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Sally Erickson, producer, What A Way To Go: Life at the End of Empire

Welcome to Speaking Truth To Power—a website owned and managed by Carolyn Baker. Carolyn is an adjunct professor of history, a former psychotherapist, an author, and a student of mythology and ritual. This website offers up-to-the-moment alternative reporting of U.S. and international news, articles containing information and opinion, and a venue of support and connection for awake individuals who want not only to be informed, but to organize their lives and communities in ways that most effectively assist them in navigating what current events are manifesting.

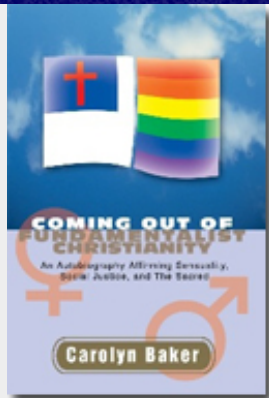
Carolyn's Mission: "The Chinese proverb and curse says, 'May you live in interesting times'." In the first decade of the twenty-first century, we live in profound uncertainty, faced with issues unprecedented in the history of the human race. Truth To Power seeks to provide readers with a 'fixed point in a changing universe' that both informs and supports humanity's efforts to remake the world—both our personal worlds and our planet. My intention is to offer a beacon of light in the smothering darkness with which we seem to be engulfed, making available information and specific ideas and strategies which we all might utilize as we experience the life/death/rebirth process inherent in the inner and outer realms of our current reality."

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RECIPE FOR COLLAPSE, STEP II, SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

Friday, 30 November 2007



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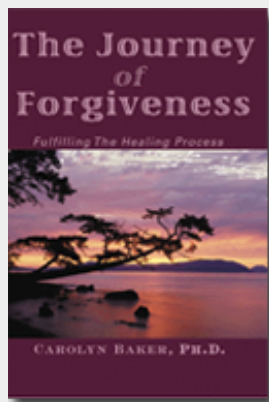
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By Freeacre

ORIGINAL POST



Times are tough, and getting tougher. The housing boom has turned into a pimp job. One of the pimps, Henry M. Paulson, former CEO of Goldman Sachs, became the Secretary of the Treasury. Others will head up agencies like HUD, the CIA, go into consulting or become lobbyists. Many will continue their lucrative careers on Wall Street, despite the havoc they have created.

Is "pimp" is too harsh or vulgar a term? A pimp, after all, figures out a way to make you go out and work and then makes you give your hard-earned money to him. He does this by a combination of impressive clothing, ostentatious personal

possessions, guile, seduction, bribery, intimidation, connections to power, and a ruthless devotion to his own personal profit. In return you get his "protection" that may, unfortunately, include the back of his hand. Re-visit the term once you find out that your 401K and/or your pension have been wiped out, and you find out that you have been ... what's the word? Pimped.

By now we all know what these miscreants have done in their no-holds-barred fantaz-o-rama scheme to create trillions of dollars worth of illusionary financial "vehicles" on the backs of the people with the least money to spend. Once enticed to sign their lives away on mortgages that would explode in two or three years and become impossible to re-pay, the gullible and the just plain slow-thinking were assured that they could re-finance (for a fee, of course) their home over and over again. Perfect! The financiers could then parlay the collective interest on all the loans, into hundreds of times the original value of the debt, make money on each new and incomprehensible transaction, and bestow upon themselves billions of dollars in bonuses on top of the exorbitant salaries and commissions they already collect - with no oversight from the government. Hell, the financiers RUN the government. What a country!

Free money for you, too, Jack and Mary! Places like Home Depot, Wal-Mart, Lowe's, Target, Bed, Bath, and Beyond, et al, were thrilled to help you spend that re-fi money to re-model and re-furbish that dandy piece of investment property. You could put it all on your credit card from City Bank and Capital One. And, while you are at it, why not buy another one? "Flip that House!" the diamond-dripping real estate wizards advised. Yeah! Housing can only go up, so you can't lose! Think big. Forget about that puny two bedroom Cape Cod that you grew up in. Now, it's all about planned communities of 3,000 or 5,000 square foot McMansions with granite countertops, computer/ entertainment centers, hot tubs, fully equipped exercise rooms, and windows the size formerly reserved for cathedrals. So what if it costs a ton of money to heat or cool and the commute is an hour each way to work, and there isn't a place to buy food or toilet paper for ten miles in any direction. It's got a Starbucks and a Juicy Juice and three Mexican restaurants and an Outback practically around the corner. Not enough room to plant a garden on your lot, but what are you, a freaking farmer?

Meanwhile, that mortgage of yours was sold, bundled, and re-sold, and has morphed into a global financial Frankenstein monster that has turned on its perverse creator and is about to kill him in a tormented frenzy. (Well, one can wish. . .) Most probably, the overlords have already off-shored their money, secured a nice rancho in Patagonia and some time share property in Dubai. Good riddance. See you in World Court.

The rest of us suckers, once the economy completely tanks, are looking at being thrown out of our homes, reduced employment, truly crippling inflation, mounting energy costs and scarcity on every level. To survive, we are going to need a roof over our heads. Not an investment vehicle, but a home. It's going to need to be secure, sustainable, and affordable. To those of us facing foreclosure and owing more than the house is now worth, it may be better to embrace the foreclosure than to engage in drawn-out battle to keep the house. Save up as many payments as you can to be applied towards renting something affordable or purchasing a travel trailer or some other alternative. Let the investment class eat the loan and suffer the loss. They are the ones who manufactured this debacle and all you've

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paid on it was interest anyway. Once the housing bubble is history, the next home you buy will be more realistic.

In these changing times, our esteemed elder, Montana Freeman, has been known to ask, "What's a motherfu**er to do?"

The greater culture herds us like cattle into differing stations to be milked, used as draft animals, medicated, fattened up, or slaughtered. Escaping the factory farm requires a serious flexibility of mind and behavior. It is going to require a cultivation of a sense of power and purpose. It is going to require motivation and inspiration beyond the bling of materialism and one's status in the matrix. It is going to involve new and better ways to enjoy ourselves, raise our kids, and do our work.

There are going to be a million different answers for a million different situations. Depending on whether people are young or old, working or not, single, partnered, with children or without, urban or rural, the responses to an economic collapse are going to have to be tailored to your needs. Now is the time to amass money and survival supplies. That way, once the economy seriously tanks, you will have some money (or gold) to purchase larger ticket items that will be selling for fire sale prices.

As a general rule, though, single people will probably find it easier to keep a roof over their heads if they form communes, or at least team up to share rental expenses. This would also provide an opportunity to create new ways to live, help each other become free of debt, gain a better understanding of what is going on in the world, build trust, make friends, have fun, while developing a financial cushion.

Young and old may make new alliances. Old people might have a paid for place, but need some help when the money becomes practically worthless and the gas prices are prohibitive. They might be able to rent a room or two for a single parent and a child to live in who will agree to help out with gardening, chores, going to the store, etc. The homeowner could help with childcare. Find each other through classified ads, message boards at community colleges, senior centers, or churches.

My son is single and in his late twenties. He is thinking of purchasing a yurt. It could be placed on our property or it could be moved to another property once he has land of his own. One might want to purchase a travel trailer that could serve the same purpose. It could be placed on a property in exchange for services to the land owner – snow shoveling, landscaping, or a little rent. Land use policies will be difficult to enforce once thousands of citizens start bending the rules at once. Bunkhouses and mother-in-law units could ease the housing crunch. Port-a-potty rental companies could be a lucrative post-collapse business venture because there is a limit to the carrying capacity of rural septic systems.

Over the next couple of years, many residential and commercial properties will be foreclosed and vacated. Left unattended, they are looted and vandalized. People could team up and make a deal with the banks or whoever holds the deed to the homes that they will provide security and keep the place tidy in exchange for being able to live there until the places are sold. Once that place is sold, they can move on to another place that needs a house sitter.

It may be best to leave the country altogether, especially if one is of the age to be sucked into the service of the military/industrial complex. Who knows what it will look like in another five years? There could be Halliburton or Blackwater dormitories full of corporate goon squads composed of young people, previously hungry and unemployed, working for food, a bed and computer games. It may be better for you to book to Costa Rica, Canada, Chili, Argentina, Belize, or just about anywhere. Get a passport now.

I housed a homeless man for several months in my backyard in Tahoe one year. I didn't have any spare rooms, but he used my tent. In the spring, he looked after my mom, who was getting senile. He just kept an eye on her so she didn't get lost or set herself on fire or anything. It worked for both of us. Lots of companion arrangements could be made for the able-bodied to take care of the elderly or disabled in return for a place to live and some food on the table. Meaningful relationships can be established that enrich both parties as well.



**Muslim Voices Against
Extremism and Terrorism**

Depending on how hard and fast the crash is, larger spaces like malls and Wal-marts might become habitable for larger associations of people. Imagine that a hundred people took over a Wal-mart building to live in. During the day, they might forage for tires, metals, plumbing supplies from abandoned buildings or other things to repair, barter or trade. They would help each other out with childcare and cook communally. They could drum and dance and tell stories and teach each other things at night. You might want to get going on a drum or a musical instrument just for fun. My son has learned to play the didgeridoo – way cool!

Right living is going to have to be tied into Right Livelihood eventually. But, it's all going to require flexibility to experiment with new ways of doing things. It's going to require that you shun the corporate messages to be fearful and hate-filled and suspicious of the person next to you. The Suits want you to see the guy on the street as your enemy and not your potential ally. It's easier to funnel us into the feedlot one by one. If we stick together, we don't fit so well into the tube. I have a feeling that when the fist of the Ruling Class has its grip relaxed by their newly established insolvency, there will be a great collective breath that the populace will then be allowed to take. It will begin to make all things new. Not that there isn't going to be a lot of suffering, but at least it will be real. We have been living in a false world fabricated out of marketing injunctions and crass disregard of the well-being of our planet and all its living things. We have been made to feel helpless against the tide of greed and despair. We have been trying to mask our pain with products that never seem to do the trick. So we are advised to buy some more.

But, when it comes down to having a roof over our heads or not, suddenly the illusions and distractions will be blown away. The televisions will be turned off, finally. The prescriptions for Prozac will no longer be filled. Reality will jam us in the face, and some nimbleness of mind will be required. Pain and loss will be involved.

But, inspiration and joy, energy and exultation also spring from real life. Real pride rises from accomplishing difficult things. In five years, roof-top and patio gardens growing salads and vegetables for the residents of townhouses might become the norm. Tenants might get organized and buy the buildings they are living in. Home-based or building-based businesses might be established. Co-ops and collectives of every sort might be formed as they catch the wave of localization. Even those goofy yuppies might jump off their treadmills and actually jog to a farmer's market!

Political parties, as usual, will be of no help. They seem to think we are supposed to support them, not the other way around. But, churches and civic associations might turn their considerable resources to organizing their memberships to develop places to live and grow food, just as a few radical churches are helping people get free from debt. (See "In Debt We Trust" documentary.) There is, after all, no shortage of homes – just the will to allow us to live within them.

The world will grow tired of these moribund old men (and dumbass younger ones) who have served us this disaster. Dollar signs are not a good substitute for our lives and our natural heritage. It is time for them to take that long walk towards the ice pack and leave us the hell alone. We need to clean up this mess and learn to take care of each other again. For so very long, the Earth was our home. Let's get it back.

[See Recipe for Collapse, Part I](#)

Last Updated (Saturday, 01 December 2007)

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