to cover, but let's start with a brief recap of the state of the union today. I'm not going to spend a lot time on these points because most of you living outside Washington already know these issues well, and you've just been waiting for someone here to voice them for you. Here goes:

We are overcome by a sense of helplessness to deal with the crime and violence that invades our lives and our homes, making many of us prisoners in our own houses.

We don't trust our leaders, and often for good reason. And good people are afraid to step forward to become leaders because their private lives will be ripped open by the press.

Our families are being assaulted at every turn. In the name of "rights" for women and children, we've instead created an impoverished class of women and children, sent tens of millions of unborn babies to their deaths, and unhitched millions of men from any sense of male responsibility to raise, protect, or train a family.

Our educational system, only two generations ago the pride of our nation, is a disaster. Selfishness, materialism, and "me-first," or a least "my group first," rule the nation. Our country was built on sacrifice, generosity, savings, delay of gratification, and building for the next generation's good. But today we are awash in the false "truths" of instant everything, consume now, discourage savings, and forget the children. I'm ashamed to say that my generation is probably the first in all of recorded history that, by ignoring our education system, promoting abortion, and encouraging divorce has openly and consciously chosen its own immediate happiness and convenience over the well-being of the next generation, our own children.

Think about it. We've pushed suffering on those least capable to cope or to understand-our children- so that we don't have to be bothered with some inconvenience, like figuring out how to stay married. And on top of that, we've saddled *them* with paying for the mess we've created by astronomically increasing the national debt, because we like to spend but haven't even got the guts to pay for our own extravagances! This is almost unforgivable and has to stop.

Our welfare system, originally designed to help families with short-term needs is now in many cases supporting the fifth or sixth generation of welfare dependency, promoting by its own inherent system the perpetuation of the problem. I said dependency, and I meant it. Our system promotes addiction, from one generation to the next, and destroys families.

Our federal tax code, now stretching to several thousand pages of misguided social engineering, is incomprehensible. It's estimated that over *six billion* man-hours every year are wasted in some part of the tax industry, making enforcing, calculating, collecting, or escaping taxes. This entire industry-including the hours and hours we all spend trying to understand it, serves no productive purpose whatsoever; it's huge drain on our economy, as we pay people to send paper to other people, for no productive result.

In the name of "right" and "free speech," we've legitimized all types of aberrant behavior; pornography, abortion, divorce, homosexual activity-yes, you heard me right- and now suicide and polygamy, most of which not only fly in the face of our own Judeo-Christian rules for correct living, but also violate the laws of almost every civilized society that has ever prospered on this earth. You don't have to be a rocket scientist-and thank God, because we aren't making many of them any more-to figure out that we violate these universal moral laws at great and immediate risk to us and, again, to our children and their children."

We could go on recounting these problems but there's no need. As I said, most of you are dealing with one or more of these every day of your lives, and our purpose is not to further worry you, but to offer a real path for solutions. Unfortunately and tragically, what we've just reviewed is the state of our union today, and it can't be papered over with pleasant political rhetoric.

We've talked about the visible problems, but they're just the logical and predictable results of the underlying cause, which we're now coming to. In order to fix something, you've got to know the cause of the trouble. So before offering solutions, we need to examine what got us to where we are.

We're going to start with a simple concept, one that really defines everything that is to follow. This concept is that we are standing today at the scene of a colossal collision of historic forces-a collision of two diametrically opposed worldviews which have been at war for a long time. If we understand those two opposing worldviews, then the details of everything else we'll discuss tonight will fit into place. Without this understanding, we'll endlessly debate secondary

issues, which both political parties have done for three decades, missing the important points. So, please listen and begin now to decide which worldview is yours; that is the key to turning this nation around.

The first worldview is Judeo-Christian, the one on which this nation was founded. It begins with the belief that there is a God, that He created us, and that He has a purpose for each one of us. It's that simple. Do you believe that?

Since He created us, He's given us rules to live by which, if we follow them, will benefit us, both as individuals and a society; and if we break them, will result in our harm. Moreover, God has chosen to reveal Himself and His laws through the Bible, which represents His "Creator's Manual" for us to read and to understand His will. Man in this worldview definitely has reason; he is created in the image of God. He is to be the master of the earth, which he needs His intelligence and reason to accomplish. But he uses these abilities within the moral framework provide by his Creator.

This worldview also acknowledges that this world is only temporary; that there is more importantly an eternal world, and that what we do here influences what happens to us there. Finally, God has provided by His grace the only means for joining Him in that eternal world through our individual belief in His Son, Jesus Christ, who voluntarily died on the cross, as a really historic fact, so that we have the opportunity to live with God forever.

The second worldview begins with the belief that man and woman are it. It believes either that there is no God, and we're the result of some still unexplained mistake, evolving on our own incredible strength from some unexplained but conveniently present ooze, or that there may be a God, but He simply made us and then left town, leaving us to our own devices. This worldview tells us that we're on our own and that we've got to improve and even perfect ourselves on our own. There are therefore no overriding rules or absolute values in this view-everything like that is to be determined by us and refined continuously by our so-called *enlightened reason*.

We're to be fervently all-inclusive, and *everything* anyone might want to do is basically fine because it all starts from human reason. So what's *really* okay and not okay must be decided by the majority or, better yet, imposed by those who have somehow obtained more "*enlightenment*" than the rest of us.

Since mankind has evolved on its own in this view and what we have to do must be inherently good because it's "human". If an individual goofs ups, it must just be because of poverty or educational deprivation or a bad neighborhood or bad parents or some other fixable mistake. If we could just fix those or get rid of outdated, constraining rules so that his behavior is redefined as acceptable-or perfect this person a bit further with one more government program to help him-then he'd be okay, too. And all of us could then work toward our ultimate goal-to be "free," to return to a state of pristine nature, where everything is wonderful and people are pleasant and prosperity pours out on everyone in a paradise of human enlightenment.

Now those are the opposing worldviews. One starts and ends with God. The other starts and ends with man. As a nation we've recently debated a lot of issues and programs, but the real question is very simple; which one of those views do you believe to be correct? They're mutually exclusive, meaning that they can't both be right. It's either one or the other. They lead to completely different conclusions and completely different activities for our government. And tonight I'm proposing that each one of us has to choose.

How have these worldviews played themselves out over the last three centuries, to arrive at this point? Historians use the words "the Reformation" and "the Enlightenment" to describe their two separate beginnings. And we have early examples of the two distinct results in the American and French Revolutions.

Despite recent myths to the contrary, which I'll address in a minute, America was founded as a Christian nation with the Christian faith as the foundation for its laws and morals. The

colonies were essentially the completion on freer soil of the Christian Reformation begun in Europe, providing a new place and a new beginning for men and women seeking to submit their lives to God's will. We don't have time now, but if you read through the papers and the speeches of all the early leaders of the colonies and of our nation, as my wife, Carrie, and I have done over the past eight months, you'll be struck by how much virtually every one of them not only believed strongly and publicly in God, but also gave Him all the credit for their free nation, their lives, and their new government.

The American Revolution was a revolt by one set of governments against another-calling on God's authority in the Declaration of Independence to override laws which the colonist believed to be wrong and unjust. They never proposed doing away with the rule by law, but proclaimed that the colonies had a responsibility to follow God's higher law for their citizens' lives, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. And throughout the long years of the Revolution and then during the creation of our nation, these same leaders constantly called upon God-publicly, in these chambers, in their speeches, and in their laws-for His guidance, His protection, and His forgiveness.

Contrast that approach, clearly following the first worldview, with the French Revolution only a few years later. There the rallying cry was not for God's law, but for just the opposite-unchecked individual liberty and equality. The humanistic philosophers behind that movement believed that man was inherently good and government was always bad-and if they could get rid of oppressive government, first the king and then subsequent manifestations, then real: freedom" could be obtained. As a symbol of their intent, the cross in Notre Dame Cathedral was replaced by a statue of Reason.

The result was an orgy of death, destruction, and dictatorship that enlightened philosophers who believed in the second worldview. But later revolutions in Russia, Germany, and elsewhere were all ultimately defeated, like the French Revolution, not by the promised blossoming of perfection, but by their own godless murdering strongmen: Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler. These killers filled the vacuums that are created every time we turn over the rule of society to some group that is going to "perfect" us, because then the only arbiter of resources and power becomes the state. This is the ultimate irony of the second worldview: in its rush to embrace romantic individual freedom, it always degenerates into the loss of *real* freedom, either to a coercive state in a humane society or to a dictatorial state in a less tolerant one. But freedom is *always* lost to the government.

And why not? In this view, since there is no God in control, then by default, who is? The state *must* be. And who is the state? The one with the most power. Who loses? Those without power, such as the weak, the nonviolent, and the "unenlightened". The natural state, which the second view seeks, turns out *not* to be pristine and glorious paradise, which it never was anyway. What we have instead are the ugly rules of "eat before you are eaten" and "survival of the fittest". *That's what nature has really always been.* And mankind always returns to it with God's laws to live up to His better ideals and to promise punishment for those who insist on doing wrong. Far from being constricting, a Christian society is actually freeing and uplifting. Without its influence, we are each someone else's meal. And we're already seeing that truth beginning to infect our own society today.

Back to our worldviews. The overriding view of our own founders was the first, the one in which man only acts knowing that God is in control. It's not surprising that hardly anyone realizes this fact any more. For forty years if the word "God" appeared in a text, that text couldn't be used in our schools. And because our nations' founders spoke so often with reference to God, hardly anything they said could be taught to our own children! Isn't that absurd? Is it any wonder we've lost our way, when simply quoting a speech by our first president, George Washington, in which he gives thanks to God for delivering our nation, is somehow equated with establishing a state religion to which we all must belong?

So, what, then, is the cause for our current unhappy state of the union? It's that we've slowly but certainly been led off the path of a nation founded on God's worldview and are instead fast becoming just another one of the many nations that have come and gone because they were founded on man's worldview. Look at history-what a miracle the founding of this nation was! How have we then been led astray?

As recently as 1892, Supreme Court Justice David Brewer could write in an official court opinion, "This is a religious people." And he quoted an earlier opinion that stated, "Christianity, general Christianity, is, and always has been, a part of the common law." And it was. Then starting in about 1910 our universities began seriously embracing the teachings of men such as Freud, Nietzsche, Darwin, Marx, and others-all of whom proclaimed, list Rousseau before them, that man is the master and God is meaningless.

By the 1930s many of the university faculties in this country accepted that worldview, and by the sixties, when my generation came of age, it was further embraced by the media and nations' entire "enlightened intelligentsia," from students to, sadly, the Supreme Court, which at that time was made up of men almost exclusively from *political* rather than judicial backgrounds.

While rightly correcting the aftermath of one great blemish on our Constitution-the institution of slavery- this court also went, without precedent, directly against 150 years of rulings and many judicial precedents to falsely proclaim, on its own, that our Constitution erected a "wall of separation between church and state," which was simply not true."

Since then, the eternal principles on which this nation was founded have been removed from almost every aspect of public life. Again, it's no wonder that people today don't realize what's happened, because this same spurious idea of separation and the ever-present threat of a lawsuit keep us from even being exposed to the real founding principles of this country. And most people's obvious first reaction- believe me, I understand it-is to discredit the kind of statements like I've just made. But from the bottom of my heart I want you to know that I'm telling you the truth. The problem is that you can never be taught the real truth if by definition you can never be taught about God's role in our nation! Why, any day now I expect the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution being declared unconstitutional.

Now there's one last connection that has to be made in the chain causing our problems, but his connection also starts us on the way to understanding the cure; the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

Institutions, no matter how bad, don't directly make problems by robbing banks or committing murder or deserting children. People do. And people act like that because their hearts don't know or respond to God's leading or His law. And they don't know about Him or His laws because He's been evicted from debate, discussion, school, the news, television, movies, history, government-everywhere other than churches themselves.

But God's worldview is true seven days a week, not just on Sunday. God is still in control of our lives on Monday at the office, but you'd never know it. And if He's evicted from schools and not allowed in our offices, then it's no wonder He's also not in the housing projects or the streets of in the divorce courts or at the pornography stands or anywhere else in our society. We've shown Him the door, and then we wonder why our society is falling apart. Every day in a hundred ways, no matter what we may say on Sunday, we proclaim the worldview that man is in charge and God doesn't matter. He's shown that He is very patient, but if we really want Him to leave, He will. As the people of Russia or Germany or Cambodia or Rwanda what that's like, when He's gone.

So the ultimate answer to our problem, Christian faith proclaims, is not an election or a parade or a speech or a new law, but a change of individual heart-a national turning to Him, one heart at a time. The ultimate solution against the man who has just pulled a trigger and killed someone is not more police to chase him or more prisons to incarcerate him, but a change of his

heart so that *he doesn't pull the trigger in the first place*. That can only come from inside. But it gets inside from being taught, from seeing role models, from having fathers, mothers, and teachers who teach values and discipline. So while the ultimate solution is the individual heart, the first important step toward that solution is the creation of a society in which faith, God's laws, and His moral expectations can be seen and can flourish.

That brings us to the question of what we can do as a nation, and for that answer we should look back to what the men and women who founded this nation believed they were creating. First, let's be clear of what they never intended: this is certainly not supposed to be a theocracy-Christian Iran-where you have to be a card-carrying Christian to vote, or where the state can collect your tithe with a tax. That would be the worst thing that could happen, both for our nation and for Christianity. No, that *not* what Americans ever meant by a "Christian nation".

So what *was* their intent? After much listening to others, prayer, and the reading of their own words, I believe that while the founders never meant America to be a Christian theocracy, they did assume our society and its leaders would always be set on a *Foundation* of Christian morality and belief. In fact, they openly despaired if what his nation would be like without that foundation.

The First Amendment to our Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion-without restriction on where or when. It's the same amendment that guarantees freedom of the press, which everyone today accepts, a meaning universal freedom for the press within government, schools, everywhere. Why should the press be freer to exercise its rights in our nation than religion is?

This amendment simply prohibits Congress- not the state or schools or any other institution – from making a law respecting an establishment of religion. Notice the "an"-it isn't talking about religion in general-in that case it would say 'the' establishment. It's referring to officially establishing any specific faith or sect. As had been the case in England, and was already the case in some of the states at that time.

Because of a couple of supreme Court rulings, made without judicial precedent, and threats of other suits, we have incorrectly focused on removing all discussions or manifestations of religion from government, schools, public buildings, and almost everywhere else. 'We've forgotten the free exercise part of the same First Amendments, unless someone tries to restrict the free exercise of the press, of course! And the result is that Christians and people of other faiths are afraid to speak or to proclaim their spiritual values in the public arena, with the negative result being that the foundation meant for our society-its Christian morality and ideals-is removed from consideration in any and all public debate. To say you are a Christian and want to discuss any topic today from the perspective of your faith is a sure ticket to being labeled a nut-just the opposite of what the founder envisions. They believed our national leader should debate and discuss issues, as I'm doing tonight, *within* the context of Christian ideal and of God's will for the nation.

So I propose to offer us all a new path, which is really an old path, to begin restoring God's worldview to our national agenda and to our political debates. It's a path that, if followed, will begin to underpin us again with the biblical morality and laws we so desperately need, without creating a theocracy and without denying anyone of any other faith his or her absolute right to pursue that faith openly and freely.

At the end of the book of Joshua, after the Israelites have entered the Promised Land and initially subdued it, their leader, Joshua, calls the entire nation together in one place and reminds them that it is God who has provided their victories. He then has the entire nation vote together, at one time, whether they as a nation will serve God or not. They vote to serve the Lord, and their successes continue when they do.

We are proposing tonight that it's time for this nation, this generation, to decide which worldview we believe. Is God in control, or is man in control? Is this government really a miracle among nations, founded by God, or just a fortuitous coincidence? Will we seek to be ruled by

God's laws, or will we just create our own changing version of what's right and wrong as we go along? Will we, in short, serve the Lord, or not?

If we vote to serve God again as the creator and protector of this nation, then it's time to examine all our national goals, priorities, programs, and laws to honestly ask whether they conform to the guidelines He wishes for us.

If we vote that God is not worth serving, that man is in control, then our nation can continue on that chosen path. And we can then no longer consider it contradictory, for example that the murderer of an unborn baby by abortion is paid, while the murderer of an unborn baby by gunshot is prosecuted. But if a majority of our nation votes for the second worldview, once and for all pushing God's presence in our nation aside, then I'm announcing tonight that I will at that time resign from this office, and the vice-president can assume my duties as the leader of this nation.

Now we can't all come together in one place and vote as the Israelites did in Joshua's day. And we all need time to consider the implications of what I've said tonight and what this vote will mean for ourselves, our families, and our future. I hope most of you will want to study as my wife and I have, and even pray about our decisions. I hope there will be a true and honest national debate that will last longer than a ten second sound bite.

So this is what I'm asking you to do. Will you serve the Lord? If you will, then I ask you to vote in the congressional election this November for men and women who openly and clearly hold the worldview that God is in control and that they are serving Him. You may have to do some real studying of candidates. You may have to ask hard questions. I don't care which party they're from, or even if they're from a party. They can be current members up for reelection or new candidates. I don't care whether they're liberal or conservative. I don't care whether they're black, white, male, or female-just people who try every day to submit their lives to God.

If you, the American people, will elect a House of Representatives and a third of the Senate according to those criteria, then I promise strong leadership to break all gridlock, to examine *all* programs and laws in light of their adherence to biblical principles, and to work with Congress to produce a completely fresh program that will truly turn this nation around.

I not only urge all of you to vote next November, but I urge many of you to prayerfully consider whether you should run for office, to use your talents in a way that will honor God.

Finally, when I say a completely fresh program, I mean it. One that will reestablish biblical principles in our nation, that will tell the world it *does* make a difference in American that it was the Ten Commandments which until recently were on the wall of the Supreme Court, not Hammurabi's Code. That it *does* make a difference that our public building abounds in quotes from the Bible, not the Koran. We need a program, which will ground us again on God's principles and which will unlock the creative spirit God has put within all of us.

I'll address some of those possible programs in a minute. But first, I want to reiterate to those who are not Christians that I am *not* talking about creating a theocracy. Though this nation has always been predominantly Christian, it has, with rare exception, always encouraged all faiths and will continue to do so. AS one conservative Jewish writer has said, people of his faith should pray for Christianity remaining the dominant religion in America because of the protection and tolerance it has traditionally provided.

In fact, Christianity, by definition can't be coercive-each individual is a "prospect" until the moment he dies - a "prospect" with a choice to accept Christ. The Christian can't demand your faith from the barrel of a gun-he can only plant seeds and let God Himself work on your heart. So no one should fear that by electing people who believe in God's rule that he or she will give up any freedoms. In fact, just the opposite. I welcome other faiths in the public debate. Christianity can hold its own in that arena, and one's faith can be sharpened when debate occurs. The tragedy is that for more than a generation no one has been able to discuss faith in public-any faith-and that has got to change.

Now, finally, what are some possible programs and policies that this new Congress of men and women seeking God's will might consider, if you, the American people, elect to serve the Lord?

We'll soon publish a short paper on each of these, and there'll be one suggested between now and November fifth, I'm sure. So tonight, because of the hour and because you have been so patient, I'll only touch on some highlights-but we want you to see that we mean real and productive change.

First, we'll propose a step that will instantly reinvigorate the country, remove a huge drag on the economy, and do much to right the wrong mentioned by Jesus in Luke all, "and you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.

We'll propose to the new congress to do away completely with our nine billion annual pages of IRS forms and instructions and replace them with a simple flat tax, pegged at eighteen percent of income.

There'll be no deductions or exceptions. There will be a gross income floor of about twenty-five thousand dollars per couple plus six thousand dollars per child below which no tax will be owed. But after that, there will be a straight eighteen percent payable on all types of earned income, corporate and individual. We'll raise the same amount of tax we do today, but we can disband almost all of the IRS, plus most tax attorneys, some accountants, and advisors-the whole tax industry.

Second, welfare reform and families. We'll propose a negative income tax so that a family earning less than a set amount will simply receive quarterly a check for the difference. People will decide for themselves how to spend it, and the system won't discriminate against those families with a man residing there. Most of those employed by the welfare departments in each state can find other jobs.

Third, affirmative action. I'm going to express out loud what many of us feel. Our founders made a terrible and tragic mistake in condoning slavery. We need to help right that wrong, but then move on. For seven years and ONLY seven years, anyone from a minority who feels that he or she has been discriminated against because of race or national origin will be able to apply for an outright grant for education, either to high school, college, and/or technical school, to assist him or her to attend. We'll do everything we can as a nation to level the playing field and to make up for any possible discrimination

But America is about equality of opportunity, about using one's God-given talents to be and to do as much as one can. We've been sidetracked by the humanist worldview into trying to ensure equality of outcomes, which is simply impossible. It winds up dragging everyone down, especially the minorities, into mediocrity, instead of lifting us all up to excellence. We'll invest seven good years and all the money it takes in righting those wrongs- but that will be the end. After seven years, unless one can prove specific, unlawful discrimination, there will be no more singling out for anything good or bad-because of one's race. We are all equal in the sight of God, and we'll all live by that law.

Fourth, the poor. Jesus said they'd always be with us, and he mandated that we take care of the fatherless. Well, tragically, today we have a whole lot of poor and fatherless people, and we have to take care of them. But not the government. The government is the worst possible choice to teach individuals who need help anything about skills, working, values, or habits. Only in extreme cases of neglect, mental illness, and helplessness should the government intervene. Otherwise, this is the job for families and churches. First, the extended family of the people in trouble. Second, other people.

We will propose that families who want to help others can register as clusters of two or three families together, and they will be matched up by private agencies with individuals and

families who are of low income and who similarly register that they need help. By spreading the task-or opportunity-to help one family with the combined resources of two or three families; the financial burden will be light. But the primary benefit is that people can actually learn from one another. The only tax deduction in the whole flat tax plan will be granted to families who help others in this way, and only for four years on a decreasing scale, since the goal is to help lift the targeted individual or family into productive status as quickly as possible. But people will again be helping people, face-to-face and family-to-family.

Fifth, education. We'll propose that the same mix of public and private educational funding that has been used successfully in our colleges for years be moved to the elementary and high school levels in the forms of a combination of public grants, vouchers, corporate endowments, and private gifts, all centered on *choice* by parents of where they want their children to attend school. Maybe something else will work in twenty years, but for now we've got to shake up our largely failing system and put responsibility back into the classroom by giving parents a real and viable choice.

Sixth, we'll propose a constitutional amendment, if necessary, on Religious Foundations and Freedom, to send the message that our laws are to be interpreted, whenever they are vague or unclear, from an historical and biblical perspective, and that the free exercise of religion, both individual and corporate, is just as important as the prohibition against establishing an official national religion. That means the free exercise of religion by students in our schools, in our government utterance about law and morality, in our courts, and in all public areas. And, again, though this is a predominantly a nation of Christian heritage, that means the free exercise of other religions as well. Today our children only get to see the "no prayer" option in school – and look what it's done for us. God has been expelled, with disastrous results. Better that they be able to pray, if they want, and to see others doing the same, including those from other religions, than to deny, as we have, the free exercise of that right to everyone except atheists.

There will be much more to do if and when we have the opportunity to work together with men and women of such a Congress next year, but for now our last proposal concerns laws on individual behavior and morality. I know that a year ago I advocated laws cut clearly from a belief in the humanist worldview. But I'm standing here tonight admitting to you that I was wrong. It *does* matter what types of behavior we lift up as the standards for our society. Simply stated, once we depart from God's laws, where do we stop? Our only safe harbor is provided by Him. And the consequences of violating those laws are already obvious for all to see in our society, primarily in our embattled families and in the waves of violence.

So we will propose laws and rules- or encourage the states to do so where more appropriate-against abortion, polygamy, homosexual activity, assisted suicide-those activates God's higher authority says are wrong and for which there are societal consequences when disobeyed. We cannot say we believe in a God-centered worldview if we ignore how He has instructed us to behave.

Now everything we have proposed in the list of programs must wait until you decide, at the election in November, because we will not impose godly rules on a nation that denies that God is important. If you acknowledge His authority and elect such a Congress, then we will push for the fine-tuning of laws and programs similar to these. But in one case I can't wait. That is abortion. Last year I signed an executive order allowing full-term abortions in the federal health care system, which was a terrible mistake, and for which I have asked God's forgiveness many times. Tomorrow I will rescind that order, returning to the previous situation of first trimester abortions only. And then we will start doing everything we can within the exiting laws to discourage *all* abortions. The deaths of so many innocent babies simple cannot be ignored until November. But in all other cases, we'll leave every law and program in place, while we campaign for and with those who share God's worldview on these and other issues.

So tonight we've asked this nation's most fundamental and important question: whom will we serve, God or man? As you have seen, from the answer to that *one question* inevitably flows the answers to *many* issues that have frustrated and bothered us for years. The key is to answer the first question first. The rest then follows.

So, my friends, that is the *real* state of our union. We have a terrible, fundamental identity crisis about who we are. That's why our legislations are deadlocked, not able to go in any one direction.

I'm proposing that we solve that crisis with our vote; just as the Israelites did. I'm asking you to vote in November to follow the Lord, as our forefathers did, by electing men and women not just of good humanist character, but who have God's view of the world in their hearts and willingness to turn this nation around in their minds.

Now again, I'm not naïve enough to tell you that electing good people or changing our institutions will directly make everything wonderful in our country. In order for our problems to be reduced, we as individuals must return one by one to God's worldview and learn to submit ourselves to His teaching. That's how our nation will fundamentally change, one heart at a time. But we can start that process and make it more possible for our hearts to hear the truth by taking the step I've proposed tonight. It's crucial. It's fundamental. And I'm convinced that God, who has blessed us and protected us beyond all measure, is watching and waiting to see what we'll do in nine months. Will we turn back to Him and allow Him to heal us? Or will we turn away from Him once and for all, and suffer the consequences?

Please think, pray, and read about what you have heard tonight. This will be the most important election this nation has held since before the Civil War. Carrie and I stand ready to help all those men and women who share our faith and a God-centered worldview, who want to run for office themselves or who want to assist others. And we'll debate anyone who has a different opinion. But our nation's future is not up to me; it is truly now up to you, the voters. I've reminded you about the vote Joshua called for among the Israelites. Well, with total humility, I want to conclude tonight as Joshua did, thirty-five hundred years ago. Carrie and I pray that each of you, each family, will make the important commitment we've outlined here. But whether you do or not, our own way is clear. I'm going to read now from the last chapter of Joshua's book:

...Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness...serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD. Joshua 24:15