

# The Republican Club of Sun City NEWSLETTER

July 2018

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Sun City Texas

(Topics in this issue: Declaration of Independence, White Racism, Texas GOP Platform, Playboy Philosophy, LGBT Issues)

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FAITH AND FREEDOM COALITION TO ADDRESS CLUB JULY 26

Timothy Head, Executive Director of the Faith and Freedom Coalition, will address the club during its dinner meeting scheduled for **Thursday, July 26 in the ballroom of the Social Center in Sun City.**

This organization, a 501(c)4 organization, was originally identified as the Christian Coalition when it was founded in 1988 by Rev. Pat Robertson and operated from 1989 to 1996 under the operations control of Ralph Reed – cited by the *Wall Street Journal* as “perhaps the finest political operative of his generation – who became founder and chairman of the Faith and Freedom Coalition.

With the change of name of the organization came an expanded mission as suggested by the following statement from the organization's web site: “Faith and Freedom Coalition is committed to educating, equipping, and mobilizing people of faith and like-minded individuals to be effective citizens.”

The success of this organization can be gauged by noting that, according to Wikipedia, it has “hundreds of thousands of supporters and several hundred local chapters.” Additionally, its success can be gauged by noting the comments of several prominent individuals, such as the following:

- **President Trump**, addressing founder Ralph Reed, his wife Jo Ann, and attendees at a recent conference of that organization, said: “In just a few years, you turned a small organization into a nationwide beautiful movement . . . I am honored by your incredible support and grateful for your commitment to our shared cause.”
- **Vice President Mike Pence**: “It is great to be back at the Faith and Freedom Coalition – the greatest pro-family, pro-freedom, grassroots organization in the United States of America.”
- **Sean Hannity**: The Faith and Freedom Coalition is “going to grow and be a force to be reckoned with.”
- **Newt Gingrich**: “What Faith and Freedom Coalition is doing historically is important for the future of our country and the future of our children and grandchildren.”

Our speaker, Timothy Head, will explain what the organization stands for, what it is currently doing to fulfill its mission, and some of its plans for the future. His background is impressive:

Prior to joining Faith & Freedom, Tim was the district director for a member of the Texas congressional delegation. He has served as chief of staff and as policy adviser to members of the Texas Legislature and worked on the Republican Party of Texas '2010 Victory Texas' effort. Before working in public policy, Tim did missionary work in Asia, Middle East, and Europe and worked on staff at Antioch Community Church in Waco, Texas. Tim graduated from Baylor University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master's of Social Work. He also received his Juris Doctor from Baylor Law School. He has been married to his wife, Annie Kate, for over ten years and they have two daughters.

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE MEETING OF JULY 26

**BEGINNING TIMES: Doors Open – 5:45 pm; Social Period – 6:00 pm; Dinner – 6:30 pm; Program – 7:00 pm**

**MENU:** Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes w/cream gravy, green beans & salad with choice of 2 dressings.

There is also an optional meal of a grilled chicken salad with choice of 2 dressings.

**COST:** Dinner fee is \$18 per person. Checks made out to “The Republican Club of Sun City” should be mailed to: **The Republican Club of Sun City, 1530 Sun City Blvd., Suite 120, PMB 227, Georgetown, TX 78633**, or left in a special drop box located on the front porch of the home of club treasurer Gene Edwards at 202 Duck Creek Lane. For information, contact Gene at 520-990-1159 or [genedwards@earthlink.net](mailto:genedwards@earthlink.net) The deadline for payment or reservations is Friday, July 20.

**VISITORS ARE WELCOME!** Non-members may attend a maximum of two meetings per year – as attendees for the dinner or as observers for the program – without having to pay membership dues.

## RADIO TALK SHOW HOST TO ADDRESS CLUB AUGUST 23

Lynn Woolley, a highly-principled conservative radio talk show host whose program can be heard in Sun City on radio station KTEM, 1400 AM, 8 - 11 am, M – F, will address the club during its dinner meeting scheduled for **Thursday, August 23 in the ballroom of the Social Center in Sun City.** Details to follow.

## OTHER CLUB NEWS

Beginning August 1, membership dues are reduced from \$20 to \$15. VP Brian Olson reports current membership is 363. Gene Edwards, club treas., reports 143 attendees and 19 observers at the June 28 meeting

## THE AMERICANS WHO RISKED EVERYTHING: THE SIGNERS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

On July 4, 2018, our nation celebrated the 242nd anniversary of the signing in the Declaration of Independence, a document which is – even today – more than an inanimate relic of the past, this being said because it provides continuing definition and understanding of our Constitution. The duration of no other constitutional republic in the world comes close to our nation's duration. Why is that so? Answers may follow.

Unfortunately, there is not a clear general understanding of how America came to be founded and of the major tenets of our founding documents, the Declaration and the Constitution and, most importantly, their significance. Some understanding, however, of their significance can be obtained by reflecting on the state of the world during earlier times as revealed in comments of Rush Limbaugh who stated:

**The story of humanity on planet Earth since the beginning of time has been one of bondage and base survival struggle. The vast majority of people who have lived did not know freedom or liberty. They did not have the right to own property, or the right to dissent, and they certainly didn't have economic opportunity. Most lived very hard times under tyranny, authoritarianism, dictatorship.**

**Humanity has always been dominated by rulers who govern by intimidation, punishment, brutality. The United States is the exception. America was founded on the premise that we are all created by God, we are all created equal, and we are all created yearning for freedom, the natural desire of the human spirit. This had never happened before.**

The signers of the Declaration not only announced that this fledgling nation was separating itself from the crown and the reasons for doing so, they also provided in the Declaration, as former U. S. Attorney General Edwin Meese notes, "a philosophical basis for government that exercises legitimate power by 'the consent of the government' [the phrase used in the Declaration] and it defined the conditions of free people, whose rights and liberty are derived from their Creator.." Those provisions (and others) found expression in the Constitution, thus revealing connections between those two documents which continues today.

What is not generally known is the great sacrifice the signers – and often their families – experienced as the British military reacted to their act which was clearly treason. Consequently, to fill that void, excerpts from an essay written by Rush Limbaugh's father about their sacrifices are provided below in italics.

Although there is general acknowledgment that our form of government is successful, there is nevertheless concern, if not despair, about the survival of the nation, given the inroads made by the left (including educational institutions), socialists/communists, adherents of Islam and others in today's society. Two questions thus emerge: (1) will the sacrifice of the Founders be proven to have been made in vain? and (2) if the nation does not survive, will its destruction, if it occurs, come on our watch?

### THE DECLARATION IS ADOPTED: AN ESSAY

**The Adoption of the Declaration.** *Congress transformed itself into a committee of the whole. The Declaration of Independence was read aloud once more, and debate resumed. A total of 86 alterations were made. Almost 500 words were eliminated, leaving 1,337. At last, after three days of wrangling, the document was put to a vote. Here in the hall Patrick Henry had once thundered: "I am no longer a Virginian, Sir, but an American." But today the loud, sometimes bitter argument stilled, and without fanfare the vote was taken from north to south by colonies, as was the custom. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted.*

**The Signers.** *What kind of men were the 56 signers who adopted the Declaration of Independence and who, by their signing, committed an act of treason against the Crown? To each of you the names of Franklin, Adams, Hancock, and Jefferson are almost familiar as household words. Most of us, however, know nothing of the other signers. Who were they? What happened to them?*

*I imagine that many of you are somewhat surprised at the names not there: George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Patrick Henry. All were elsewhere.*

*Ben Franklin was the only really old man. Eighteen were under 40; three were in their 20s. Of the 56, almost half – 24 – were judges and lawyers. Eleven were merchants, 9 were landowners and farmers, and the remaining 12 were doctors, ministers, and politicians.*

*With only a few exceptions, such as Samuel Adams of Massachusetts, these were men of substantial property. All but two had families. The vast majority were men of education and standing in their communities. They had economic security as few men had in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Each had more to lose from revolution than he had to gain by it.*

*These men knew what they risked. The penalty for treason was death by hanging. And remember: a great British fleet was already at anchor in New York harbor.*

*Even before the list [of signers] was published, the British marked down every member of Congress suspected of having put his name to treason. All of them became the objects of vicious manhunts. Some were taken. Some, like Jefferson, had narrow escapes. All who had property or families near British strongholds suffered.*

Francis Lewis, New York delegate, saw his home plundered and his estates, in what is now Harlem, completely destroyed by British soldiers. Mrs. Lewis was captured and treated with great brutality. Though she was later exchanged for two British prisoners . . . she died from the effects of that abuse.

William Floyd, another New York delegate, was able to escape with his wife and children across Long Island Sound to Connecticut, where they lived as refugees without income for seven years. When they came home, they found a devastated ruin.

Phillip Livingston had all his great holdings in New York confiscated and his family driven out of their home. Livingston died in 1778 still working in Congress for the cause.

Louis Morris, the fourth New York delegate, saw all his timber, crops, and livestock taken. For seven years, he was barred from his home and family.

John Hart of Trenton, New Jersey, risked his life to return home to see his dying wife. Hessian soldiers rode after him, and he escaped in the woods. While his wife lay on her deathbed, the soldiers ruined his farm and wrecked his homestead. Hart, 65, slept in caves and woods as he was hunted across the countryside. When at long last, emaciated by hardship, he was able to sneak home, he found his wife had already been buried, and his 13 children taken away. He never saw them again. He died a broken man in 1779, without ever finding his family.

Thomas Lynch, Jr., South Carolina delegate, had his family broken from privation and exposures while serving as a company commander in the military. His doctors ordered him to seek cure in the West Indies and on the voyage he and his young bride were drowned at sea.

Thomas Nelson, signer of Virginia, was at the front in command of the Virginia military forces. With British General Charles Cornwallis in Yorktown, fire from 70 heavy American guns began to destroy Yorktown piece by piece. Lord Cornwallis and his staff moved their headquarters into Nelson's palatial home. While American cannonballs were making shambles of the town, the house of Governor Nelson remained untouched. Nelson turned in rage to the American gunners and asked, "Why do you spare my home?" They replied, "Sir, out of respect to you." Nelson cried, "Give me the cannon" and fired on his magnificent home himself, smashing it to bits. But Nelson's sacrifice was not quite over. He had raised \$2 million for the Revolutionary cause by pledging his own estates. When the loans came due, a newer peacetime Congress refused to honor them, and Nelson's property was forfeited. He was never reimbursed. He died, impoverished, a few years later at the age of 50.

And, finally, there is the New Jersey signer, Abraham Clark. He gave his two sons to the officer corps in the Revolutionary Army. They were captured and sent to the infamous British prison hulk afloat in New York harbor known as the hell ship "Jersey" where 11,000 Americans were to die. The younger Clarks were treated with a special brutality because of their father. One was put in solitary and given no food. With the end almost in sight, with the war almost won, no one could have blamed Abraham Clark for acceding to the British request when offered him his son's lives if he would recant and come out for the King and parliament. The utter despair in this man's heart, the anguish in his very soul, must reach out to each of us down through 200 years with his answer: "No!"

Of those 56 who signed the Declaration of Independence, nine died of wounds or hardships during the war. Five were captured and imprisoned, in each case with brutal treatment. Several lost wives, sons or entire families. One lost 13 children. Two wives were brutally treated. All were at one time or another the victims of manhunts and driven from their homes. Twelve signers had their homes completely burned. Seventeen lost everything they owned. Yet not one defected or went back on his pledged word. Their honor, and the nation they sacrificed so much to create, is still intact.

The 56 signers of the Declaration proved by their every deed that they made no idle boast when they composed the most magnificent curtain line in history: "**And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.**"

## SOME IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF THE DECLARATION

**Foreword.** By now, there is a general understanding that the curricula of public schools and public universities do not provide an adequate understanding of how America came to be founded or of the main tenets of its founding documents. For example, a news article in the June 30, 2016 issue of *The Wall Street Journal* reports that "Students at the University of Texas at Austin . . . can partly fulfill their U. S. history requirement by signing up for *Jews in American Entertainment.*" This would be consistent with some of the bizarre practices taking place at universities one can hear about.

Because there appears to have been limited opportunity for a person to gain at least some understanding about the founding of this nation, what follows is a brief discussion of two important subjects in the Declaration: Natural Law and the Source of Our Rights.

**Natural Law.** Natural law was a controlling influence on the founders and framers, and found expression in the Declaration through the use of such terms as “Laws of Nature” and “Nature’s God.” Note in this regard the following statement from the Declaration: **“When . . . it becomes necessary for one people . . . to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them . . .”** (emphasis added)

“Natural Law” is generally acknowledged as providing an intrinsic, built-in knowledge of what is right and wrong. The reader wishing more explanation of that term may find writings of Locke, Jefferson, Plato and others a bit abstract and difficult to understand; however, a clear and authoritative explanation is provided by Jurist William Blackstone whose *Commentaries* was the second most referenced document (following the Bible) used by the framers. Wrote Blackstone:

**As man depends absolutely upon his Maker for everything, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his Maker’s will. This will of his Maker is called the law of nature . . . This law of nature, being coeval [coexistent] with mankind and dictated by God Himself is, of course, superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over the globe, in all countries, and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this . . . Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws; that is to say, no human laws should be suffered [permitted] to contradict these.**

Natural Law is not merely a relic of the past. As many readers can recall, in the absence of any applicable written law, it was the charge “crimes against humanity,” a charge based on Natural Law, which was used to convict and execute Nazi leaders after World War II.

Author Mark Alexander contends, “To better understand what is meant by ‘the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God,’ recall that our Declaration’s signers were not of one mind on matters of theology and doctrine. They were Christians, Deists and Agnostics.” Although they were of wildly differing views about such matters, they nevertheless had a similar view about one important matter identified by Thomas West, author of *The Political Theory of the Founding*, who stated: “In the founders’ view, it is reasonable that the God who both revealed the Decalogue and is author of the natural world created that world with natural moral principles that accord with His law. The alternative – moral commands with no basis in, or that contradict nature – seemed to the founders profoundly irrational and implausible.”

**The Source of Our Right: God or Man?** The Declaration states the following:

**We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness – That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governemd.**

British writer G. K. Chesterton stated, “America is the only nation that is founded on creed [i.e., religious belief]. That creed is set forth . . . in the Declaration . . . It certainly does condemn . . . atheism, since it clearly names the Creator as the ultimate authority from whom these equal rights are derived.”

Columnist Cal Thomas provides the following explanation: “The framers of the Constitution clearly understood that in order to put certain rights out of the reach of government, whose power, they wished to limit, those rights had to come from a place government could not reach . . . The only way to preserve them for ourselves and our posterity is to acknowledge they come from a higher place.”

Communists and others, however, wish to eliminate religious influence from government. But note the following comment by columnist Jeffrey Kuhner:

**Capitalism, private property, the nation-state and the traditional family – all rest upon the Judeo-Christian moral order. Marxists have understood one seminal truth: destroy a religion and you destroy the culture and civilization it spawned.**

**That is why modern liberals relentlessly advance the sexual revolution characterized by individual gratification, abortion on demand and birth control. Sexual permissiveness – the Godless libertine society – and not the international proletariat is the true agent of radical change.**

**In fact, the founder of the Bolshevik Revolution, Vladimir Lenin, deliberately promoted open marriage, abortion, birth control and militant secularism as a means of social engineering. For Lenin, religion was the enemy.**

There has been open resistance from the left, Democrats and Liberals to the notion of rights being endowed by a Creator God. CNN journalist Chris Cuomo, in a program about President’s Day, boldly asserted, “Our rights do not come from God. That’s not our country. Our laws come from collective agreement and compromise.” Resistance was further illustrated by President Obama, who had a history of deliberately omitting the words “endowed by their Creator” when discussing “rights” in various forums. Alexander makes the following contention which appears to be confirmed by the presently noted rampant corruption and abuse of power in Washington: “The history of man, since its first record, has repeatedly and tragically documented that when the people settle for the assertion that government is the source of their rights, tyranny is the inevitable result”

## SHOULD THE FOUNDERS BE BRANDED “WHITE RACISTS”?

Assertions that all of the nation's founders and framers were slave holders and were advocates of slavery may simply stem from an ignorance of the nation's history; but in other instances the assertions may have been motivated by the benefits which can accrue to those individuals who, in claiming the nation's founders were racists, can undermine our form of government - which was their goal. In any case, given the propensity of many politicians, the major news media, many college professors and others to support leftist causes and to promote “white guilt,” a presentation of certain factual information may help counter the demagoguery being promulgated.

David Barton, who is scheduled to speak at the club's November 29 dinner meeting, is a history scholar who specializes in examining and analyzing *original documents* of our founders offers insights into the conduct and beliefs of those men. He states:

**While some framers did own slaves, rarely is anything said of the overwhelming majority of framers who did not own slaves and who rejected slavery. And rarely is it acknowledged that slavery was not the product of, nor was it an evil introduced by, the founders; rather slavery had been introduced into America nearly a century-and-a-half before the founders and had been strongly enforced upon them by British law. In fact, many of the founders vigorously complained about the fact that every attempt they had made to end slavery and the slave trade in the Colonies (as Virginia had attempted in 1767 and Pennsylvania in 1740) had been vetoed by King George III.**

The role of the Declaration in the slavery issue is interesting. Barton reports that, prior to the adoption of the Declaration, there had been few serious efforts to dismantle the institution of slavery, that it was the founders who collectively initiated the first changes against slavery, and that it was the language of the Declaration which not only enabled these changes to begin but also to bring about the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments so important is securing protection for civil rights.

It is interesting to note that one of Jefferson's oft-quoted phrases - “Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever” - was made in the context of his deploring the institution of slavery.

## TEXAS GOP ADOPTS PLATFORM SUPPORTING TRADITIONAL VALUES

Delegates to the 2018 Texas GOP convention adopted a number of planks strongly in support of traditional – and especially family – values, even though they run counter to values expressed in much of the rest of the country.

In view of the recent recognition of the 242<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, it should be noted that among the “Principles” stated in the Texas Platform is one which supports “The laws of nature and nature's God” and a strict adherence to the original language and intent of the Declaration and the Constitution. Following are excerpts from certain planks of the 2018 Texas GOP Platform:

**121. Sexual Education.** We demand the State Legislature pass a law prohibiting the teaching of sex education, sexual health, or sexual choice, or identity in any public school in any grade whatsoever, or disseminating or permitting the dissemination by any party of any material regarding the same. . .

**140. Gender Identity.** The official position of the Texas schools with respect to transgenderism is that there are only two genders: male and female.

**142. School Security.** The Texas Legislature shall pass a statute that allows Texas school teaches, or other school employees, who are certified and insured to be authorized to carry a concealed gun on the premises of their assigned school for security and protection purposes. . .

**310. Gender Identity Facilities in Businesses.** We support enacting legislation in the State of Texas ensuring that no government entity in the state be allowed to take upon itself to define for any private business or private entity how it must segregate its restrooms, changing facilities, or showers. . .

**311. Child Rights.** We call on the Texas Legislature to pass legislation to protect privacy in public schools and government buildings . . .by ensuring that multi-use facilities . . . are designated for and used only by persons based on the person's biological sex.

**316. Homosexual Behavior.** We affirm God's biblical design for marriage and sexual behavior between one biological man and one biological woman . . .We oppose homosexual marriage. . .We urge the Texas Legislature to pass religious liberty protections . . .

The reader is reminded of the special program of the State Party titled “Strategic Texas Action Team” (reported in the March 2018 newsletter) whereby citizens can participate, along with legislators, in interim hearings on certain legislative matters to be considered by the Legislature during the coming session. Contact the State Party for information.

The Texas GOP Platform, a 30-page document, is available for viewing and/or downloading at the state party's website, [TexasGOP.org](http://TexasGOP.org)

## THE “PLAYBOY PHILOSOPHY” IS ADOPTED

The death of Hugh Hefner, publisher of Playboy Magazine, in September of 2017 triggered an interest in the philosophy known as the “Playboy Philosophy” which he originated and promoted. As will be demonstrated later in this report, some of its major tenets are still in effect today.

What is the “Playboy Philosophy”? The late William F. Buckley offers several comments which provide some understanding of that term: (1) the key insight to Hefner’s belief is that “a man’s morality, like his religion, is a personal affair best left to his own conscience,” (2) but, cautions Buckley, “Mr. Hefner’s philosophy notwithstanding, there is such a thing as public morality, and that morality has throughout civilized history been primarily sustained by religion,” and (3) The so-called sexual revolution, of which Playboy is the slickest harbinger, asks, in effect, that “sanctions be removed against what used to be known as ‘illicit sexual behavior.’”

During a 1992 interview with *The New York Times*, and recently reported by the *Austin American-Statesman* in connection with Hefner’s death, Hefner was asked of what he was proudest. His response – which even more clearly defines the “Playboy Philosophy,” was: “That I changed attitudes toward sex. That nice people can live together now. That I decontaminated the notion of premarital sex. That gives me great satisfaction.”

Many citizens – and especially the young who have not yet undergone life’s edifying experiences – may believe it was a philosophy or worldview such as that promoted by the “Playboy Philosophy” which enables them to bask in what they believe is “freedom” unencumbered by religion or moral restrictions, without consequence.

But with the passage of time, evidence has surfaced to indicate there are adverse effects to both society and the individual emanating from such philosophies and worldviews. Note that Hefner, having been married 3 times, tearfully noted, “I’ve spent so much time of my life looking for love in all the wrong places.” Following is a survey of some evidence in support of that conclusion.

**Western Civilization.** Author Kirby Anderson, quoting Professor Glenn Sunshine, notes that Western civilization is the product of ancient Roman civilization and that once you remove Christianity, modern society reverted back to Roman society, and a recovery of the ancient pagan world.

In support of this contention, Anderson notes, “The Romans lived in an oversexed society. So is our society. Rome practiced abortion. So does our society. Rome was anti-natalist and made a deliberate attempt to prevent pregnancy. They focused on sexual enjoyment and did not want to bother with kids. In our modern world, birthrates in most of the western democracies are plummeting.” Anderson concludes, “We are facing a society that is not willing to accept biblical ideas.”

**Pornography.** Patrick Trueman, a former DOJ official and current president of the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, contends, “Without Hefner, pornography may never have gone mainstream. Hefner was a revolutionary folk hero or champion of free speech.” But there now exist reports of deleterious effects of pornography on marriages, brain tissue and civility. Kirby makes the following assertion: **“It’s a problem no one wants to talk about. Everyone knows it’s a problem, a very big problem. But few truly understand how immense it has become. It’s the quintessential elephant in the room. With the expansion of the internet to smartphones and other mobile devices, pornography has spread like a pandemic.”**

**Fewer Marriages.** Anderson notes another problem, one which can affect the population of American replenishing itself. Anderson explains Sociology professor Mark Regnerus (UT) has published research that explains why men are postponing marriage. It can be summarized in two words: cheap sex. “As compared to the past, many women today expect little in return for sex, in terms of time, attention, commitment, or fidelity. Men, in turn, do not feel compelled to supply these good as they once did.”

He adds another explanation: pornography. “Online porn has made sexual experience more widely and easily available too. A laptop never says no, and for many men, virtual women are not genuine competition for real partners.”

**SDS.** Sexually transmitted diseases (SDS) are another problem, notes author Penna Dexter who cites Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that Sexually Transmitted Diseases are at record levels and that young people, for behavioral and biological reasons, are at high risk of contracting SDSs.

She reports we’ve had a five percent rise in chlamydia from 2015 to 2016, a ten percent rise in gonorrhea, and an eighteen percent rise in syphilis. Yet governments refuse to hold abstinence as the standard, continuing to follow the protocol of “Talk, Test and Treat.”

**Suicide.** Another problem is the suicide rate. *World* reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a distressing report: Over the last two decades, the US suicide rate has risen by 25 percent. Among people ages 15 to 34, suicide is the second-leading cause of death.

In 2016, nearly 45,000 people in the United States ended their lives. That means there were more than twice as many suicides as homicides.

The data show that more than half of those who committed suicide had no known mental health disorder.

**Spiritual Life.** Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a soviet dissident who became an acclaimed literary figure, delivered some 40 years ago what may be a prescient message for American when he said: "We have placed too much hope in political and social reforms, only to find out that we were being deprived of our most precious possession: our spiritual life."

**What Has Happened to Us?** Author Carolina Lewis notes not only the high suicide rate, but also depression, drug addition and other afflictions of society and then speculates about what could account for these developments . She notes that men and women of the past faced harrowing wars, hunger and loss, yet they possessed a resilience that eludes our modern culture. Why? There are no simple answers, but at least part of it is that our ancestors believed in a duty to their families and to God while our modern culture has rejected those concepts in favor of extreme individualism and materialism, two matters discussed below.

**Individualism.** According to the philosophy of individualism, personal interests supercede moral responsibilities to family or God. This philosophy has produced a narcissistic culture that prioritizes self-focus above any other communal value. Consider modern psychology's chief questions: "How does that make *you* feel?" "Is this decision helping *you* become *your* best self?"

**Materialism.** The other philosophy, materialism, believes that the material world exists as the only reality. It denies an afterlife or judgment, believing instead that humans, like all of nature, simply go back to dust.

Yet in a philosophy without God, morality or consequences, life's only purpose remains to amass fame, fortune and pleasure exemplified by the phrase, "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die."

**Conclusion.** When a society can no longer find happiness with the simple things of life, but instead requires lavish entertainment, parties and pleasures to distract and sustain itself, it's called "decadence." Yet decadence ultimately proves itself to be empty. When a person has reached the end of the individualist and materialist pursuits, what's left? Nothing but disillusionment. And that's the problem.

## BOYS WIN AT GIRLS' TRACK AND FIELD MEET

**Foreword.** The June 30, 2018 issue of *World* included a report on a high school level girls' track and field meet held in Connecticut in which two boys, claiming they were transgendered, won the first place and the runner-up positions.

The report is exceedingly well done and clearly exposes some of the problems schools have in dealing with transgender issues. Excerpts of that report follow:

*The fastest times ever run in the girls' 100 and 200 meters at Connecticut's State Open high-school track and field championships now belong to a boy. The runner-up in is also transgender.*

*Neither of the [two boys] has begun transitioning from male to female. The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) does not require them to do so. One need only self-identify as a particular gender to compete as a member of that gender.*

*CIAC Executive Director Karissa Niehoff expressed sympathy for biological girls who were denied the opportunity to advance to the New England championships due to their transgender competitors' success. At the same time, she was unwilling to state that [the two boys] should not be competing against girls.*

*"The optic isn't good," Niehoff admitted. "But we really have to look at the bigger issues that speak to civil rights and the fact this is high-school sports."*

*The question is, whose civil rights?*

*Congress enacted Title IX in 1972 to ensure that women – that is, biological women – receive the same educational opportunities as men, including participation in interscholastic sports. More than one court has recognized that interscholastic sports are typically sex-segregated for good reason. Physiological differences give boys a significant competitive advantage over girls in athletics, and if boys were free to compete against girls, athletic opportunities for girls would all but perish.*

*The Obama administration ignored those courts' rulings in 2016, issuing a national directive to public schools interpreting the word "sex" in title IX to include "gender identity." That interpretation conflicts with Congress' intent in passing the law, and the Trump administration has since rescinded it. Still, 17 states, including Connecticut, have laws requiring transgender "females" to be treated no differently from biological girls regardless of whether they've undergone hormone treatments.*