



Impact

NEWS & NOTES

■ House Speaker Paul Ryan has announced that as part of the process to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Republican congressional leaders would include a provision that would prevent Planned Parenthood from receiving any federal funding. Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) America's largest abortion provider and the largest single recipient of federal funding for family planning. The GAO found that over a three year period (2010-2012), PPFA received \$344.5 million in direct federal funds and an additional \$1.2 billion in funding from Medicaid. Investigations of Planned Parenthood financial data and practices conducted in 12 states found hundreds of thousands of abortion related claims were billed unlawfully to Medicaid. Based on Planned Parenthood's latest annual report, taxpayer dollars accounted for at least 40% of all the corporation's revenue—and 100% of the cor-

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poration's profits. A new poll released by the Susan B. Anthony List found that American voters in 2018 Senate battleground states (Florida, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) support ending federal funding for Planned Parenthood by a margin of 56 to 40 percent. While Trump and pro-life Republicans vow to defund the abortion giant, celebrities will be raising money for Planned Parenthood through a three-hour telethon-style Facebook Live event on Inauguration Day. The "Love-a-thon" includes Jane Fonda, Jamie Lee Curtis, and others.

The Weekly, 1/13; National Review, 1/10; FACT, 1/13

■ Stem Express, the fetal tissue broker that bought baby body parts from Planned Parenthood and then sold them for profit, has dropped its suit against The Center for Medical Progress' David Daleiden, whose videos exposed the trafficking of aborted baby parts. This was the first suit brought against the investigative journalist. The National Abortion Federation and Planned Parenthood have also brought lawsuits against him. FACT, 1/13

■ Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin signed two bills in favor of life this past week, a bill that would ban abortions at 20 weeks or more and a bill that would require abortionists to share ultrasound images of the baby with the mother before an abortion. The ultrasound bill states

that the pregnant woman does not have to look at the images or hear the child's heartbeat if she doesn't want to. The ACLU has already filed a suit against the ultrasound bill claiming that it violates the mother's right to privacy and her First Amendment freedoms.

FACT, 1/13

■ One of the most significant U.S. Supreme Court decisions in 2017 could come in a case from Columbia, Mo., concerning the relationship between church and state. Trinity Lutheran Church applied in 2012 for a state program that reimburses non-profits for purchasing and installing recycled tire scraps to resurface playgrounds. Citing a state constitutional clause barring money to aid churches or religious sects, Missouri denied the church's application for its preschool that operates in the church's building, which was upheld by federal courts. Though justices of the Supreme Court has delayed setting a hearing date, they are still expected to hear oral arguments in time to issue a decision by late June.

Word & Way, 1/9

■ The American College of Pediatricians is speaking out against the use of a 9-year-old "transgender" on National Geographic's January magazine cover. Says its president Michelle Cretella, "When academic, medical and other public institutions propagate the lifetime use of toxic hormones and the sur-

gical removal of healthy body parts as healthcare for children, they are engaged in institutionalized child abuse.

FACT, 1/13

■ California recently passed a law that bans state paid-for travel to Tennessee, North Carolina, Kansas, and Mississippi because of various laws those states passed last year that offended California's LGBT community. The Tennessee law that offended California's lawmakers was one that protected professional counselors from losing their license if helping the client achieve his or her counseling goals would violate the counselor's conscience.

FACT, 1/13

■ The North Dakota Senate rejected a bill that would have updated the definition of marriage to include same-sex "marriage" and would have updated language referencing "husband and wife" to gender-neutral terms.

FACT, 1/13

■ Lambda Legal has filed a federal lawsuit against a New Jersey Catholic hospital that refused, on religious grounds, to allow a surgeon to perform a hysterectomy on a transgender "man" as part of his gender reassignment. According to AP, the hospital says it makes decisions in conformance with ethical and religious guidelines of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Religion Cause, 1/6

■ After a lengthy legal battle, a California transgender

"woman" became the first inmate in the U.S. to receive a government-funded gender-reassignment surgery. The 57-year-old convicted murderer is now serving a life sentence at a women's facility in California. There are 475 transgender inmates in California prisons.

Wash. Post, 1/10

■ A company has been blocked from providing video filters to families who want to watch movies and TV series without offensive content. On January 4, an appeals court rejected VidAngel's request to keep streaming cleaned-up content while the suit unfolds from Disney and three other major studios. Last month, a preliminary injunction forced VidAngel to take down its 3,000-plus videos – everything from Game of Thrones to Minions – while fighting allegations from the filmmakers of copyright violations. Its 100,000 customers are now back to watching movies the typical way: all or nothing. While several of its predecessors in the filtering business settled when faced with Hollywood law-

suits, VidAngel is ready to fight. The startup is surprisingly equipped for the case, with a former Oscars attorney as its legal counsel and \$10 million in backer support and has set crowdfunding records by raising half that amount in about a day.

Christianity Today, 1/5

■ Tennessee Representative Bill Sanderson is hoping to get the state Revenue Department to design license plates with the words "In God We Trust" which would go into circulation by July 1, 2017. Last year, lawmakers passed a bill that would have made the Bible the state's official book. This bill was vetoed by Gov. Bill Haslam, however. Lawmakers also tried to pass a law requiring the words "In God We Trust" to be painted behind the podiums of speakers in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. This measure also failed, although a bill did pass to have the phrase painted in the tunnel beneath the Capitol.

Christian Headlines, 1/12

■ A classified advertising website accused of being a "hub" for the sex trafficking

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." — MARTIN LUTHER KING

Martin Luther King, Jr., born this day January 15, 1929. Although the name "Michael" appeared on his birth certificate, his name was later changed to Martin Luther after the German reformer. In 1955, King earned a Ph.D. from Boston University's School of Theology and led the Montgomery Bus Boycott later that year. Thereafter he fought for equal rights by using nonviolent civil disobedience, based on his Christian beliefs and the injunction of the Lord to turn the other cheek in the Sermon on the Mount. In 1963, he gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. Washington passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. That year he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. King was assassinated in Memphis in 1968 at age 39.

of children has shut down its adult section in the US. The move followed the publication of a Senate report that claimed Backpage.com had "knowingly concealed evidence of criminality" by editing ads featuring words associated with child abuse. The Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations described Backpage as the "world's second-largest classified advertising website", adding that the service was involved in 73% of all child trafficking reports passed from the public over to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). The UK and other international versions of Backpage.com continue to offer their adult sections.

BBC, 1/10

■ On Jan. 1, the Norway cut some ties with its Evangelical-Lutheran Church, rewording the national constitution to change the denomination from "the state's public religion" to "Norway's national church." The change means the nation of just over 5 million people - about 82 percent of them Evangelical-Lutherans - will still fund the church but will no longer appoint its clergy, who will still be considered

civil servants. Norway is one of the least theistic nations in Europe, with 39 percent of Norwegians saying they are atheist or agnostic, but it also has its own "Bible belt," along its southwest coast.

RNS, 1/7

■ Europe's court of human rights has rejected an appeal by a Turkish-born couple who were fined in Switzerland for keeping their daughters out of mixed-gender, mandatory public-school swimming lessons for reasons linked to their Muslim faith. On Tuesday the Court acknowledged "interference" in freedom of religion but asserted that public schools had a "special role" in integration, particularly of children of foreign origin. Such issues of compulsory public education and religious belief have prompted similar cases in neighboring Germany and Liechtenstein in recent years.

AP, 1/10

■ Germany is celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Martin Luther's issuing his 95 theses and (perhaps apocryphally) pinning them to the church door at Wittenberg. He set in motion a split in Christianity that would forever change not just Germany, but the world. After

generations of secularisation, not to mention decades of official atheism in the formerly communist east (which includes Wittenberg), Germans are not particularly religious. Nevertheless, the Reformation has shaped the German language, mentality and way of life. After he translated the Bible into German, Luther wanted everyone to read it. At first Protestants became more literate than Catholics; ultimately all Germans became bookish, making Germany the second-largest book market after America. Luther also shares blame for some negative qualities ascribed to Germans. He was deeply anti-Semitic, a prejudice his countrymen have shed at great cost. *The Economist*, 1/7

■ French Jews have been leaving France in increasing numbers and emigrating to Israel following increasing attacks on their communities. Since 2006, a total of 40,000 Jews have left the country with the head of The Jewish Agency of Israel, maintaining that the threat of terrorism is the number one motivating factor for Jews leaving the country.

Christian Headlines, 1/10

■ This past year, for the third year in a row, persecution of Christians has hit a record high worldwide. Open Doors has released its 2017 World Watch List and cites increasing concerns for Asia along with the Middle East, due to both ethnic nationalism and Islamic extremism.

Christian Headlines, 1/11

No, We Can't 'Agree to Disagree' on Marriage

by John Stonestreet

For years, a steady drumbeat of Christian pastors, musicians, and authors have announced they've "evolved" on the issue of homosexuality. Authors like Matthew Vines and more recently, Jen Hatmaker, musician Nicole Nordeman and Yale philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff argue that the Bible doesn't actually condemn same-sex "marriage." Christians, they say, should bless such unions as "holy."

Many of them have said that even if we don't agree, we shouldn't make it a big deal. We can "agree to disagree," they say. Typically, they offer one of three reasons.

First, this issue, they say, is like the mode of baptism, or worship styles, or wine versus grape juice in the Lord's Supper. In other words, homosexuality is a matter of preference, an area where believers can respect one another's differences.

But this doesn't make sense for *either* side. Advocates of same-sex "marriage" say it's a human right. If that's true, the traditional view is not just mistaken, it's dangerous! Opponents say that acts of homosexuality are sinful. If that's true, then Christians can't agree to disagree either.

Second, we often hear that the Church is evolving on this issue, especially every time a Christian celebrity changes their minds. But the vast majority of evangelicals still hold to the traditional view, and they're not changing their minds anytime soon. As my "BreakPoint This Week" cohost, Ed Stetzer, points out in *Christianity Today*, "Evangelical organizations across the spectrum are making clear where they stand on marriage." Groups like the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Christianity Today, and even more progressive social-justice-minded organizations like World Vision and Fuller Seminary, have all unambiguously committed to hold the line on this issue.

As have denominations. Virtually every evangelical communion has reaffirmed God's

design for sex and marriage. Even in the United Methodist Church, long considered a stronghold of liberal theology, and in the worldwide Anglican communion, the marriage debate has taken a conservative turn as traditional members in Africa and elsewhere exert their influence.

But, some will reply, "If Christians don't all agree on what marriage is, you can't say there's such a thing as 'the Christian position.'" But Christian truth isn't made of what people who call themselves Christians say. It's revealed truth, made known through creation, through Scripture, ultimately through Christ—each of which are quite clear about what makes us male and female, what marriage is, and about sexual morality.

Which is why Christians never questioned marriage until culturally yesterday. A post-sexual revolution claim just a few years old does nothing to negate the consistent Christian witness about marriage throughout all of history.

Which brings up the final argument, "If marriage is a core part of Christian teaching," we hear, "why isn't it in the creeds or the councils? Why did no one talk about it until now?" The answer is, because no one questioned what marriage is until now—anywhere, much less in the Church.

Throughout history, the need to clarify certain Christian doctrines has almost always arisen because of challenges. No one thought we needed a canon, until Marcion suggested some books weren't Scripture. No one thought we needed to clarify Jesus' place in the Godhead, until the Arian heresy. In each case, what was upheld wasn't a theological innovation, but a clarification of the consistent Christian teaching.

So next time someone says, let's just agree to disagree about this issue, say, "No. Instead, let's agree to love each other and to pursue the truth together." That's a much better way forward.

Breatpoint Commentary, 11/21/2016

ENTERTAINMENT NOTES

★★NEW MOVIES

	Quality	Moral	Age
<i>Monster Trucks</i>	PG	+4	+1 10+
<i>Silence</i>	R	+4	-2 OT/A
<i>Patriots Day</i>	R	+4	-2 A
<i>Live by Night</i>	R	+2	-4 A
<i>Bye Bye Man</i>	PG-13	+1	-4 OT/A

A- Adult, T-Teen, OT- Older Teen

Film "Quality" is an estimate (+1 to +4) of appeal for the intended audience or age group. "Moral" rating ranges from extremely objectionable (-4) to very good (+4). movieguide.org/pluggedin.com