

PUPPY TRAINING AND AMERICAN ECONOMIC DISASTER

By Don Killoren, St. Louis, MO

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Welcome to the population center of America. I met Henry George and his wonderful plan when I applied for a job with Lou Basso in 1969. He changed my life from a budding Socialist to a believer in true JUSTICE. Lou brought me

into Public Revenue Education Council with Noah Alper, Stan Fredericksen and Al Katzenberger and I came to respect you Georgists. What a grand group.

I do not know Henry George at the depth that you do. But I want to tell people how his ideas could change our messed up economy. So pretend that I'm coming to talk to you at a gathering of Voters who are Home Owners - Renters.

Good morning Voters - Home Owners - Renters. It is so good to speak with you. We meet where the Illinois, Missouri and Mississippi Rivers form a barge hub with major railroads, interstate highways for manufacturing and distribution, and where God has blessed the area abundantly with countless supplies of natural resources and fertile farm land.

What more could any area want? So why do we have high unemployment and so many homeless people? And look at the many infrastructure problems we have in our community that are affecting the value of your homes. Roads and bridges need repair, many fire hydrants do not work, fire and police protection is below what is needed. Large numbers of homes are owned by the city due to non-payment of property taxes. Rental property is never much better than what is necessary to make it livable.

The answer is we are violating fundamental economic rules! When faced with homelessness and lack of food we think of charity. We keep asking for government bandaids for problems. We should be asking how the problem was caused by violations of justice.

We voters must make loud and clear noise to get elected officials to remove from the economic system what is picking our pockets.

Rule # 1: Puppy training: dog does good - it receives a treat; does bad - it gets a swat. Quite simple! In our system people improve a home, or build a factory or office building and then have to pay high property taxes. They work 40 hours, earn a paycheck and guess what: they pay income taxes for what crime? Producing? Is that any way to treat a puppy?

Rule # 2: "Thou shall not steal." The system is built on a violation of a most basic principle: "Pay for what you get and pay workers for the work they did for you.

The land under our homes has great value only because the community worked hard building roads, schools, churches, shopping, entertainment and businesses with all kinds of jobs to make this a great community. But the system does not collect just payment for work the community did giving land that value.

Not paying the community for its work is theft! Charging low land value taxes and high building taxes is a violation of justice principles.

Rule # 3: God said: "You are not to sell land in perpetuity. You are pilgrims and sojourners with me." In other words: "You guys can't buy and sell land as if it belongs to investors for profit. Land and natural resources need to be made available to support the entire human family's needs." True, we need to have title to land to assure our access for productive use in supporting those needs. But land speculation violates the basic commandment. Land investment makes no new land. Land speculation earns no reward, and productive use of land must have no penalty.

We home owners - voters have been misled to believe that rising home prices are an advantage for us. In reality, the increasing land prices means we pay higher prices for everything we buy and it causes manufacturing jobs to outsource to other areas. This causes higher taxes to support people who cannot find jobs and forces them to live on welfare.

We need to go back to God's justice laws and puppy training 101.

Voters, would you like to:

- stop paying higher taxes for improving our neighborhood?
- get more for your \$\$\$\$ when shopping?
- have public and private education opportunities expanded?
 - see roads and bridges, water and sewer lines, police and fire protection upgraded?
- have manufacturing and high tech jobs come to the area?
- invite more business investment opportunities?

Let's try a clever problem solving technique: Use the problem to solve the problem. The community's land is valued in the market by how the renting population views the community's resources. Their decision to locate in the area depends on how they view the community's infrastructure, schools, churches, health care, jobs, (continued on page 12)

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entertainment, cultural aspects, etc. Let's rebuild the community's assets with high charges on the land speculation that is causing the outsourcing of jobs problem. This will bring jobs back to the community and provide added revenue needed for infrastructure, education, health care and more. Who knows? We might even be rid of the income tax.

As voters we control the direction of our economy. All we need is to speak up loudly and clearly. We need to tell our elected officials we will vote only for those who do what is needed to change our messed up economy: End land speculation and remove taxes from all buildings and equipment so there is no penalty for producing and there is no reward for standing in the way of those who are making the community a place where people want to live and raise a family and invite friends to visit. Let's speak up and tell friends about justice and call our state senator and representative. Tell them why they must remove taxes from buildings and equipment and raise taxes on land only. It is voter power time!

Thank you my Georgist friends for letting me share Henry George's grand plan for a productive economy.

For scriptural references to land value and justice see John Kelly's book: "The Other Law of Moses." It opened great insights into land use. Thanks folks, for all you are doing to correct the injustices in our system.

(Don Killoren may be emailed at donkilloren@att.net)

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