

# No Place Like Home to Help Freedom Grow

While having dinner with a Chinese couple several years ago, I listened as they described their visiting parents' response to the American landscape. Having recently arrived from China, the parents' amazement about the Dakotas was particularly amusing. "So much space!" was the loose translation. "They could build so many apartments!"

I laughed heartily at the time, realizing just how different American interests were from those of the Chinese. Americans certainly didn't need myriads of high rises stretching across the Dakota plains!

But in retrospect, I now wonder if there was more underlying that comment than simply the Chinese need for space. Could such a thought also stem from the communist ideology that pervades China, an ideology that squelches freedom and seeks control over every aspect of life?

Home ownership, the ideal of a little house with a white picket fence, is the American dream. That house is a place of rest, a place to gather—a place to live, work, and play in. At its heart, the little-house-and-picket-fence dream is freedom itself: control over a small piece of property an American can call his own.

That American dream still lives. But not everyone thinks that's a good thing, judging from a recent *Time* magazine headline that declared "[America Needs to End Its Love Affair With Single-Family Homes.](#)"

Housing developers, the article explains, are continually trying to buy land and develop communities of multi-family dwellings—in essence, the high-rises our friends from China were so eager to build. But these same developers seem to be

mildly exasperated because, despite their best efforts to patiently explain the benefits of housing density, many individuals continue to inquire and dream about single-family homes.

“I would love to own a single family home and have pets and children running around,” one woman told *Time*. “I would rather not be in an apartment building. It doesn’t feel as homey.”

Unfortunately, affordable single-family home ownership is increasingly difficult to achieve. Corporations such as BlackRock are gobbling up single-family homes and turning them into rentals, writer [Pedro Gonzalez explains in the August 2021 issue](#) of *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*.

In the article, he also draws attention to the fact that multi-family housing is pushed by those who fear climate change and view America through a racist lens—for, of course, single-family dwellings encourage both a larger carbon footprint and the concept of the nuclear family, the latter of which was once [a direct target of Black Lives Matter](#).

The increasing difficulty of owning a home is likely not accidental, for—as philosopher James Burnham wrote in his 1941 book [The Managerial Revolution](#),—“ownership means control; if there is no control, then there is no ownership.” Thus, if our ruling elites can prevent average folks from owning their own homes, doing so will strip those same people of more freedom and control over their own lives.

Burnham himself uses this issue of home ownership to illustrate how property rights translate into freedom: “If I own a house, let us say, that means that—at least under normal circumstances—I can prevent others from entering it. In developed societies with political institutions, it means also that the state (the police in this instance, backed by the courts) will if necessary enforce this control of mine over access to the house. If I cannot, when I wish to, prevent

others from entering the house, if anyone else or everyone has the same rights of entry as I, then neither I nor anyone would say that I am the 'owner' of the house."

Burnham also notes that the control that comes with ownership offers many benefits to the owner, including "warmth, shelter, [and] privacy." Take that control away and give it to someone else—such as a corporation or the government—and the individual can kiss both freedom and those benefits goodbye.

But if we want those benefits, then we need to hold on to the American dream ever more tightly, not only for ourselves, but for others also.

Do you want to be free from the grasp and control of government? Then put your earnings toward a house and other amenities that will make that home more comfortable for yourself and those you love, instead of spending your earnings on experiences or other frivolous items.

Do you want your children to know and value freedom? Then encourage them toward home ownership and set aside a small nest egg to help them toward that purpose one day. Teach them how to do the things that will aid in maintaining that house. Learning to paint, repair, and beautify a home while young will lay the groundwork for greater pride and ownership in—and desire for—their own future property.

Do you want others to experience the freedom that having a place to call their own brings? Encourage them to buy a house and then pay it off quickly. Give them a helping hand with their house projects where you're able. Make your own home a bright spot to which you can invite them so that they get a taste of the freedom and benefits that home ownership brings.

Those who seek to control our bodies and minds would like nothing better than to stick each of us into a soul-crushing, rented high-rise in order to quash our freedom. Don't let them do it. There's no place like home—especially when it's in the

land of the free.

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