



NEWS & NOTES

■ Under HB 2, which was upheld by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in 2013, Texas lawmakers required abortion facilities to comply with the same safety standards as surgical centers and required that abortionists have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital in case of post-abortion complications. With one member now absent, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments on Wednesday. Given the absence of Justice Scalia, if there is a 4-4 tie on this Supreme Court case, the 5th Circuit's ruling in favor of Texas would stand. Other options include the possibility that Justice Kennedy could join with the four predictably liberal justices or that the SCOTUS would rehear the case next year. Breyer likened the risk to dental surgery. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg noted abortion is much less risky than childbirth. Justice Sonia Sotomayor said aspirin can kill,

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Editor: Bruce Warmack

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It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed ...

— Lamentations 3:22

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but “we don’t require that people take aspirins in (ambulatory surgical centers) or in hospitals.”

If Kennedy and the court’s liberal justices strike down any part of the law, the landmark decision could implicate similar abortion restrictions imposed by conservative legislatures in other states. Twenty one abortion providers have opened since 2011, while at least 162 have closed down or stopped offering the procedure, Bloomberg reported. Both supporters and critics of abortion attribute the decline to a range of factors, from high operating costs and reduced demand, to the rise of strict state regulations. And both sides say the abortion debate in America is reaching a seminal moment.

FACT, 3/4; RNS, 3/4;
USA Today, 3/3;

Christian Science Monitor, 2/25

■ On Friday the Tennessee state House passed HJR 529 by a 79-18 vote, in which the legislature expresses its support for the constitutional issues raised in the state lawsuits in response to *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the Supreme Court’s same-sex “marriage” decision. On Wednesday, Rep. Susan Lynn, R-Old Hickory, the sponsor of the measure, said that the court violated the doctrine of severability. “They can’t decree that we now have to marry same-sex couples,” she said. “Our law does not say that, it’s never said that, and it was never the intent of the

General Assembly to do that.” It will now move to the state Senate.

FACT, 3/4;
Tennessean, 3/3

■ The Alaska Senate has passed a bill that would ban Planned Parenthood materials from being used in public school sex education classes. Senate Bill 89 requires parents to give permission before their child attends public school sex education classes. The bill also would ban educational material from any “abortion services provider,” including Planned Parenthood.

Christian Headlines, 3/3

■ The Oklahoma House passed the Humanity of the Unborn Child Act, which establishes a state public high school program that teaches young people the growth and development of a baby in the womb as a means of deterring future abortions. The bill goes to the Oklahoma state Senate.

FACT, 3/4

■ The Tennessee Senate Education Committee Wednesday unanimously voted to recommend that the Senate Finance Committee strip all state funds from the Office of Diversity at UTK. Only federal funds would be used for the office. This newly passed amendment will require concurrence by the full Senate and the House before it could go into effect. The diversity office does not receive any federal funding, according to UT officials.

FACT, 3/4

■ On Tuesday, South Da-

kota Gov. Dennis Daugaard vetoed a “bathroom bill” that would have protected the privacy rights of public school students by limiting school bathroom and locker room use based on the student’s biological sex. The bill would have upheld the standard that has been in place at public schools for decades—boys only using boys’ facilities, and girls only using girls’ facilities. Tennessee’s “bathroom bill,” HB 2414, heads to the House Education Administration & Planning Subcommittee next Tuesday. Tennessee’s Department of Education is making the same arguments used by South Dakota in its opposition to the bill.

FACT, 3/4

■ After two weeks of testimony, the Tennessee House Health Subcommittee approved HB 1840 that protects the First Amendment rights of professional counselors who, under the American Counseling Association’s new Code of Ethics, were being forced to provide counseling to a client even if the client’s goals or objectives violated the counselor’s religious beliefs.

FACT, 3/4

■ Fast food chain Chick-Fil-A has started a new promotion in which patrons receive a free ice-cream dessert if they put their phone away while they eat. “Americans now spend an average of 4.7 hours per day on their phone ... Although our phones were meant to

bring us closer together, they can sometimes have the opposite effect,” said a statement from the restaurant.

Christian Headlines, 3/3

■ Presidential candidate Ben Carson officially suspended his campaign for president Friday but said he would continue fighting for the betterment of the nation in other ways. Carson will serve as national chairman of My Faith Votes, a group focused on Christian voter turnout. “It is my faith that motivated me to be involved in the political process to begin with,” Carson said

LifeNews, 3/4

■ The businessman and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump won seven states on Super Tuesday, including Tennessee, the most evangelical of the states voting, with 67 percent of Republicans identifying themselves as such. But self-identification as an evangelical is “a broad brush within a Southern state that’s pretty Christianized,” such as Tennessee, said David Kinman, president of the Barna Group. Russell Moore, the Southern Baptist Convention

ethicist, alluded to it as one of the reasons he no longer wants to be called an evangelical.

RNS, 3/3

■ A Bible and framed Bible verse have been removed from a display that was set up by volunteers at a Veteran’s Administration clinic. Military Religious Freedom Foundation founder Mikey Weinstein had protested that the display violated the U.S. Constitution. “It is a sad day when the Veteran’s Administration caves to one narrow view of the proper way to honor the courage and sacrifice of those who have dedicated their lives in service of their country,” said Ron Crews, the executive director of the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty.

Christian Headlines, 3/1

■ The advocacy group One Million Moms (OMM) is battling against Fox for airing the show “Lucifer,” which OMM claims portrays the devil as a likeable character. The show portrays the devil as a handsome man named Lucifer Morningstar who is bored with ruling hell so he comes to Los Angeles

Thursday...being set apart by...this Province as a day of fasting, prayer and humiliation ... all officers and soldiers are strictly enjoined to pay all due reverence on that day to the sacred duties of the Lord of hosts .”

— GEORGE WASHINGTON

General Washington gave these orders on March 6, 1776, two days after 25-year-old Henry Knox unbelievably moved 59 cannons 300 miles to protect Boston Harbor. Surprised British General Howe evacuated his ships and 3000 men from Boston. Washington wrote, “much blood was saved and a very important blow...prevented. That this most remarkable Interposition of Providence is for some wise purpose, I have not a doubt.”

to start a nightclub. "Do you think I'm the devil because I'm inherently evil or just because dear old Dad decided I was?" Lucifer says in the show. "By choosing to air this show, Fox is disrespecting Christianity and mocking the Bible," the group said.

Christian Headlines, 3/3

■ A scientific paper that attributed the design of the human hand to a Creator has been heavily criticized and was eventually retracted. The paper claims that the mechanical architecture of the hand is due to "proper design by the Creator." Criticism of the article led the editors to retract the paper and to assert that the process of peer evaluation for the paper was not as thorough as it should have been.

Christian Headlines, 3/4

■ Last week the Senate passed, and President Obama signed into law, a bill that would block imports "made with convict labor, forced labor, or indentured labor." For the past 86 years, the "consumptive demand exception" allowed such goods if there was a "demand" and it was not created in the U.S. Last year the Associated Press conducted an 18-month investigation on slavery and other abusive practices of the fishing industry

in Southeast Asia.

The Weekly, 3/4

■ A Christian student at a university in England has been expelled for quoting Scripture about homosexuality on his personal Facebook page. The University of Sheffield dismissed the student, Felix Ngole, who was pursuing his Master's degree and who quoted Scripture in support of Kim Davis, the Kentucky clerk who was jailed after she refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The student was told that he was "no longer recognised as a University student" because others might have been offended by his words.

Christian Headlines, 2/29

■ Proposed Extremist Disruption Orders (EDOs) would be issued by a British High Court when it is persuaded that someone is "participating in activities that spread, incite, promote or justify hatred against a person (or group of persons) on the grounds of that person's (or group of persons') disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and/or transgender identity." Free speech advocates are teaming to oppose the "highly contentious legislation."

RT, 3/2

■ Several days of attacks

in February's final days killed hundreds of people and sent thousands fleeing from largely Christian areas of Nigeria's farming belt. The armed attacks had features long familiar to Nigerians: ethnic Fulani cattle herders, largely Muslim, moving in on farmers, largely Christian. The long-running land conflict frequently is framed in economic terms, but survivors said the attackers specifically targeted Christians and churches and spared Muslims and mosques. "Yet the US embassy still maintains that this is purely a turf war between farmers and grazers without religious undertones," said Emmanuel Ogebe, a Nigerian human-rights lawyer based in Washington, D.C. who specializes in crimes against Nigeria's Christians.

World Watch Monitor, 3/4

■ A Chinese husband and wife who led a Christian congregation that opposed a government campaign to remove crosses atop churches have been given long prison sentences for corruption and disturbing social order, state media said. For the past two years, local authorities in Zhejiang have removed hundreds of crosses from churches in the province, saying they violate building codes, or demolished churches altogether. Last month, provincial authorities opened a separate corruption probe into a church that has the largest Protestant congregation in the Chinese-speaking world.

AP, 2/28

POLITICAL WISDOM FROM CHUCK COLSON

Why We Haven't Endorsed a Candidate

by John Stonestreet

Many evangelical leaders have publicly endorsed candidates, even earlier than usual, but the Colson Center will maintain Chuck's practice of not doing so, as tempting as it is. But that ought not be confused with disinterest. Trust me—I'm very interested in this election, even more about what it's revealing about the character of our nation than who will actually reach office.

But I'm also interested because, like each and every area of culture, Christ cries "Mine!" over politics and government, too. The question, as Chuck once said, is not whether Christians should be involved in politics, but how.

Because Americans are able to participate in a process that decides who governs us, it's essential we do so. Simply put, Christians should vote because we can. This falls into the "whatever your hand finds to do..." category of Christian action.

But we ought not participate in order to gain political power. Christians are not, as Chuck used to say, a special interest group. And the only way to avoid becoming one is by being clear on the God-given purpose of the state. God intended government to preserve order and ensure justice. Obviously, it doesn't always do so, especially after the fall. And so government has the additional purpose of restraining evil.

But we must not think that the state is the only institution, or even the most important institution, that shapes culture and impacts our lives. There are other divinely appointed institutions with their own scopes of authority. The family, churches, private associations, and local government structures also have "legitimate roles to play in a justly ordered society."

Chuck Colson championed the importance of these other institutions, which Edmund Burke referred to as "little platoons."

Chuck believed deeply in the Reformers' idea of "Sphere Sovereignty," the idea that God has ordained each institution to operate within certain boundaries of authority. And clearly, of all the institutions, the state is most prone these days to overstep its boundaries. In a BreakPoint commentary from 2010, Chuck declared, "Government has no legitimate interest in running car companies, the healthcare industry, or taking over student loans."

Why? Well, in addition to exceeding authority, there's also the issue of ability for each institution. The state's tools are blunt and generalized, not precise and personal. Frankly, the state cannot solve all problems, and it oversteps its bounds when it tries to do so.

Here we have a clear window to look at our candidates and their grandiose promises. Pay close attention to what they say is broken and who they say is responsible for fixing it! Beware of any candidate promising to "fix" everything. They can't—and it's a problem if they try. Utopian thinking always fails, and very often results in tyranny.

And so, one of the best things Christians can do in this election cycle is to spend ample energy on rebuilding those "little platoons" that are upstream from politics and that strengthen civil society. After all, the best way to have a healthy state is to have a healthy culture. And the church and family are best suited for that.

And a final note. While there's no religious test for office, there is a character test for leadership: integrity, honesty, and care for others. And ultimately, God decides elections. We ought pray that He's gracious to us, and that He'll give us better than we deserve.."

Breakpoint Commentary, 3/2/2016

ENTERTAINMENT NOTES

★★NEW MOVIES

	Quality	Moral	Age
Zootopia	PG +4	+1	10+
London Has Fallen	R +3	-2	T/A
Whiskey Tango Foxtrot	R +4	-2	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