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### America in View of Charlie Kirk's Life

“It drives the left nuts when you say this, that all men are created equal in the eyes of God, all men and women, but not all cultures are created equal...Western civilization is the best that humanity has produced. It's an outgrowth of the Bible.” Charlie Kirk lived his life for his faith, his family, and America. A strong conservative, he treated everyone with the respect they deserved as image-bearers of God. Throughout his career, he debated thousands of people, spoke on numerous subjects, and fully exercised his First Amendment right to free speech. All three branches of our government, both at the state and federal levels, have upheld this right over the centuries with certain reasonable limitations. My pastor addressed the youth group the Sunday after Kirk was murdered, encouraging us to follow in Kirk's bold example and emphasizing that verbal disagreement does not equate to violence. Upon interviewing people from multiple generations, I discovered differing viewpoints on Kirk, his work, and his death. Although he was apparently killed by a young man with a rifle on a college campus, Charlie Kirk fervently defended the Second Amendment rights of American citizens. I fully agree with his stance and, moreover, believe that several subsequent restrictions should be lifted, such as gun-free school zones for the protection of our youngest citizens. While many examples are available, I have compared two instances, one in which left-wing politicians allowed political violence to run out of control and another portraying constitutional law enforcement action as violence.

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution reads, “Congress shall make no law ...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or of the right of the People to peaceably assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” Proposed by the Anti-Federalists in 1789, the Bill of Rights was intended to explicitly enshrine several key freedoms Americans possess. Elsewhere, the Texas Penal Code states, “...a person commits an offence if the person intentionally or knowingly threatens another with imminent bodily injury.” At first glance, these two laws can appear contradictory. However, upon closer examination, they are paradoxical. The First Amendment articulates our right to free speech; the penal code puts certain limits on it. In the law, a fine line is drawn between the right to free expression and the

threats that cause chaos. The First Amendment was intended to protect our right to express ourselves and our voice in the government. On the other hand, the penal code safeguards us from living in fear and societal chaos. When the Constitution was ratified in 1788, it codified Americans' right to free speech. In the centuries since, state constitutions and penal codes have been drafted and ratified to establish and explain specific parameters on our God-given rights. Not only have the executive powers enforced these guidelines, but the Supreme Court also confirmed them. In 1917, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., in his majority opinion, wrote, "The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting 'fire' in a theatre and causing a panic." The First Amendment acknowledged our right to free speech, and successive legislative and judicial acts have upheld it.

Three days after Charlie Kirk died, on Sunday morning, Pastor John Meador of Cross City Church, Eulless, addressed my youth group regarding Kirk's assassination. He began with an overview of Kirk's accomplishments and then encouraged us to follow his example. Primarily, Meador focused on having respectful conversations with people of opposing opinions. Ultimately, we should be bold when speaking the truth, remaining uncompromised in Christ, and remembering that disagreement is okay. He emphasized that words, however disagreeable they may be, are not violence in and of themselves. This point of view coincides with the penal code, which clarifies that speech only becomes violent and illegal when imminent bodily injury is threatened. Additionally, it corresponds with the First Amendment, which states that we are allowed to express our opinions and disagree without legal consequences. Disagreement and conversation are God-given rights protected by the Constitution and essential for a functional free society.

Hoping to hear a wide variety of opinions, I interviewed people from three different generations: the baby boomer generation, my parents' generation, and Gen Z. During these conversations, I asked them a series of questions about Charlie Kirk, his work, and his assassination. Here is what I learned. Both older generations were largely unfamiliar with him prior to his death. By contrast, my generation was far more acquainted, including one friend involved in a TPUSA chapter at his high school. When asked about how they had heard about his death, the older generations were either watching the news or received a report on their phones. Younger generations were made aware by friends at school, and then sought out further details throughout the day. Reactions were mixed. Some were shocked. Some were disappointed. Still

others were sad, frustrated, or curious. Interestingly to note, however, is the fact that the adults, who expressed sadness, seemed upset over the horrific event, while the younger generation grieved the loss of him as an individual. In my final question, I inquired whether they thought the suspect currently in custody acted alone or was involved in a larger conspiracy. My uncle confidently stated that he believes this scheme had been in the works for thousands of years and was carried out by extra-terrestrial beings. As for the rest of my contacts from the older generations not currently locked up in a psych ward, they are convinced that the suspect largely acted alone. While they are certain he was influenced by outside sources (contemporary liberal agendas, and social media...), they are fairly confident that he was the sole perpetrator of the crime. Conversely, my generation widely suspects a further conspiracy, with additional details yet to be disclosed.

Clearly, based on my conversations, a distinct difference exists between the answers of the younger generations and those of the older, especially in their reactions and familiarity. Why? Primarily because Charlie Kirk targeted impressionable fourteen to twenty-five-year-olds. This is the same generation that liberals want so badly to indoctrinate. Kirk understood what the Communists in this country know as well, that you have to catch them young. His goal was to inform the next generation of Americans and persuade them toward conservative ideology and activism that would make this country great again. Accordingly, that is the reason he debated and spoke at college campuses and student rallies, instead of nursing homes and bingo parlors. While his message may not be as relevant to older generations, we can all admire and strive towards emulating his respectful attitude and skillful debate tactics. Becoming more familiar with Kirk's message and the generation he influenced is necessary for older generations to understand the hundreds of vigils in his honor, his massive funeral, and the nationwide sadness felt in his absence. Charlie Kirk spent his life communicating conservative values, and if we want these values to dominate our culture, we cannot be unified without intragenerational conversations.

Columbine High School, Colorado, 1999; Sandy Hook Elementary, Connecticut, 2012; Uvalde Elementary, Texas, 2022; Covenant School - Nashville, Tennessee, 2023. These are some of the most deadly and infamous school shootings in America. While only four are listed here, there have been numerous school shootings over the years. Tragically, the list goes on and on. Why is the list so long, and why are the perpetrators so "successful"? The answer is simple.

Schools are typically occupied by crowds of women and children, the most defenseless among us. The shooters walk in with semi-automatic rifles and an abundance of ammunition, and the teachers and students are armed with glue sticks and crayons. By contrast, the West Freeway church shooting in White Settlement, Texas, was ended in just six seconds by an armed parishioner with just one accurate shot from his handgun. If he had not fatally shot the armed intruder, dozens of his fellow congregants would have, as their firearms were also drawn. Similarly, in June of this year, at CrossPointe Church in Wayne, Michigan, a shooter was approaching the entrance of the building, and a member intentionally rammed him with his truck, but this action failed to neutralize the threat. Security teams inside the church responded by locking the doors, while two members of the CrossPointe security team engaged and ultimately killed the shooter with their own firearms while still outside.

This disparity is brought to you by the Texas Penal Code - chapter forty-six, sections three and eleven, which bans firearms on school premises. According to the Penal Code, “A person commits an offense if the person intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly possesses or goes with a firearm, location-restricted knife, club, or prohibited weapon on the physical premises of a school or educational institution.” This offense is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in jail and a \$4,000 fine. These laws contribute to the fact that school shootings are not uncommon. Gun-free zones are killing zones. This ban needs to be lifted, not just for the anecdotal reasons described above, but also because the Constitution supports this change. The Second Amendment reads, “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” As mentioned earlier, penal codes create parameters and explain our rights and liberties. While many of these guidelines are justified and necessary, others are not. In the case of the aforementioned firearm regulations in the Texas Penal Code, the legal limitations have proven deadly. As the old frontier saying goes, “God made man, and Sam Colt made ‘em equal.” It is absolutely necessary for teachers and staff to carry firearms on campus. Bad guys with guns are stopped by good guys with guns. This great equalizer needs to be allowed in schools in order to protect the vulnerable population therein.

In 2021, George Floyd died as he was being arrested for attempting to use a counterfeit bill in a convenience store. This incident sparked riots in dozens of major cities across the nation. Costing cities almost two billion dollars in damage, the riots were violent and destructive.

Despite endless video evidence to the contrary, the mainstream media either remained completely unconcerned or blatantly denied the obvious. Over and over, news outlets maintained that these protests were “Not riots” and “Mostly, to one-hundred percent peaceful.” They even went so far as to say that burning and destroying property is not violence and is justified! Nancy Pelosi casually stated, “People will do what they do.” Likewise, several years later, when President Trump sent ICE to expel the illegal immigrants from our country, riots broke out again. ICE agents were performing their constitutional duty of protecting our country from enemies both foreign and domestic. Protesters responded with violence. They hurled rocks, caused chaos, and hindered justice. Meanwhile, despite proof to the contrary, left-wing politicians, such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, demagogued a threat from conservatives, declaring that the protests were the result of right-wing politicians. They blamed Donald Trump’s actions involving him and his administration’s crackdown on illegal immigration as the instigating factor of the protesters’ violence, as if the protesters were not responsible for their own actions. What a load of hooey!

In conclusion, written in our Constitution is our First Amendment right to free speech. Further legal action on both state and federal levels has established parameters by legislative bodies and judicial interpretation. The Sunday after Charlie Kirk died, Pastor Meador urged us to follow in Kirk’s example of respectful conversation. My interviews revealed that different generations had varied responses to Kirk’s assassination. The gun ban on school properties violates the Second Amendment, and these resulting deadly incidents stand in stark contrast to shootings in churches, where they are ended in seconds by armed laypeople. Most importantly, Charlie Kirk wanted to be remembered for “...courage for my faith.” Charlie Kirk was a Christian. He put his faith and trust in his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lived a perfect life in order to impute his righteousness to us, who paid the penalty for our sin by his death on the cross, who rose again on the third day, and who is now seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. In light of Kirk’s death, many Americans have reconsidered their relationship with their Creator and headed back to the pews on Sunday mornings. By the grace of God, this renewed interest in spiritual matters will result in the maintenance of the Biblical foundations that have made Western civilization great.