

# SLOUCHING TOWARD GOMORRAH

FR. BILL MCCARTHY, MSA

*MY FATHER'S HOUSE*

Judge Robert H. Bork has written an insightful and powerful book, *Slouching Toward Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline*. In his *New York Times* bestseller, Bork compares America not to Bethlehem but to Gomorrah, the biblical city burned to the ground for the sinfulness of its people. To explain the decline into decadence, Bork reaches back to the 1960s, a decade in which America's moral integrity came under full-blown assault. He states that unless there's a religious revival and people of faith become significantly involved, then we will sink deeper into depravity.

The retired federal judge says grassroots involvement and serious change are the only hope for American democracy. Ours was a nation under God founded upon Judeo Christian principles revealed as our founding fathers stated in "the laws of nature (the natural law) and the laws of nature's God (the Divinely inscripturated revealed law):"

These eight words, found in the Declaration of Independence, set the tone for the new republic of these United States. The one thing that made America great was that we were constitutionally a "nation under God." When our constitution was being written old Ben Franklin stood up and addressed the Continental Congress with these words, "I have lived sirs, a long, long time. The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. If a sparrow cannot fall to the earth without his notice, can this nation rise without his aid. For we have been assured in the sacred writings that unless the Lord builds the houses, they labor in vain that build it (cf Ps 27:1).

Since 1963, something has gone awry. With a liberal and Masonic Court, the Supreme Court has unfastened this nation from its Christian foundation. It does not take a genius to realize that a nation without its foundation will crash and self-destruction.

The signs of slouching toward Gomorrah are everywhere -- secular humanism as the offered religion of today, the holocaust of 45 million abortions, the trillion dollars of waste of resources on militarism, the meltdown of our public school system, the horrific breakdown of the family, the epidemic spread of sexually transmitted diseases especially AIDS, the permissiveness of the legal system, the anti-Christian bias of our courts, the totalitarianism of our police, and the most obvious sign of Gomorrah - the official and legal acceptance of sodomy.

America is obviously under the heavy judgment of an all-holy God. As someone stated, "If God does not punish the United States, he owes Sodom and Gomorrah an apology." We are on a downward and slippery and accelerating slide. Sin is multiplying. From 1900 to 1941, every known sin in America doubled proportionately. From 1941 to the end of the Korean War, it doubled again. From 1954 to 1963, when we took God out of our schools, it doubled again. From 1965 to 1973, when we no longer officially held these truths to be self-evident that all men and women especially unborn babies were endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, especially the right to life, sin doubled again. From 1973 to 1985 again. And from then until now, it doubled again. The avalanche of evil grows faster and faster. Look at what we offer our children - violence, rape, incest, abortion, pornography, selfishness, promiscuity. Look at the role models -- Rambo, Madonna, the Grateful Dead, John Travolta, athletes who do drugs. Listen to the talk shows. They are so disgusting that it is frightening.

Enter Judge Bork. Judge Bork says that the most promising development in our time is the rise of an energetic, optimistic, and politically sophisticated religious conservatism. It may prove more powerful than merely political or economic conservatism, because religious conservatism's objectives are cultural and moral as well. Thus, though these conservatives can help elect candidates to national

and statewide offices, as they have repeatedly demonstrated, their more important influence may lie elsewhere.

Bork suggests that in order to change the culture, people have to be active on the local level. They need to speak out in their churches and workplaces and neighborhoods, and they need to be involved in grassroots government, such as school boards. Certainly, the national political scene is valuable, he notes; but to actually change the culture, that can best be done locally.

Because it is a grassroots movement, new religious conservatism can alter the culture, both by electing local officials and school boards (which have greater effects on culture than do national politicians) and by setting a moral tone in opposition to today's liberal relativism.

We may be witnessing a religious revival, another awakening. Not only are the evangelicals stronger than ever in their various denominations, but other organizations are likely to bring fresh spiritual forces to our culture and, ultimately, to our politics. Christian Coalition (and other organizations) along with the resurgence of interest among the young in Orthodox Judaism are all signs that religion is gaining strength. If so, religious precepts will eventually influence political action. Promise Keepers, like earlier religious awakenings that benefited America, adds an emotional fervor to churches that too often lacked it.

In his book, Bork argues that only religion can accomplish for a modern society what tradition, reason, and empirical observation cannot. Christianity and Judaism provide the major premises of moral reasoning by revelation and by the stories of the Bible. There is no need to attempt the impossible task of reasoning your way to first principles. Those principles are accepted as given by God.

For most people, only revealed religion can supply the premises from which the prescriptions of morality can be deduced. Religion tells us what the end of man should be and that information supplies the premises for moral reasoning and hence a basis of moral conduct. Philosophers cannot agree on the proper end of man and hence cannot supply the necessary premises. Religion is by its nature authoritative and final as to first principles. It must be so or it would be valueless. Those principles are given on a stone tablet, either literally or figuratively, and, so long as you believe the religion, this is simply no possibility of arguing with what is on the tablet.

It may be a crucial question for the culture whether the Roman Catholic Church can be restored to its former strength and orthodoxy. Because it is America's largest denomination -- only one with strong central authority -- the Catholic Church can be a major opponent of the nihilism of modern liberal culture. Pope John Paul II has been attempting to lead an intellectual and spiritual reinvigoration, but there is resistance within the Church. Modern liberal culture has made inroads with some of the hierarchy as well as the laity. It remains to be seen whether intellectual orthodoxy can stand firm against currents of radical individualism and radical egalitarianism. For the moment, the outcome is in doubt.

Liberals of the modern variety are hostile to religious conservatism in any denomination. They realize, quite correctly, that it is a threat to their agenda. For that reason, they regularly refer to the "religious right," using the term as a pejorative to suggest that anything conservative is extreme. No conservative, religious or secular, ought to accept the phrase. There is no symmetry of "left" and "right" in religion, in our culture, or in our politics. The Left, as apparent throughout history, and never more so than in the 1960s, is alienated and hostile to American institutions and traditions. They will destroy those institutions and traditions if they can. There is no group of comparable size and influence to balance the extremists of modern liberalism, no "right" that has a similarly destructive program in mind.

Bork notes that modern liberals try to frighten Americans by saying that religious conservatives "want to impose their morality on others." That is palpable foolishness. All participants in politics want to "impose" on others as much of their morality as possible, and no group is more insistent on that than liberals. Religious conservatives are not authoritarian. To the degree they have their way, it will be through democratic processes. The culture would then resemble the better aspects of the 1950s, he notes, and that would be cause for rejoicing.

# SLOUCHING TOWARD GOMORRAH

FR. BILL MCCARTHY, MSA

*MY FATHER'S HOUSE*

Judge Robert H. Bork has written an insightful and powerful book, *Slouching Toward Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline*. In his *New York Times* bestseller, Bork compares America not to Bethlehem but to Gomorrah, the biblical city burned to the ground for the sinfulness of its people. To explain the decline into decadence, Bork reaches back to the 1960s, a decade in which America's moral integrity came under full-blown assault. He states that unless there's a religious revival and people of faith become significantly involved, then we will sink deeper into depravity.

The retired federal judge says grassroots involvement and serious change are the only hope for American democracy. Ours was a nation under God founded upon Judeo Christian principles revealed as our founding fathers stated in "the laws of nature (the natural law) and the laws of nature's God (the Divinely inscripturated revealed law):"

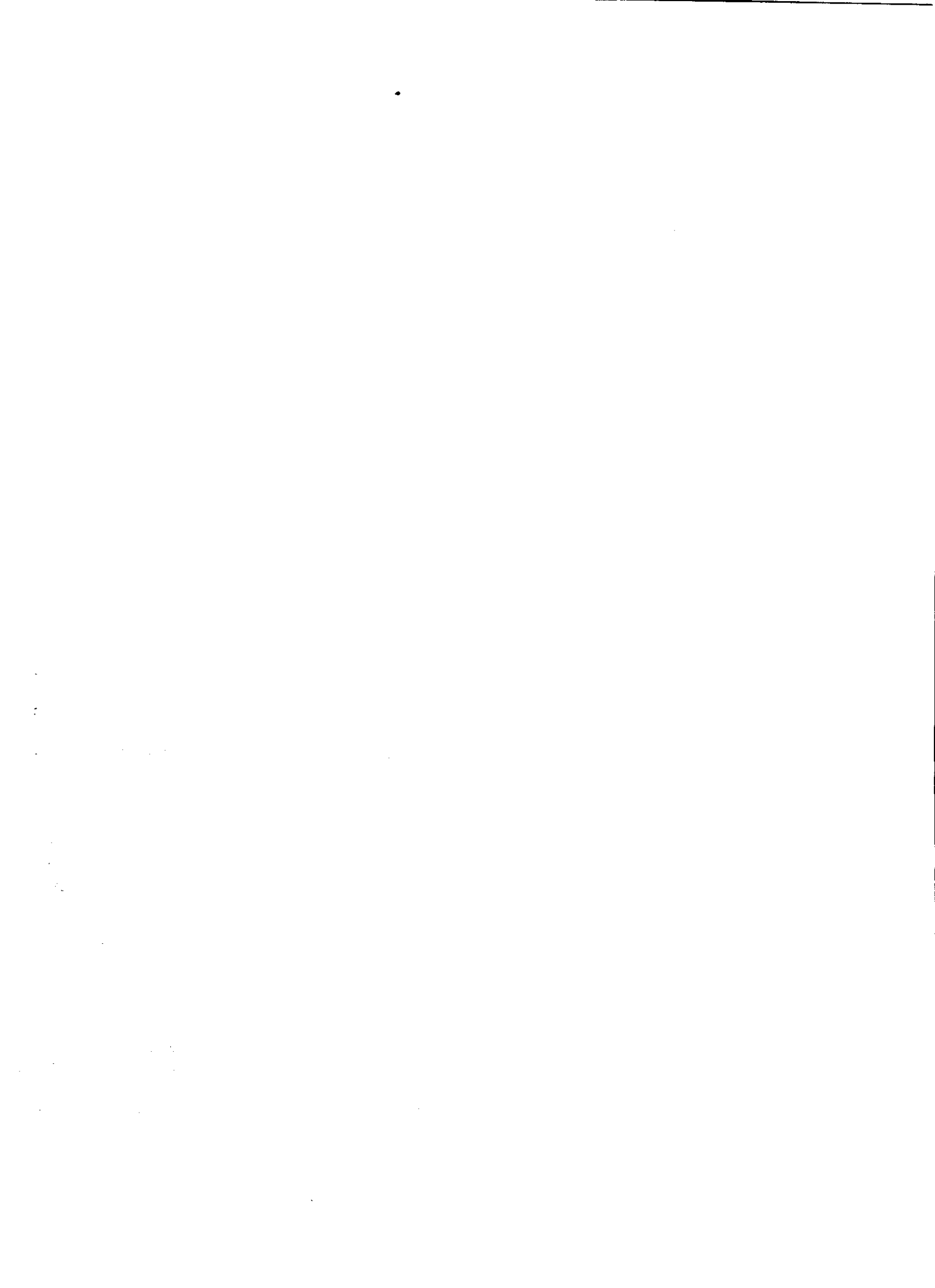
These eight words, found in the Declaration of Independence, set the tone for the new republic of these United States. The one thing that made America great was that we were constitutionally a "nation under God." When our constitution was being written old Ben Franklin stood up and addressed the Continental Congress with these words, "I have lived sirs, a long, long time. The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. If a sparrow cannot fall to the earth without his notice, can this nation rise without his aid. For we have been assured in the sacred writings that unless the Lord builds the houses, they labor in vain that build it (cf Ps 27:1).

Since 1963, something has gone awry. With a liberal and Masonic Court, the Supreme Court has unfastened this nation from its Christian foundation. It does not take a genius to realize that a nation without its foundation will crash and self-destruction.

The signs of slouching toward Gomorrah are everywhere -- secular humanism as the offered religion of today, the holocaust of 45 million abortions, the trillion dollars of waste of resources on militarism, the meltdown of our public school system, the horrific breakdown of the family, the epidemic spread of sexually transmitted diseases especially AIDS, the permissiveness of the legal system, the anti-Christian bias of our courts, the totalitarianism of our police, and the most obvious sign of Gomorrah - the official and legal acceptance of sodomy.

America is obviously under the heavy judgment of an all-hoily God. As someone stated, "If God does not punish the United States, he owes Sodom and Gomorrah an apology." We are on a downward and slippery and accelerating slide. Sin is multiply. From 1900 to 1941, every known sin in America doubled proportionately. From 1941 to the end of the Korean War, it doubled again. From 1954 to 1963, when we took God out of our schools, it doubled again. From 1965 to 1973, when we no longer officially held these truths to be self-evident that all men and women especially unborn babies were endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, especially the right to life, sin doubled again. From 1973 to 1985 again. And from then until now, it doubled again. The avalanche of evil grows faster and faster. Look at what we offer our children - violence, rape, incest, abortion, pornography, selfishness, promiscuity. Look at the role models -- Rambo, Madonna, the Grateful Dead, John Travolta, athletes who do drugs. Listen to the talk shows. They are so disgusting that it is frightening.

Enter Judge Bork. Judge Bork says that the most promising development in our time is the rise of an energetic, optimistic, and politically sophisticated religious conservatism. It may prove more powerful than merely political or economic conservatism, because religious conservatism's objectives are cultural and moral as well. Thus, though these conservatives can help elect candidates to national



and statewide offices, as they have repeatedly demonstrated, their more important influence may lie elsewhere.

Bork suggests that in order to change the culture, people have to be active on the local level. They need to speak out in their churches and workplaces and neighborhoods, and they need to be involved in grassroots government, such as school boards. Certainly, the national political scene is valuable, he notes; but to actually change the culture, that can best be done locally.

Because it is a grassroots movement, new religious conservatism can alter the culture, both by electing local officials and school boards (which have greater effects on culture than do national politicians) and by setting a moral tone in opposition to today's liberal relativism.

We may be witnessing a religious revival, another awakening. Not only are the evangelicals stronger than ever in their various denominations, but other organizations are likely to bring fresh spiritual forces to our culture and, ultimately, to our politics. Christian Coalition (and other organizations) along with the resurgence of interest among the young in Orthodox Judaism are all signs that religion is gaining strength. If so, religious precepts will eventually influence political action. Promise Keepers, like earlier religious awakenings that benefited America, adds an emotional fervor to churches that too often lacked it.

In his book, Bork argues that only religion can accomplish for a modern society what tradition, reason, and empirical observation cannot. Christianity and Judaism provide the major premises of moral reasoning by revelation and by the stories of the Bible. There is no need to attempt the impossible task of reasoning your way to first principles. Those principles are accepted as given by God.

For most people, only revealed religion can supply the premises from which the prescriptions of morality can be deduced. Religion tells us what the end of man should be and that information supplies the premises for moral reasoning and hence a basis of moral conduct. Philosophers cannot agree on the proper end of man and hence cannot supply the necessary premises. Religion is by its nature authoritative and final as to first principles. It must be so or it would be valueless. Those principles are given on a stone tablet, either literally or figuratively, and, so long as you believe the religion, this is simply no possibility of arguing with what is on the tablet.

It may be a crucial question for the culture whether the Roman Catholic Church can be restored to its former strength and orthodoxy. Because it is America's largest denomination -- only one with strong central authority -- the Catholic Church can be a major opponent of the nihilism of modern liberal culture. Pope John Paul II has been attempting to lead an intellectual and spiritual reinvigoration, but there is resistance within the Church. Modern liberal culture has made inroads with some of the hierarchy as well as the laity. It remains to be seen whether intellectual orthodoxy can stand firm against currents of radical individualism and radical egalitarianism. For the moment, the outcome is in doubt.

Liberals of the modern variety are hostile to religious conservatism in any denomination. They realize, quite correctly, that it is a threat to their agenda. For that reason, they regularly refer to the "religious right," using the term as a pejorative to suggest that anything conservative is extreme. No conservative, religious or secular, ought to accept the phrase. There is no symmetry of "left" and "right" in religion, in our culture, or in our politics. The Left, as apparent throughout history, and never more so than in the 1960s, is alienated and hostile to American institutions and traditions. They will destroy those institutions and traditions if they can. There is no group of comparable size and influence to balance the extremists of modern liberalism, no "right" that has a similarly destructive program in mind.

Bork notes that modern liberals try to frighten Americans by saying that religious conservatives "want to impose their morality on others." That is palpable foolishness. All participants in politics want to "impose" on others as much of their morality as possible, and no group is more insistent on that than liberals. Religious conservatives are not authoritarian. To the degree they have their way, it will be through democratic processes. The culture would then resemble the better aspects of the 1950s, he notes, and that would be cause for rejoicing.

