



Impact

NEWS & NOTES

■ The Tennessee House has passed a measure that “expresses its disagreement with the constitutional analysis in *Obergefell v. Hodges* and the judicial imposition of a marriage license law that is contrary to the express will of this body and the vote of the people of Tennessee.” Support for same-sex marriage in Tennessee is only at 29 percent, according to a poll released by Middle Tennessee State University. In addition, 57 percent of Tennessee residents strongly oppose it. *Christian Headlines, 3/14*

■ The Alabama Senate voted Tuesday to end state-issued marriage licenses. Couples who want to marry would be required to file a form recording their marriage rather than have probate judges issue marriage licenses. The bill heads to the Alabama House. A few Alabama probate judges have already stopped issuing marriage licenses altogether to avoid giving them to same-

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sex couples. *FACT, 3/18*

■ Defying the wishes of many of Georgia’s most influential companies, the Georgia General Assembly on Wednesday overwhelmingly approved a proposal to strengthen legal protections for opponents of same-sex marriage. Gov. Nathan Deal, a Republican, had previously voiced misgivings about legislation that could be perceived as intolerant. The Georgia bill would shield faith-based groups from penalties if they refuse to provide “social, educational or charitable services that violate such faith-based organization’s sincerely held religious belief.” It would also protect such groups if they chose not to employ someone whose religious beliefs conflict with the organization. *NY Times, 3/16*

■ Following New York City’s lead, by executive order, Seattle’s Mayor Ed Murray has opened all public restrooms that have commodes with stalls so that men can use women’s restrooms and women can use men’s restrooms to accommodate “transgenders.” Plus, city employees who work for Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Seattle Center, and the Seattle Public Library must undergo “transgender” sensitivity training through Seattle’s Office for Civil Rights. Murray is a professed homosexual, who claims to be married to another man, the Seattle Parks and Recreation

director. Meanwhile, the Tennessee House Education Administration Subcommittee unanimously voted for the “bathroom bill,” House Bill 2414, which prohibits public schools and universities from forcing students to use restrooms and locker rooms with students of the opposite biological sex.

FACT, 3/18; Lifesite News, 3/15

■ The American College of Pediatricians responded recently to gender identity issues in children: “The norm for human design is to be conceived either male or female . . . No one is born with a gender. Everyone is born with a biological sex . . . A person’s belief that he or she is something they are not is, at best, a sign of confused thinking.” The College believes that children should not be chemically or surgically altered to imitate the opposite sex. “Conditioning children into believing a lifetime of chemical and surgical impersonation of the opposite sex is normal and healthful is child abuse,” the statement read. “[A]s many as 98% of gender confused boys and 88% of gender confused girls eventually accept their biological sex after naturally passing through puberty.” *FACT, 3/18*

■ A number of lesbian, gay, and transgender groups have sent a letter to the NCAA, urging the Association to disassociate with all colleges that have gotten, or are in the process of getting,

exceptions to Title IX, including all religious based institutions that specifically discriminate against transgender students. Title IX, as put into effect in 1972, prohibits gender discrimination on college campuses. In 2014, the U.S. Department of Education extended Title IX to also include transgender students. Some religious colleges have requested and received exceptions to Title IX, however.

Christian Headlines, 3/15; World, 3/14

■ On Wednesday President Obama picked 63-year-old native of Illinois, Merrick Garland, as his Supreme Court nominee. Though he is described as a moderate, Garland’s court ruled against Priests for Life, which was one of the organizations to file a lawsuit against the Obama administration over its HHS mandate. The court found that the “regulations do not impose a substantial burden on Plaintiffs’ religious exercise.” In an earlier decision, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a favorable ruling in *Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, a landmark case. *LifeNews, 3/17*

■ A leading neonatal physician has confirmed that babies in the womb can feel pain at 20 weeks. Dr. Colleen A. Mallory, a professor of neonatology at Northwestern University’s, said that doctors use pain medication for babies at 20 weeks be-

cause scientific literature points to babies’ ability to feel pain at that age. Mallory said, “The standard of care for NICUs requires attention to and treatment of neonatal pain. There is no reason to believe that a born infant will feel pain any differently than that same infant if he or she were still in utero.” Previously, 24 weeks of gestation was considered a baby’s viability point. However, babies are now surviving outside the womb as early as 20 weeks. On Thursday South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard signed into law a 20-week abortion ban, making it the 13th state to adopt the Pain-Capable Unborn Protection Act. Courts have blocked the legislation in Arizona, Idaho, and Georgia. *Christian Headlines, 3/18*

■ An atheist has sued the mayor and city council members for attending the groundbreaking ceremony for a large cross a local

church had erected on its premises. The cross is under construction alongside Interstate 37 in Corpus Christi, Texas – a city whose name literally means “Body of Christ.” The atheist says it will be a safety hazard but is suing officials for attending the groundbreaking ceremony, which occurred on a Sunday. “No matter what belief you have, this is the name of our city and it was my constitutional right to attend, and I will never regret being there for this wonderful moment,” said Mayor Nelda Martinez. Pastor Rick Milby said it will be the largest cross in the western hemisphere. *FACT, 3/18; FoxNews, 3/16*

■ A Tennessee bill that aims to prevent religious indoctrination in schools is headed to the governor’s desk. The state Senate voted 29-1 to pass the bill on Monday. The bill’s advancement through the state legislature

This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent Being... All variety of created objects which represent order and life in the universe could happen only by the willful reasoning of its original Creator, whom I call the Lord God.” — SIR ISAAC NEWTON

Principia (1687)

Sir Isaac Newton was an English physicist and mathematician who is widely recognized as one of the most influential scientists of all time. President of the Royal Society from 1703 till his death on March 20, 1727, Sir Isaac Newton developed calculus, the laws of gravity and motion and built the first reflecting telescope. Though not orthodox in his beliefs, he insisted, “Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who set the planets in motion. God governs all things and knows all that is or can be done.” Regarding the Bible, Newton wrote, “The system of revealed truth which this Book contains is like that of the universe, concealed from common observation yet the labors of the centuries have established its Divine origin.”

follows months of concern centered around a middle school social studies unit on Islam. The bill gives local school districts more say on how to teach religion in public schools. *Tennessean*, 3/14

■ Tennessee Representative Martin Daniel legislator has argued that free speech on college campuses should even include recruiting for terrorist organization ISIS. The bill, called the “Tennessee Student Free Speech Protection Act,” is sponsored by Daniel and aims to promote freedom of speech, whatever form that may take. Representative John DeBerry Jr. countered that “Free speech is one thing. Being stupid is another.” The bill has been taken off review after the exchange between Daniel and DeBerry.

Christian Headlines, 3/18

■ The creator of a fake prayer website, which sold prayers to customers for payment, has been forced to pay restitution of up to \$7.5 million to customers that were swindled. The Seattle-based company, Christian Prayer Center (CPC) had sold prayers to 125,000 customers for \$9-\$35 per prayer.

The website included fictitious testimonials from consumers. *Christian Headlines*, 3/17

■ A 1,000-year-old Christian cross has been discovered in Denmark, proving that Christianity had a presence in the country earlier than previously thought. The crucifix is made of finely constructed gold threads and tiny filigree pellets. It weighs 0.47 ounces and is 1.61 inches in length. Two runestones were previously discovered in Denmark, dating back to 965 A.D. These were the earliest evidence of conversion to Christianity in the country before the recent discovery of the crucifix. By 1050 A.D., when Christian missionaries had been in the country for two centuries attempting to convert the Vikings, it is thought that most Danes had converted to Christianity.

Christian Headlines, 3/18

■ Four Bible translators have been murdered by militants in the Middle East. According to Wycliffe, a raid took place on the translators’ office. Two of the translators were shot and killed, while another two died of wounds from being beaten. These last two managed to protect

and save the lead translator by lying on top of him while the militants beat them with their now-empty weapons. However, Wycliffe says the militants did not destroy the “computer hard drives containing translation work for eight language projects.” Wycliffe thanked the Lord for this blessing and requested prayer for the families of the slain translators. Wycliffe also asked for prayer for God to raise up new translators to carry on the work being done.

Christian Headlines, 3/18

■ In a 393-0 vote on March 14, the U.S. House declared “the atrocities perpetrated by ISIL against Christians, Yezidis, and other religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.” Earlier this year, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament declared the ISIS campaign against Christians and other religious minorities to be genocide. On Thursday, the U.S. State Department announced through Secretary of State John Kerry that it has determined that the actions of Islamic State constitute an act of genocide. Kerry referred to IS as “Daesh” that is a acronym of the Arabic for “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.” The genocide designation by the U.S. could help bring ISIS members to the International Criminal Court.

World Watch Monitor, 3/16;
The Weekly, 3/18

SO WHAT IS AN EVANGELICAL, ANYWAY?

Evangelicals and Politics

by Eric Metaxas

The media is all over the “evangelical” vote this election season. But who is?

Forty years ago, *Time* magazine declared 1976 to be “The Year of the Evangelical.” The occasion was the candidacy of then-former governor Jimmy Carter who introduced many Americans to a phrase they had never heard before: “born-again Christian.”

This year, Evangelicals are in the news again, and again, for mostly political reasons. It’s difficult to avoid the plethora of stories about how “Evangelicals” are voting and what it all means.

This broadcast is about none of this. Instead I want to talk about the word “Evangelical” in the context where it makes the most sense: what people believe. In the process we may learn things we probably didn’t know but should.

Writing for *Christianity Today*, “BreakPoint This Week” co-host Ed Stetzer and Leith Anderson of the National Association of Evangelicals sought to define what the term “Evangelical” means, especially in this election year.

Most surveys, especially political ones, depend on self-identification. If a person calls herself an Evangelical, then she is counted as one. Others use denominational affiliation as a proxy. Neither of these gives us an accurate estimate: They either include people who probably shouldn’t be included or miss people who should be included.

So Anderson and Stetzer chose to focus on what people say they believe rather than how they self-identify. They asked respondents a series of questions about their beliefs, shaped by what is known as the Bebbington Quadrilateral, after the Scottish historian Thomas Bebbington. These statements are:

- The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe.
- It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- Jesus Christ’s death on the cross is the only

sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin.

- Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God’s free gift of eternal salvation.

As Bebbington found in his own research of Evangelicals in 18th through 20th century Britain, these beliefs most closely reflect what “evangelicals have believed and how they have acted.”

Anderson and Stetzer found that people who agreed with these statements were also likely to self-identify as Evangelicals.

After analyzing the results of the responses, they found that “about 30 percent of all Americans have evangelical beliefs as described by the four questions.” That’s more or less consistent with other survey findings and, thus, not a surprise.

What may be a surprise is the racial and ethnic breakdown of their findings. The group most likely to hold evangelical beliefs were African Americans at 44 percent. That is 50 percent more likely than Whites with 29 percent, and Hispanics with 30 percent.

Whatever else this research reveals, one thing is clear: the image of Evangelicals in the media, and frankly, among us as well, is at best incomplete, and at worst a distortion.

Anderson and Stetzer hope that as their research and its methodology are used, “more Americans will see through the unfortunate cultural and political stereotypes and recognize evangelicals as a diverse people of faith who have given their lives to Jesus Christ as their Savior.”

Amen to that. We should not sit idly by as the term “Evangelical” becomes a synonym for a purely political label like “social conservative” or the “religious right.”

No matter what happens between now and the election, we’ll still be called to spread the good news, the *euaggelion*, from which the word “Evangelical” is derived. Let’s demonstrate that clearly.

Bretpoint Commentary, 3/18/2016

ENTERTAINMENT NOTES

★★NEW MOVIES

	Quality	Moral	Age
<i>Miracles from Heaven</i>	PG +4	+4	10+
<i>The Divergent Series: Allegiant</i>	PG-13 +4	-1	T/A
<i>The Perfect Match</i>	R +2	-3	A
<i>The Bronze</i>	R +3	-4	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