

From the White House to the Church House, **America is Spiritually Rotten**

By Jesse Boyd

By the grace of God, I recently completed a long walk across the USA, and definitely not by the shortest or easiest route (thelongwalkusa.com). My daughter and I got our feet wet in the Atlantic off North Carolina's Cape Hatteras in March of 2021; and just three months ago, we dipped our feet in the Pacific off the California coast.

Along an unbroken 8,118-mile route across 20 states and 251 counties, we carried a cross with an American flag in distress and prayed for our nation in these troubling times. Others joined us at different times and places, always making us a small team of peaceful Christians. About 600 of those walking miles and 10 of those counties were in Montana, a "conservative red state" with some of the best Second Amendment (2A)-affirming self-defense laws on paper in all of America.

November 12, 2022 was a brutally cold afternoon. After 5,543 miles of walking without incident, we found ourselves contemplating whether or not to call it a day on the side of an icy highway in Madison County, a deep-red county with a Republican Sheriff and where nearly 72% of voters cast a ballot for Donald Trump in the 2024 election.

Our support vehicle was legally parked at a junction off to the side, and our team of five, including my daughter and 12-year-old son, stood beside it with our Christian cross, minding our own business.

Suddenly, in the middle of what seemed like nowhere, we found ourselves the victims of a violent assault and hate crime. A burly stranger drove up screaming, "Your KIND ain't welcome in Montana!" He then exited his pickup and crossed a road to attack me and my young son standing at my side.

In by-the-letter accordance with Montana law, I drew my sidearm in self-defense, and the attacker stopped dead in his tracks. As quickly as it had begun, the matter de-escalated. Next, I made a terrible mistake. Because I love Jesus, and was walking across America for the purpose of reasoning with folks about the spiritual problems of our nation, I foolishly put my little derringer away, thinking I could speak to this guy about our peaceful purpose.

It didn't work. The madman punched me in the face, broke my sunglasses, tackled me to the ground, and then repeatedly pummeled me with his fists while my head was buried in the snow. As soon as I went to the ground, my daughter, the young man who is now her husband, and my ministry partner came to my aid and helped get me out from under that madman. Though three of us are highlytrained marital artists, we showed great mercy and restraint. He escaped with a bloody nose, and by God's grace, none of us were hurt, despite my nursing a back injury sustained from a bad fall on the ice in Yellowstone National Park. After fending off this attack, three other individuals came on the scene. They mocked the name of Jesus and our cross while threatening to kill us if we didn't leave Montana. The attacker loudly described himself as MAGA, Q-Anon, and a Trump supporter while bragging: "I know the sheriff in this county, you are going to pay."

We fled that very dangerous scene and dialed 911 from a spot about a mile up the highway, identifying ourselves and reporting what had transpired. Despite claiming self-defense and acting in accordance with the laws of a constitutional-carry, stand-your-ground state, multiple Madison County sheriffs deputies responded like a SWAT crew.





Four of us were arrested and charged with felony assault without any investigation, and my 12-year-old son, Josiah, was forced to kneel in the snow with multiple firearms pointed at him. Josiah was handcuffed, transported to the attacker's place of business and left unattended in a police vehicle, tampered with as a witness, and ultimately put into CPS custody until my wife could fly out from North Carolina to retrieve him.

The rest of us spent four days in different county jails, and as dash and body camera footage later leaked to the public by an anonymous whistleblower would reveal, the involved deputies referenced our attacker on a first-name basis, openly mocked our Christian faith and our walk across America, and literally conspired to prevent us from walking through their county. While the others laughed at our situation, Madison County Deputy Daniel Wyatt says: "Every one of these sons of bitches needs to go to jail ... We gotta call child protective services for the fucking kid. Come and take the goddamned kid ... The family that walks across America together gets to go to jail together."1

A corrupt Madison County justice of the peace, lame-duck incumbent Mark Glines, who had been ousted by the voters a week prior, spoke from his bench about being lied to the in past "by Christians" and set our bail at an outrageous \$50,000 each, and ordered us to wear expensive ankle monitors while he pontificated: "This was a crime of violence." In truth, it was a hate crime. It was Christian persecution right here in America, furthered by good-ole-boy sheriff deputies under the authority of a Republican sheriff and by a Republican justice of the peace, all in a deep red county. Ironically, it would also be aided and abetted by conservative Montana Attorney General, Austin Knudsen, who boasts about paying more than lip service to the 2A.

For nearly two years, we fought the unjust and false charges brought against us for simply acting to defend ourselves from an unprovoked and violent hate crime in the middle of nowhere Montana. All the while, the story got little to no media attention.

We turned down multiple slap-on-the-wrist plea offers from AG Knudsen, who hung his entire case on a game of semantics: whether or not "draw or present a weapon," as allowed by Montana law in response to a threat of bodily harm, actually means someone can "point" a weapon. This "conservative" politician actually attempted to induce 5th District Judge Luke Berger, appointed by Democrat Governor Steve Bullock, to undo Montana's landmark 2009 HB 228 self-defense statute, one that cements a person's right to possess or use a firearm for self-defense without fear of prosecution for doing so.

As the saga droned on for many months, we maintained, "No pleas, no deals, to the end." We refused to parley with the wicked men responsible for what was described in an official court filing as "the most extreme case of selective prosecution motivated by religious discrimination in the history of Montana."

In May of 2023, our long walk resumed from the very spot it was sabotaged. On September 19, 2024, all unjust charges against all the others in our group were suddenly dismissed. On October 4th, Judge Luke Berger, appointed by a liberal Democrat governor, issued a righteous ruling that actually strengthens and reinforces the very self-defense statute that AG Knudsen was trying to dilute but charges against me were still pending.

Less than a week later, all of us, the victims of the Madison County Montana hate crime arrived at the Pacific waters, completing the work I had committed to the Lord more than three years prior. Less than two weeks after that, the unjust charge against me was finally dismissed. The Madison County Sheriffs department returned my firearm, the cross, and the upside-down American flag they seized from us in November of 2022, and while doing so, a deputy was caught on camera agreeing that his department had screwed up.

Such is the kind of unconstitutional trampling of civil rights and law-fare one would expect to find these days in blue states or liberal cities, but not in rural Montana. How can this be?

At the turn of the 20th Century, the United States was basking in the glow of its economic prosperity and national glory. The dollar was backed by gold; our country was feared and respected by the nations of the world; and a Republican President with a reputation for honesty, integrity, humility, and a stalwart Christian faith had just secured a second term. Following a bloody brother-war and the unconstitutional tyranny of Reconstruction, America was truly great again. President McKinley's running mate in 1900 was Teddy Roosevelt, and six months following his 1901 inauguration as vice president of the United States, he delivered a speech at the Minnesota State Fair, an event showcasing the great glory and prosperity of America. It was Labor Day, a Monday, and Roosevelt used the occasion to sound a solemn alarm:

"No prosperity and no glory can save a nation that is rotten at

On Friday of that same week, at another huge exposition showcasing America's prosperity in Buffalo, NY, President McKinley was shot by a madman, proving Roosevelt's point. On September 14th, McKinley died and Teddy became, at that time, the youngest man ever to serve as President of the United States.

Teddy Roosevelt's alarm at the turn of the 20th Century, in fact, echoed alarms sounded by two former presidents around the turn of the 18th Century. John Adams warned, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Thomas Jefferson elaborated: "God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the Gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath."

To see what these men saw, and to understand how such a thing could happen in Madison County, you have to take off your political glasses. Matters of the heart are moral and spiritual matters. Rottenness of heart is a tremendous spiritual problem, and the spiritual problems of a nation founded and established in the fear of God cannot be fixed with political or economic solutions, and certainly not by elections.

When the moral fabric of American society is torn, the Constitution is little more than words on parchment, and all segments of society, including rural red counties, become tainted. Once spiritual rot sets into the heart of a nation, the entire culture becomes a polluted and poisonous well. Everyone who drinks from it gets sick—Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives in blue states and red states.

My maternal English ancestors came to tidewater Virginia and North Carolina not long after the settlement of Jamestown in 1607, sailing to these shores to worship God freely, believing liberty to be a blessing from His Hand. They settled in an area profoundly affected in the mid-1700s by America's First Great Spiritual Awakening. Some crossed the icy Delaware with George Washington on Christmas Day in 1776; and others marched with General Robert E. Lee in the Army of Northern Virginia, eyewitnesses to the Third Great Spiritual Awakening spreading through the Confederate Camps.

My paternal Scotch-Irish forebears settled in Western Kentucky and witnessed America's Second Great Spiritual Awakening. Some later served as Baptist missionaries when Mississippi and Louisiana were considered dangerous frontier; and my great grandfather preached Christ in the trenches during the First World War. With the Psalmist, I can truly say: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Psalm 16:6). All the more, Roosevelt's 1901 alarm strikes a personal chord, and like Jefferson of old: "Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever."

In March of 2021, I prayerfully decided to go for a walk, from sea to shining sea, and to cry out to God for this land while sounding an alarm in the spirit of a watchman upon a wall:

AMERICA HAS A SPIRITUAL PROBLEM, AND SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS CANNOT BE FIXED WITH POLITICS.

Let's face it: Long have we Americans provoked Almighty God to anger with our sin, and our chief export to the nations nowadays is iniquity. We have kicked God and the Lord Jesus Christ out of everything. We have canceled the same Ten Commandments our Founding Fathers deemed essential to national security. We butcher our unborn children (60+ million since 1973). We teach our little boys to be little girls. We celebrate all forms of sexual perversion. Today, America is where the love of money is indeed the root of all evil, where men are cowards and the family is assailed, where dummies govern, and where the liberties that our fathers bled and died to secure are hastily cast aside in the name of "health & safety." We are indeed a nation rotten at heart, and no amount of glory or prosperity can save us. Moreover, God is just, and His justice cannot sleep forever. We desperately need spiritual awakening in our streets and revival in our local churches.

Our walking route was not limited to roads. You name it, we walked it or we ran into it. Along the way, we also ran into a lot of people—folks of many different ethnic, economic, political,



and religious flavors. I found myself repeating Roosevelt's 1901 warning, his exact words, countless times to countless individuals. I'll go ahead and warn you. What I am about to report from those interactions might throw your right/left political paradigm into a tailspin:

Our best and most fruitful leg of the journey turned out to be the 1,500 miles across Washington, Oregon, and California—the very liberal Pacific Northwest. The most dangerous place proved to be in a "MAGA" corner of Montana. Two of the friendliest of more than 3,600 encounters with strangers proved to be liberal Democrats sitting on their front porches, one near the starting line with a Biden sign in the front yard, and one near the finish line with a Harris sign in his front yard. Both offered us refreshment and listened with intent as we sounded Roosevelt's alarm, asking questions and gladly receiving a Gospel tract from our hand. The California liberal at the end even asked if we had ever been attacked along our journey for carrying that cross. When we informed him about Madison County, he profusely apologized "for what Montana did to you." Five times along the way, we were told: "You are not welcome here." Once it was a liberal hater. The other four times, it was those claiming to be Trump supporters. Sheer profundity!



You see, it's not as simple as right/left or red/blue. Take off your political glasses and stomp them in the ground. America's problems are spiritual, and spiritual problems can't be fixed with political solutions. In William McKinley's first inaugural address, more than four years before his assassination, he said something we all would do well to remember at the beginning of a second Trump Presidency:

"There is no safer reliance than upon the God of our fathers ... who will not forsake us as long as we obey His commandments and walk humbly in His footsteps."

Teddy Roosevelt's 1901alarm was part of the same speech best remembered something else he said, a phrase often divorced from it original context: Because prosperity and glory cannot save a nation rotten at heart, the righteous must: "WALK SOFTLY AND CARRY A BIG STICK."

As a Bible-believing Christian and a lawabiding citizen who fears God and loves his country, I maintain without apology that America is spiritually rotten, from the White House to the Church House. We need to humble ourselves, repent, and return to the God of our Founding Fathers. It's either back to the Bible, what Andrew Jackson described as "the Rock upon which our Republic rests," or it's back to the jungle! We must to look to Jesus for help, remembering as Patrick Henry once affirmed: "This great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

I'll keep walking softly in these times, but I will carry a big stick, not kool-aid for Donald Trump, the Republican Party, or political conservatism. That big stick is a resounding alarm:

"No prosperity and no glory can save a nation that is rotten at heart."

As for the Madison County hate crime, all involved must be held accountable to insure that such trampling of civil rights never happens again to anyone in Montana. Perhaps one of the best forms of that accountability involves bringing back a citizen grand jury. As our two-year battle unfolded, I was shocked to learn that my constitutional right to presentment of evidence before a grand jury was non-existent in Montana. In my home state of North Carolina, every single felony charge goes before a grand jury to determine whether or not there is enough evidence to prosecute. Back home, the charges against us would have been thrown out quickly, and we never would have been indicted.

In Montana, however, law enforcement officers or prosecutors can claim "probable cause" for any reason without any check-and-balance evaluation of their "evidence" short of a trial. Hence, the intimidation factor is strong, and more than 90% of criminal cases in Montana are settled through plea deals due to the cost of a trial. That not's justice, neither is it safe for a law-abiding citizenry in a nation rotten at heart.

I started my long walk near the beginning of the hopelessly corrupt Biden Administration. I sounded Teddy Roosevelt's alarm on the highways and byways throughout. Here at the beginning of a new Trump Administration, I'll keep sounding that alarm. America is in big trouble with God! We must humble ourselves and repent. None of that changed with a favorable election.

The Lord may have indeed meted out great mercy by its outcome, but to whom much is given, much is required.

More than a century ago, Roosevelt was right, and we would do well to remember it moving forward. No rebounding economy or second Trump Administration can save our nation. Spiritual problems necessitate Holy Ghost revival in our churches and spiritual awakening in our streets. Without these, 2024 election results ultimately won't matter.

Apart from Almighty God, humility before Him as a people, and national repentance, Americans vexed and angry over a blue tyranny might just be foolish enough to replace it with a red tyranny. And historically, those prove to be much worse and much more dangerous. Look no further than Nazi Germany.

Mark these words of an obscure walking



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preacher from North Carolina: No red wave will have any lasting benefit as long as America continues to collectively stick its middle finger in the face of our Founding Fathers' God, daring Him to act! No glory or economic prosperity can save our nation. In fact, hypocritical Christless conservatism is just as dangerous to a free people as woke godless liberalism.

And as the French statesman, Alexis de Tocqueville, long ago remarked: "America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great." Let's not work to make America great again. Let's make her good and God-fearing again! Such is my understanding of true conservatism, genuine American patriotism.

As for Madison County, stay tuned. I'll be back, walking softly and carrying a big stick. For more information on the Madison County Hate Crime, visit thelongwalkusa.com.

You crossed paths with some Bible-believing Christians who love their country and started **WALKING ACROSS AMERICA** from the beach at Cape Hatteras, North Carolina on March 1, 2021. We aim to keep walking from sea to shining sea, until we put our feet in the waters of the Pacific.



More than 100 years ago, and 4 days before the assassination of President William McKinley, Vice President Teddy Roosevelt forewarned: "No prosperity and no glory can save a nation that is rotten at heart." We should have listened. God save the USA!

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