

# Kingdom Congress of Illinois

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## Position Paper on Hydraulic Fracturing: Business Mandate

Business includes the practices by which men co-operate as they work together to fulfill the original Genesis 1:26-28 mandate to be fruitful and fill up the earth. It is the engine of dominion. Business practices involve issues concerning:

- Private Property
- Use of Resources
- Cost of discovering and developing resources
- Reaping of the reward for investment
- Ability to make private contracts
- Private Organizations

### Private Property

Private property is boundaried and development of that property is the right of the owner. Adam was created in the image of God and given the earth to manage. Although the earth belonged to God, Adam was given stewardship of God's property. Adam was to have cared for the earth in keeping with the will of the Owner. Man's relationship to God and man's service to God is intrinsically tied to his management of the earth.

God placed the first "No Trespassing" sign around the Tree in the center of the Garden and expects man to respect boundaries. Commandment 8, "Thou Shall Not Steal" (Ex.20:15) is a boundary law that forbids man from interfering with the private property of his neighbor. Adam failed to honor God's private property identified in the Tree.

When God called Abraham into covenant, God revealed to Abraham the portion of the earth that he would be required to steward. His assigned private property was Canaan (Gen. 12:1; 15:18). His heirs took occupation of Canaan during the days of Joshua. Each family was assigned clearly defined territories in which they would take up residence and which they would manage. The private property rights of each family were protected by laws given through Moses.

God not only allocates private property, He honors each man's temporary apportionment. God promised Abraham ground that was occupied by other land owners, but God did not give Canaan to Abraham's family until the former stewards had so poorly managed the earth that they forfeited their position as stewards for the earth's Owner. They were fired from the delegated position and the seed of Abraham was hired to care for the private property.

Before the Israelites took possession of the land, Abraham and his descendants lived in Canaan. Isaac, Abraham's son, sojourned in the land belonging to the Philistine, Abimelek. There, Isaac planted crops and grazed his flocks with Abimelek's permission. He had to leave when Abimelek sent him away and was only successful in digging a well after he and Abimelek made a covenant with each other (Gen. 26). Isaac honored the private property of Abimelek.

### Use of Resources

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The owner of any property has the right to discover and develop the property's God-appointed natural resources or grant permission for another to do so. Land and nations have resources. The Garden and outlying land had resources. Genesis 2 tells of plants, animals, water, gold, and onyx.

Scripture abounds with testimony that all the earth and all the nations are filled with resources. Egypt had the life-supporting Nile River. Tyre was located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and was renowned for their ships and commerce. Lebanon produced the mighty cedars that were used in the construction of the Temple. The East had spices which were procured and sold throughout the Middle East.

Even people are resources. King Hiram sent carpenters and masons to build David a house (2 Sam. 5:11). Ex. 35:30-35 tells us that the Lord gave wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and skills, to certain men for building the tabernacle. Discovering how the resource benefits the whole requires cooperation. Hiram and Solomon made a league with each other for their mutual benefit (1 Kings 5:12).

While it may seem that natural resources are limited, God gives inspiration for innovation that can lead to more effective utilization of limited resources or development of newly discovered resources. For example, before petroleum was discovered, whale blubber was widely used for lamp oil and in lubricating trains. Had God not inspired the discovery and use of petroleum, the whale resource would soon have become depleted to extinction. (1) At the height of horse drawn carriage travel it was predicted that in a certain number of years, the cities would be too deep in manure for travel. But before that could happen, the internal combustion engine was developed that powered transportation. (2)

### Cost of discovering and developing resources

The cost of discovering and developing resources require the expenditure of knowledge, skill, and research, often at considerable expense and risk. The developer must ascertain what the market demands and price his goods and services according to what the market will bear. The developer is entitled to reward for his investment and risk-taking.

The patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were wealthy for their investment in God's purposes. Even though Laban changed Jacob's reward, substituting Leah for Rachel, Jacob ultimately received his reward (Gen. 29). Boaz was a successful farmer whose fields yielded great harvest and from which he graciously supplied charity for gleaners and for Ruth (Ruth 2). Even today, inventors of new products and technologies can receive patents that allow them exclusive rights for a certain period of time in order to recoup their development costs.

### Reaping of the reward for investment

Businesses are entitled to rewards for their risk and investment; which can be used to further develop the investment, provide for their own well-being and the well-being of their employees, and distribute as charity. However, they must avoid greed.

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Luke 12:16-21 tells the parable of the rich man who built larger barns for his wealth, greedily gathering and not distributing. Proverbs 1:19 says that greedy ways actually take away the life of the greedy one. And, of course, I Tim. 6:10 says that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

### Ability to make private contracts

Individuals or corporations may make private contracts with other individuals or corporations as a means by which both parties advance their goals for using their assets. Contracts define the specific private property that each party voluntarily brings to the agreement, the delineated responsibilities, and the distribution of rewards. Because private property is boundaried and may only be used at the discretion of the owner, no one may coerce another party into the creation of a private contract.

The ability to make private contracts facilitates neighbors living together safely without trespassing boundaries. Abimelek and Isaac agreed to not harm each other (Gen. 26:28, 29). We can find a number of instances where safety of the neighbor is promoted. Exodus 21 and 22 discuss situations of an ox goring a person, a uncovered pit causing injury to an animal, an ox goring a neighbor's animal, livestock straying into and destroying the neighbor's field, fire spreading to the neighbor's field. Accidental injury is discussed in Deut.19:5. Protection of the neighbor and his property involves "No Trespassing" against his boundaries and also addresses issues of our neighbor's safety.

### Private Organizations

Finally, some businesses are private organizations that have a collective voice for their interest group, for example: the Farm Bureau, environmentalist groups, breast cancer awareness groups, unions. These groups function in the business realm researching truths related to their interest group and making the public aware of their findings. Occasionally, in the course of research and development of their area, they may discover practices that harm or infringe upon the private property of others. Should such a situation occur, these organizations can solicit the media to help communicate their cause or they can take their findings to the civil realm in hopes of creating laws or enforcing existing laws through court decisions.

### Concerning Hydraulic Fracturing

Environmentalists have a legitimate collective voice in discovering facts of possible harm to the planet or environment. Their resources are knowledge and information; their love of neighbor can be authentic; their reward is the benefit of the earth. If they stayed legitimate, hydraulic fracturing (commonly known as fracking) contractors might actually come to them for advice; but it sometimes appears that their agenda is not to honor their neighbor's right to his or her private property but to shut down the plant.

Environmentalists should have a voice, but caution should be taken that their cause does not infringe upon free enterprise and the reward due the entrepreneur. The support given to the environmentalist by the media and the civil realms needs further scrutiny. Both the

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media and the government have been given spheres of authority in which God requires them to operate. Media must report truth and government must protect private property. When truth is compromised for the sake of a cause, the media has failed in its assignment. When the interest of one party in litigation is weighed more heavily upon the scales of justice than the interest of the second party, the civil realm has failed in its assignment. Media must be aware that it has a sphere of responsibility and take caution not to manipulate the opinion of the public concerning the business of fracking. Government must, likewise, be aware that it has a sphere of responsibility and take caution not to champion the cause of the environmentalist over the business of fracking.

It may be that environmentalists see themselves as saviors of the planet. Rightly, God has given the planet into the care of humanity. Knowledge needs to be accumulated to determine practices that bring life and not death to that which is in our care. When practices damage the earth or the inhabitants of the earth, it is just to outlaw those practices. True facts and righteous laws have historically proven to bring warranted action to protect the environment.

However, in the course of man's discovery of the uses of the earth's resources, knowledge is often gained through trial and error. Man is not all knowing. Man cannot perfectly foresee all outcomes of his decisions. Man is not omniscient. To this end, God maintains His providential care over His earth. Before God allows man to destroy the earth, God either removes the unrighteous stewards (as in the case of the Canaanites) or God brings to light a new discovery to protect the earth's resources (as in the case of the petroleum and internal combustion engine noted in the above paragraph discussing natural resources).

#### In Summary

Illinois has a God-appointed resource that the market demands.

Much of the cost of development has already been done.

Business has developed the technology to release gas from shale safely and effectively. The fracking operation fulfills the love your neighbor mandate by not moving onto land without private contracts and by taking caution via many safety regulations to not harm the neighbor's property.

Both the fracking companies and environmentalists are legitimate as long as they stay within their boundaries.

Government has the right to discover facts provided by environmentalists to make righteous judgments and shut down private business to protect the common good if contamination is found.

#### References:

- (1) [http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2009/11/16/091116crbo\\_books\\_kolbert](http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2009/11/16/091116crbo_books_kolbert)
- (2) <http://www.sjvgeology.org/history/whales.html>

This Position Paper was written by Joyce Geiler