

## STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

By Gordon Howie

There is much RIGHT with South Dakota. It is a wonderful State in which to live and raise a family. But that is changing, and not for the better. We have seen a steady moral decline for several decades while many of us have done little or nothing. We are now at a crossroads as a State and a Nation. Will we choose righteousness as our path, or continue in moral decline and wickedness.

This is the condition of our State;

### **Education**

Our current condition....

We see a disturbing trend that empowers government to make decisions about our children's education, beginning with MANDATORY kindergarten, expanding the MANDATORY attendance age, and reaching toward state sponsored Pre-K. ALL of these moves spend more money and take choices away from parents. Prayer has been removed from our schools; replaced with the promotion of deviant lifestyles, graphic sex education, and schools that require on site security. School districts are suing the state for more money. Their focus is often on indoctrination rather than education.

What needs to be done.....

Reverse the trend of empowering government, and instead empower parents to make decisions regarding their children's education. All or part of the State aid to education needs to follow the student WHEREVER the parent chooses to send them; public school, home school, Christian school or private school. THAT empowers parents, increases the quality of education and decreases the cost. At the same time, it holds school districts accountable to the parents who can take their child AND THE MONEY somewhere else if the school board won't listen.

### **Illegal immigration**

Our current condition.....

Illegal immigrants are stealing South Dakota jobs, creating burdens for taxpayers and increasing crime in our State.

What needs to be done.....

Hold employers accountable; pass strict laws to protect South Dakota jobs and security. When illegals are caught, fine the employer... use the money to fund the unemployment insurance shortfalls, and place the illegals on a 90 day jail/work plan before sending them back home.

### **Protecting children**

Our current condition.....

Over 50 unborn children are killed every month in South Dakota. They are destroyed in their mother's wombs in the name of "choice".

What needs to be done.....

Planned Parenthood needs to be run out of our state. The out of state "doctors" who come here to kill our children need to be stopped at the border and sent home.

## **Our oil & natural gas resources**

Our current condition.....

Politicians are boasting about ethanol and wind. They are ignoring our oil & natural gas.

What needs to be done.....

The State needs to partner with landowners to develop these resources. We could also partner with neighboring States to create regional refineries. A result will be reduced tax burdens and new jobs. These resources located under school and public lands can serve as a further revenue source.

## **State Government Spending**

Our current condition.....

Next year's budget spends \$32.5 million dollars more than this year. Politicians give us excuses, rhetoric and budget double talk, but continue to spend more money.

What needs to happen.....

We need to FREEZE state spending and STOP government growth. No more excuses, no more delays, no more budget double talk. An aggressive program should begin immediately to examine every State agency, top to bottom to find new efficiencies, cost savings and eliminate waste.

## **Our freedom**

Our current condition.....

The federal government is taking control of business and health care. In league with the media and leftist politicians, they are systematically destroying the freedoms guaranteed by our constitution. Our political leaders are asleep at the switch rather than aggressively defending our freedoms.

What needs to happen.....

We need to pass the Health Care Freedom Act, and form coalitions with other states to preserve our constitutional rights as a state and as individuals. Our State government needs to be PRO-ACTIVE in defending our freedoms at every level against continued Federal intervention.

## **The citizens**

Our current condition.....

About 5% of the State population just chose the Republican nominee for Governor and US House. Most eligible voters simply did not find it important enough to vote. The majority of South Dakota citizens are being ruled by a small minority. That small minority has led us a long way in the wrong direction, but the blame does not really lay at their feet. Rather, the unengaged majority is really responsible for the condition of our State and our Nation.

What needs to happen.....

Every eligible citizen needs to register to vote, support candidates..... and VOTE.

## **How can we take back our government?**

Politics, the pulpit and the press have been responsible for getting us where we are today. Politicians have led us in the wrong direction by being self serving and more concerned about the next election than what is best for our nation. The press has been complicit in that mission by creating an illusion of deception to advance a liberal agenda rather than reporting truth. The pulpit has been largely silenced by fear. Pastors have been reluctant to speak openly.

The body of Christ needs to wake up and get engaged. Spiritual leaders need to leave political correctness, come out from behind their fear of loosing congregations or tax exempt status and become bold leaders. They need to speak openly about the defining moral issues of the day. They need to stop calling evil good and good evil. These leaders need to endorse candidates, help get them elected and then hold them accountable to righteousness rule. Our spiritual leaders need to become the Martin Luther Kings of today... willing to give their lives in the pursuit of freedom and righteousness. True Christians must become today's Rosa Parks, and take the front seat on the bus, in defiance of a government snared in wickedness. Like Rosa Parks, they can change the course of American history.

Christians will either stand up and take their rightful place of authority, or be subjected to the rule of secular humanists, radical Muslims, socialists, or other brands of wicked rulers. If pastors do not have the freedom to speak openly from the pulpit without fear of government retribution, we are no longer a free Nation.

Our government was meant to be a government of the people by the people and for the people. This government OF the people will become the new reality as the body of Christ rises up and rules over it.