



The Virtue Solution: Project Overview

“Virtue is to liberty what the soul is to the body.” – John Adams

Unlocking the Cure for a Disease

After years of watching the Federal government amass power, borrow and spend without restraint, and trample the Constitution, it has become obvious to many that something is horribly wrong. Even “conservative” states like Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina are among the most dependent on profligate Federal spending. More alarmingly, decades of family and church breakdown has led to moral outrages like those of Planned Parenthood and lawless decisions like *Obergefell* that legalized “gay marriage.”

There’s a problem in America. It is not one political party or another, or one media source or another, or one overreaching law or another. The problem as it would appear to the organizers of this project is that “we the people” have lost our character. Worse than not communicating the liberty message, we have not lived it. We have failed to practice what is right where it counts most. The problem is a systemic one: a disease of dependency and carelessness.

What is Virtue?

The only answer is a remedy our Founders called “virtue,” the moral courage to do what is right and to resist what is evil, regardless of the consequences. In a civic sense, Aristotle said that virtue is justice, exercised among neighbors. It is expressed in a patriotic sense of loyalty to one’s community, in which one cares for others—particularly the needy—in his surrounding locale. Put simply, it is the Biblical command: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31).

We hear much about the necessity of faith from the church pulpit today. Faith is indeed the foundation of right living, because human beings are desperately sinful, without the power to do what is right within them. Our Creator proclaimed, “Without Me, you can do nothing” (John 15:5b). As an individual, placing your faith in Jesus Christ is the first and most important step you can take towards building a righteous society. Yet faith is not meant to exist alone.

The Apostle Peter admonished us to “Add to [our] faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge...” (II Peter 1:4). Before we can gain knowledge, we must add virtue to our faith by acting on God’s will in the real world. This virtue comes from the person of Jesus Christ. It can only be achieved in His righteousness, which is freely available as a gift to those who ask for it.

Jesus’ righteousness is not merely a theory or legal construct. It also must exist in the real world. Indeed, demonstrating the virtue of Christ is why we are in the world at all. In I Peter 2:9, we find that the reason we have been made “a holy nation” is to “show forth the [virtues] of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.” That which is virtuous is that which best declares Jesus’ character. Philippians 2:1-8 explains that the character of Jesus is described in love, humility, and servanthood.

The opposite of virtue is selfishness. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we should be serving Him with our whole selves, for “No one can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24). This service of God should compel us to care for the neediest in our communities (Matthew 25:40, 45). Today, material things and human accomplishment has become the god of America. The desire for financial success has displaced the desire for eternal success. Our economic system itself is not to be blamed for this. Rather, it is the eradication of godly principles from the economic and civil realms, because of the church’s failure to proclaim them. In general, America simply does not know how to act.

Who Will Show The Way?

The prophet Hosea warned, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). According to Peter, the bridge from faith to the knowledge needed to prevent destruction is virtue. God’s people must be the first to exercise virtue if we want others to follow. The necessity of virtue applies not only to our spiritual lives but also to the physical world in every God-ordained jurisdiction. Our thesis that virtue is the solution is valid first and foremost for the individual, yet it also extends to our families, churches, economy, and civil government. It is necessary then for God’s people to take action on their beliefs and gain the experience and understanding to build and maintain the infrastructure needed to save their civilization from destruction.

We would do well to heed Hosea’s prescription: “Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy. Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD, till He comes and rains righteousness upon you” (Hosea 11:12).

The Bill of Rights: A Plan to Cultivate Virtue

The Founders of our country never believed words written on paper could keep America free. For example, James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution,” wrote:

“Is there no virtue among us? If there be not, we are in a wretched situation. No theoretical checks - no

form of government - can render us secure. To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness, without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea.”

Samuel Adams, leader of the Sons of Liberty, agreed with such a perspective:

“Neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt. He therefore is the truest friend of the liberty of his country who tries most to promote its virtue.”

The Founders time and again clearly indicated that it is only as the people possess virtue—that is, moral courage—to act on the written laws, and resist their violation, that documents like the Constitution are meaningful. But in this vein they are very much meaningful. In particular, we believe the Founders designed the Bill of Rights in such a way that its exercise during a time of crisis would create an environment in which virtue would flourish, giving new life to liberty.

Before this can happen, there must be a spiritual awakening of God’s people. The church and family must again fulfill their God-given roles and responsibilities in the culture. There must be a new reformation, a “revolution in the hearts and minds of the people” as John Adams put it, in which Christ is placed in His rightful position as the authority over all of life, and His law of liberty is made our rule of conduct.

From there, several specific practical steps can be taken to restore America. These steps do not produce a sweeping immediate change in government. However, these exercises of virtue build a framework for retaking liberty at a community, county, and state level by creating an engaged, virtuous people who will cease their dependency on Washington, D.C., resist evil, and ultimately replace tyrannical systems and rulers.

Five Tools to Rebuild America

The Bill of Rights can be distilled into five major areas of action that protect all our other liberties.

1. Spiritual Awakening (First Amendment). Because our Constitution only works for a moral and religious people, the first step to restore virtue is to fully exercise our Christianity. Foundational to this is full reliance upon God through prayer, and returning to a Biblical worldview in every aspect of our lives—including philosophy, education, law, aesthetics, and relationships. Knowledge of the Source of liberty is the foundation. Without individual rights that are determined outside of humanity, those rights are subject to arbitrary denial.

2. Education and Advocacy (First Amendment). Thomas Jefferson told us that as long as the press is free “all is safe.” This idea presupposes that “we the people” will turn from apathy and in fact use the press to hold government accountable. The next step to restore virtue is to speak and publish the truth. Citizens cannot be both ignorant and free.

3. Local Associations – (First through Fourth Amendments). The right of assembly should be practiced to organize home-based community associations in which people are trained to care for one another. This is the heartbeat of The Virtue Solution (see *Jefferson’s Hundreds* below). Alexis de Tocqueville had much to say about the power of such groups, especially in the pattern of a church.

These associations of good neighbors will form the structure on which America can build a fresh, principled approach to civic issues as well as together resist the incursion of evil. The Founders called this concept a “militia.” Militia is not a bad word; it’s actually the one organization called “necessary” in the Constitution. We need to reclaim its proper use: to prevent violence and provide care for others by appropriately organizing.

4. Renewed Jury System (Fifth through Eighth Amendments). The common law grand jury must regain independence, so that those who violate the law face appropriate legal consequences. The petit jury must also again exercise its historic right and duty to render a not-guilty verdict where the law in question is itself unjust.

5. State Nullification (Ninth and Tenth Amendments). James Madison and Thomas Jefferson agreed that state-level resistance must be the first line of defense against Federal overreach. There are boundaries to every jurisdiction that may not lawfully be crossed. Each individual and each state must therefore, in each area of civic responsibility, be willing to refuse to comply with edicts that violate God's Law or the U.S. Constitution.

Individuals working in isolation will be ineffective with these tools. Therefore, a key goal of this project is to promote the convening of local community-based associations.

Working Together: Jefferson’s Hundreds

Thomas Jefferson foresaw a day when the safeguards of the U.S. Constitution would fail, leading to increasing oppression. He recommended that in such a situation, the nation should divide ourselves into communities of one hundred households each, which would form new “ward republics” independent of outside control. These ward republics should be small enough that “every citizen can attend, when called on, and act in person.” Jefferson envisioned that each community of one hundred would select its own justice of the peace, militia captain, constable, schoolmaster, and jurors. He wanted most government capacities to be exercised at the lowest level, so they could be quickly and effectively steered in a virtuous direction.

Of particular importance to Jefferson was the education of the citizenry. He believed that America could only fall due to the ignorance of the people, thus he included creating a new school in each ward republic. He was particularly interested in renewing agrarian skills, because he believed a farming setting was the place liberty could most easily flourish. He was also insistent on the importance of reading.

As communities grew less beholden to faraway powers, more loyal toward their own families and neighbors, rightly educated in truth, and closer to the earth and to self-sufficiency, Jefferson believed they would become both a better and stronger people. Americans would learn to meet each others’ needs. Those faraway powers would gradually lose their economic grip.

Realizing Jefferson’s vision will require steady work. We will need to create new local industries, new means of education, new ways to provide healthcare, and more. As American communities learn and practice their responsibilities, virtue will be cultivated, and dependency will cease. Virtue is the cure for the ills of America. Without it, problems will be impossible to solve. Building on a foundation of Biblical authority and spiritual restoration, we can implement the specific framework of Jefferson’s Hundreds to create a fresh beginning.

The Plan: Love Your Neighbor

Virtue is exercised through love for our neighbors, motivated by a love for our Creator. In fact, all just laws are specific ways of demonstrating genuine love toward others (See Romans 13:9-10 and Galatians 5:14). As vehicles for promoting virtue by loving your neighbor, The Virtue Solution Project presents two possible models for local associations in the pattern recommended by Jefferson.

No one can tell you exactly the best way to meet the needs of your neighborhood. That would be missing the point. Our goal is to give you a pattern. To get you started, we have identified five basic areas of need:

- Spiritual Leadership
- Self-Defense
- Engineering
- Preparedness
- Medicine

Whenever you need guidance, we'll come alongside you to help implement the plan, placing people in initial roles and organizing to build a self-sufficient system that lasts. Our hope is that you will also guide others to build their own communities, so that virtue will grow exponentially across the nation.

The Good Neighbors Model

The Good Neighbors plan starts by meeting and develop relationships with your immediate neighbors that will produce prosperity and security for your neighborhood.

This is easy to do. Meet five of your nearest neighbors on each side or direction from your home. Have a get-together to learn about each other's talents, interests, families, and needs. It's as easy as a knock on a door, a cup of coffee, or an outdoor BBQ. Acting as neighbors will enrich your lives immensely. After you meet your neighbors, encourage them to reach out to five of *their* immediate neighbors, and for those to reach out to five more. The number of involved neighbors will multiply rapidly.

Throw a family-friendly neighborhood block party. Hold your get-togethers regularly, each neighbor inviting more neighbors each time. We can suggest further events you can hold as your neighborhood grows, such as an "old-fashioned election day" and more. You are effectively creating a real community where children will play securely and people know and care for each other.

This isn't merely a social endeavor, as fulfilling as that will be. By interacting regularly with your neighbors, needs will present themselves which you, working in concern along with your neighbors, can meet for one another. Your neighborhood will become safer and self-sustaining, without needing government agents or corporations.

A Good Neighbors community will greatly inhibit any "bad guy" from mischief among you. Consider this: if you are ever in need of help, who knows best who belongs in your house, a policeman or your neighbor? Who's more likely to shoot the wrong guy or falsely arrest you? Acting as neighbors—home to home and person to person—is how we can become secure, free, and prosperous again.

Using the Good Neighbors Model, the goal is to secure one person per voting precinct to serve as a community coordinator. That person will coordinate wards made up of 100 households. A precinct generally consists of about 2,000 homes, so with only 20 coordinators the precinct can be fully divided into Wards. You don't have to wait for this person to get started; just start reaching out to those around you.

To simplify your efforts you can begin with resources that are easily available like voter records, property records, and tax records. Break down your precinct into small neighborhoods. One helpful resource you may wish to use to organize will be the Peacekeeper app, under development at www.peacekeeper.org. A representative from The Virtue Solution Project will also be happy to meet with you either in person or online. Email us to make a request, at thevirtuesolution@gmail.com, or learn more about the Good Neighbors Model at www.goodneighborsact.com.

The Fellowship Model

The Fellowship Model is complementary to the Good Neighbors Model. Some might choose to pattern their association after one model or the other; some may choose elements of both.

This model is not limited to your immediate neighbors but also includes your existing relationships. Your original community would consist of the people who are closest to you in agreement and friendship; those who you know that would readily carry out this vision. Invite these friends from all over the state and region to learn about the project. Then, keep in touch with these people and organize gatherings with them.

Your home is a great place to start getting together to focus on spiritual growth, personal relationships, and life skills. Over time, you may wish to find property where everyone can gather consistently. Having property to go to would be a great advantage during a crisis. Perhaps someone in the core group would be willing to dedicate a piece of land for this purpose.

With this model, take care not to allow your group to isolate itself. You want your community to be a lighthouse, not a monastery. Reach out to others, befriend them, and bring them in.

The Fellowship Model seeks to lay a solid foundation of likeminded families. The real advantage of this plan is that it provides a base where new community coordinators can be trained. Since the members of the community are not together geographically (at the outset), there is room to grow. The goal is to get everyone on the same page quickly so that they can begin their own neighborhood projects.

When you come to a point where you think the overall training has been successful, one way to proceed would be to identify two people who can be leaders in their area, then divide your group into two pieces geographically. The two parts will now have their own leaders and will meet more frequently than the large combined group. As soon as these two groups have reached a stable mass (inviting their own best friends and likeminded acquaintances), each group can again divide in two once its people feel they are ready. And so each group can divide into a smaller and smaller geographic area as it gains enough members.

Communities based on philosophy or fellowship need to be free to expand at their own rate organically, so in this model the number of 100 households is not cut and dry. It would be more of a recommended threshold to keep communities from getting too large.

A Bright Vision for America

The American people will never be won over by a vacuum or void. They will be won by a better alternative. They will need to see that liberalism, socialism, central planning, and interventionism are inferior to freedom.

Through practicing virtue, we can provide that better alternative. By exercising the plan the Founders set in the Bill of Rights, we can reclaim that freedom. We can change the country starting at the ground level and moving to counties and states, which will then change the Federal level.

Some may question whether enough time remains to achieve national renewal. We believe there is always time, provided the right steps are taken. But it's crucial to realize the exercise of virtue has local benefits regardless of its ultimate effect. Turning our families and communities toward virtue produces loving relationships, local economic prosperity, secure neighborhoods, and opportunity for the knowledge of truth, no matter what the future holds for America as a whole. Turning our counties and states toward virtue by encouraging "lesser magistrates" such as the sheriff to interpose against unconstitutional actions produces local physical protection.

Each act of virtue, each family and community empowered, each innocent person protected, and each individual who comes into a right fellowship of faith with his Creator, will be a success in itself. The steps in this project are things each American should be doing regardless of whether they are part of an organized effort. Furthermore, as we win at each level, we buy more time to continue to change the course of the nation.

Our end goal is a society strong and free, with a stable foundation. It is a place where opportunity exists for all because neighbors are willing to defend and care for each other. It is a government that respects the God-given rights of each person because that government is being held to account by the people at every level. It is an economy built on local self-sufficiency, and so is in no danger of becoming top-heavy with dependence on giant corporations or Federal intervention. It is a nation that respects the unchanging "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" rather than the whims of whoever happens to hold the reins of power. It is a people who again have the courage to be a light of God's goodness through love to others.

Virtue is the cure to our nation's disease of dependency and carelessness. It is what is required for that end goal to be achieved. Whether this goal will be successful on the broad scale remains in God's hands. Perhaps our plan will only produce an oasis here and there in a desert of godless collapse. Let us each do our part regardless and take responsibility to love our neighbor as ourselves, as our Lord has commanded, to reap the local rewards that are available at each step of the way, and trust the results to Him.

Doing right in the power of God results in a bright light shining where it otherwise would not. That bright light is what America needs, and it's what our families and neighbors need too.

How We Will Proceed

The Virtue Solution Project will consist primarily of five elements. Please join with us!

1. An introductory booklet that brings together the brightest ideas of the liberty movement dealing with the five-step plan seen above, which will be distributed to a target audience.

2. A YouTube channel with videos consistently addressing current issues with practical solutions from the standpoint of restoring virtue, and providing examples from those involved in the project. If you are interested in being interviewed during a video episode, please let us know.

3. An array of promotional literature that can be absorbed by anyone from a brilliant scholar to a politician. This literature will communicate both the need and practical steps for how to fulfill the need.

4. A mobile app and associated online programs that will assist in making connections at the community level, and streamline the formation and training of response groups.

5. A journalistic network that will provide on-the-ground news and report on best practices from the communities associated with the project.

Get Involved

Do you want to practice love to your neighbors? Do you want to join a community where virtue is being cultivated and liberty is being restored? Are you excited about the possibility of a fresh beginning for our American civilization? We invite you to take action.

First, we need coordinators who can ignite the project within their communities and bring others together, weaving the fabric of Jefferson's Hundreds. If the average number of people per household is three, there are about one hundred million households in America, and thus an approximate total of one million community coordinators will be called for when all's told!

Second, within each community we need pioneers to come forward to lead in at least five areas, so that these communities can grow to be truly self-sustaining: Spiritual Leadership, Self-Defense, Engineering, Preparedness, and Medicine. Within each category there is a need for people with skills of all kinds. For example, within Engineering, we need individuals who can handle construction, communications, energy sources, machinery, and water. Within Medicine, we need individuals with skills in first aid, nutritional health, and treatment of critical injuries. Whatever your unique skills are, know that someone in your community needs them. Your job is to find and meet that need.

Third, we need creative people who can help us write, present, produce videos, and generate web content and artwork to communicate and promote the Virtue Solution Project.

Finally, please consider contributing financially toward our ongoing publication and media costs as we endeavor to provide hope through the Founding principles.

Contact Us Today

If you are interested in rebuilding the American civilization on principle and moral character through a nationwide fabric of spiritually-focused communities, please call R. Josiah Magnuson at 864-420-7933, or email us at thevirtuesolution@gmail.com.

At our website, www.TheVirtueSolution.com, you and your friends can officially sign up for this project. You can also find numerous quotes on virtue from the Founding Fathers, and a lot more information about the details of this project. Thank you for investing in your family, community, and nation!

Credits

The Virtue Solution: Project Overview was written by R. Josiah Magnuson and edited by Rep. Jonathon Hill. The *Good Neighbors Model* was contributed by Patricia Wheat, and the *Fellowship Model* was contributed by Jim S. Davis. *The Key* original artwork was contributed by Abigail Hill. In addition, numerous others have given of their time and talents. We are grateful for the part each one has played in shaping this project.