



Impact

NEWS & NOTES

■ State lawmakers on Thursday approved a bill that diverts — for one year only — about \$436,000 from the University of Tennessee Office for Diversity and Inclusion and into scholarships for minority students in engineering. If ultimately approved by Gov. Bill Haslam, that move ends — at least for this year — a push by conservatives angry over the Knoxville campus's annual Sex Week and memorandums to the campus community from the diversity office last year discussing gender-neutral pronouns and ways to make Christmas holiday office parties inclusive for non-Christians. When demands to “defund” diversity programs first surfaced last year, the discussion revolved around \$19 million spent throughout public higher education on such diversity efforts as scholarships and faculty recruitment. Later, the Senate Education Committee recommended taking

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Editor: Bruce Warmack

\$8 million from UT diversity programs. UT President Joe DiPietro said Thursday night, “While we appreciate what could have been an \$8 million hit being reduced to \$436,000, we continue to be concerned about the loss of those important inclusion and diversity programs impacted by this reduction.”

Knoxville News Sentinel, 4/21

■ Rep. Susan Lynn on Monday decided not to pursue a vote on House Bill 2414, the so-called “bathroom bill.” David Fowler, Family Action Council of Tennessee president, said, “We are grateful for the legislators who said they would take the bill from Rep. Lynn this year and continue to push it forward; however, it was not to be. ... In the meantime, we would encourage citizens to monitor the policies of their local school systems and demand that their schools defend the privacy of students if threatened with lawsuits, as has already happened with one local school system.”

Chattanooga, 4/18

■ The Tennessee House has passed legislation adding new regulations for handling aborted fetal remains in the state. The Fetal Remains Act passed 79-9 last on April 14, having already cleared the Senate in a 28-2 vote three days prior. The proposed legislation adds language clarifying that reimbursement for the preparation, preservation, transfer, shipping, or handling of an

aborted fetus or fetal tissue would be a Class E felony. The sale or purchase of fetal tissue is currently illegal in Tennessee. Governor Bill Haslam had advocated for passage of the law after the undercover videos surfaced implicating Planned Parenthood in trafficking the remains of children aborted at its facilities. Haslam directed the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) to review abortion regulations and inspection requirements related to the handling of aborted fetuses, looking for ways to strengthen regulations. Some administrative changes were immediately made, but Haslam maintained the legislation is needed to strengthen accountability and transparency for surgical abortion centers.

LifeSiteNews, 4/18

■ Controversy over a Ten Commandments monument removed from the grounds of the state Capitol in October continues with an effort to reinstate the monument. The Oklahoma House of Representatives voted 65-7 on Thursday in favor of a statewide vote to determine whether to remove an article of the state constitution which prohibits the use of state funds to support religion. If the voters decide to abolish the constitutional mandate, it will pave the way for the Ten Commandments monument to be reinstated on the grounds of the Capitol. Christian Headlines, 4/22

■ A federal court upheld Utah’s ban on polygamy Monday, saying it lacked jurisdiction, reinstating a statute that makes bigamy a third-degree felony. Salt Lake City is home to the Mormon church, which sanctioned polygamy until 1890 when Utah sought statehood. But some break-away groups still encourage the practice. Although Utah may not prosecute anyone simply living in a polygamous relationship, it will prosecute for associated forms of domestic abuse, child abuse, or fraud,

World News Service, 4/18

■ Dr. Eric Walsh, a public health expert and lay minister, was allegedly fired from his Georgia Department of Public Health job for giving sermons on homosexuality and evolution. “I don’t believe I did anything wrong,” Walsh said in an interview. “This has been very painful for me. I really am a strong believer in the Constitution. But now I feel like maybe all these ideals and values that I was raised to believe – the ideals they country was founded upon – no longer exist.” Walsh was hired on May 7, 2014. A few days later, Todd Starnes of Fox-News.com writes, “DPH officers and other government workers began investigating his religious activities.” Then on May 16, the department rescinded the job offer.

RT, 4/21

■ Norwegian bishops are asking the Vatican for per-

mission to stop officiating civil weddings, citing concerns about “aggressive” politicians, particularly after the Lutheran Church’s decision to conduct same-sex “weddings” in Norway. Separating civil and religious ceremonies would protect other churches from “increased pressure to consecrate same-sex couples,” they said. In the U.S., the city of Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, faces an ongoing lawsuit for an ordinance that could be used to force ministers who run a for-profit wedding chapel to perform same-sex “wedding” ceremonies that go against their faith. Additionally, photographers, bakers, and florists across the U.S. have faced retribution for refusing to violate their consciences by participating in same-sex “wedding” ceremonies.

LifeSiteNews, 4/22

■ A new study from Baylor University revealed that nine out of 10 Americans have turned to God in

prayer for personal healing or for the healing of loved ones. “Outside of belief in God, there may be no more ubiquitous religious expression in the U.S. than use of healing prayer,” stated lead researcher of the study Jeff Levin. Christian Headlines, 4/20

■ Christian recovery groups and churches are critical to helping working class adults overcome their alcohol and drug addictions. Erik Epp of Addiction No More said many of them who turn to Christian treatment centers often have some background of Christianity. “At the time of admittance they usually are disconnected to their faith and Savior. Their choice of drug has now, by default, become their God. Seeds have been planted and our job is to water them,” Perea said. According to studies by two Princeton economists, addiction abuse is a direct cause of rising mortality rates among some sections of American society. For exam-

I commend my soul into the hands of God, my Creator, hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting.”

— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

So wrote Shakespeare in his last will and testament. He died 400 years ago on his birthday April 23, 1616, four years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. Despite their secular appearance, Shakespeare’s plays conceal an undercurrent of Biblical meaning. In *Henry VI Part 2*, “God’s goodness hath been great to thee; Let never day nor night unhallowed pass, But still remember what the Lord hath done.” In 1983, a federal court stated, “The First Amendment was never intended to insulate our public institutions from any mention of God, the Bible or religion... Some of the better known works which rely heavily on allusions from the Bible include... The Plays of Shakespeare... Secular education imposes immediate demands that the student have a good knowledge of the Bible.”

ple, middle-aged white American annual death rates have spiked due to suicides and afflictions linked with substance abuse[, unlike the same groups in other industrialized nations]. RT, 4/22

■ Popular singer and U2 front man Bono has teamed up with the translator of The Message Bible, Eugene Peterson, to make a film about the Psalms. Bono, whose songs with the band U2 often have Christian undertones, identifies as a Christian and is heavily invested in humanitarian work. The film, called simply The Psalms, will be released April 26, 2016. Christian Headlines, 4/22

■ They call it the West Coast Rumble: a set of multi-week Pentecostal revivals in Seattle and San Diego, plus a large Christian rally in Los Angeles two weekends ago. The events mark the 110th anniversary of the legendary Azusa Street Revival, which birthed the Pentecostal movement in the U.S. The 1906 revival sparked a massive spiritual awakening that today numbers some 279 million adherents worldwide. Known for having received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Pentecostals often speak in tongues and dance during worship services and report healings and

other miracles. RNS, 4/20

■ Thousands of Norwegian Christians are protesting the government's removal of five children from a Christian family after Norway's child welfare service discovered that the children were spanked and experienced religious indoctrination. Corporal punishment is against the law in Norway. Tens of thousands of protesters joined together to petition the government to restore the children to their family. Christian Headlines, 4/21

■ The UK Parliament has joined US Secretary of State John Kerry, US House of Representatives, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in describing the actions of Islamic State (or Da'esh) as genocide. A motion, passed on Wednesday by 280 votes to 0, although the UK government opposed it. MPs had heard from a woman who had come directly from Syria and spoke of Christians being killed and tortured, of children being beheaded in front of their parents. Christians and Yazidis had been targeted explicitly because of their religion and ethnicity. Five dense dossiers are reported to have been compiled detailing these crimes. Experts say there has never

before been such international support for recognizing a genocide while atrocities are still happening. World Watch Monitor, 4/21

■ A Muslim man who was intent on killing Christians has miraculously encountered Christ and become a Christian himself. Al-Rashid commanded a radical Islamic group and was angered by a report of a former Muslim who had converted to Christianity and become a pastor. "We attacked them several times," Al-Rashid recounted, "and miraculously they escaped." He then saw a miraculous vision of light over a one of the pastor's children near death but who suddenly regained consciousness and was healed. Soon after, Al-Rashid surrendered his life to Christ. Al-Rashid now works with Bibles for Mideast, distributing God's Word to those who are just like he was. He also went to see Pastor Paul who embraced him as a Christian brother. Christian Headlines, 4/21

■ A Christian woman and wife of a pastor has been killed in China while she and her husband protested the demolition of their church. They were pushed into a ditch by a bulldozer and were covered in soil. Her husband was able to escape, but she suffocated. Police are reportedly investigating the incident and have taken two members of the demolition team into custody. Up to 1,700 churches have been demolished or had their crosses taken down in a single province. Christian Headlines, 4/19

WALKING AWAY FROM THE GAME AND \$13M

The Peculiar Story of Adam LaRoche

by John Stonestreet

In March, Major League baseball player Adam LaRoche shocked the sports world. LaRoche, a 12-year veteran who averaged more than 20 home runs a year and won many awards for his defensive skills at first base, unexpectedly retired.

By doing so, he walked away from \$13 million—the amount left on the final year of a two-year contract with the White Sox.

Even more shocking than leaving \$13 million on the table was the reason he did so: The White Sox had informed LaRoche that his 14-year-old son, Drake, could no longer accompany him in the club house every day.

If you can't imagine walking away from that kind of money for that kind of reason, you're not alone.

But then again, a lot of what LaRoche does is peculiar, and I mean that in the best possible way.

It's fair to say that most of those who commented on his decision, which in the age of social media means practically everyone with access to the Internet, were critical of LaRoche's decision to put his ideas about being a good father ahead of his team and his teammates.

Not that it matters to LaRoche. He told ABC news that "I have zero regrets." While he admitted to being angry with the White Sox at first, he added that their actions made his decision to retire easier. As he put it, "I don't want to be defined by this game. I know there's a lot more to life."

Well, this understanding that there's a lot more to life is why Tim Keown of ESPN wrote in his profile of LaRoche, "You need to forget everything you think you know about professional athletes. Adam LaRoche is different."

Part of the difference, as LaRoche's comments suggest, is that he's not consumed by the sport, despite being the son of one major leaguer and the brother of another. He has other interests, chief among them his Christian faith and his family. It's why Drake, who

attends regular school in the off-season and is home-schooled in the spring quarter, accompanied his dad to the ballpark every day.

It's why, when LaRoche played for the Washington Nationals and the Chicago White Sox, he and other teammates sponsored "Faith Days" in 2014 and 2015.

And most of all, it's why LaRoche and Milwaukee Brewers pitcher Blaine Boyer spent ten days last November working undercover in Southeast Asian brothels trying to rescue underage sex slaves.

Yes, you heard me right. LaRoche and Boyer, working with a group called Exodus Road and at great personal risk, used a hidden camera to identify trafficked girls—known only by a number pinned to their bikini—and also their bosses.

As Boyer told Keown, "Something huge happened there for us . . . Adam and I truly believe God brought us there and said, 'This is what I have for you boys.'" On the flight home LaRoche turned to Boyer and said, "What are we doing? We're going back to play a game for the next eight months?"

Upon his return from Asia, LaRoche was haunted by what he had seen and by the fact that it was going on while he lay safely in his bed.

Keown writes of LaRoche's "nearly cinematic level of nonconformity" to people's expectations of what an athlete should be. But a better description would be "peculiar." Peculiar in the biblical sense of being "a peculiar people." The Greek word translated "peculiar" means "costly" and "treasured," but because our treasure is found in different places than the rest of the world, Christians are to be "peculiar" in the more typical sense of being "different," maybe even considered "weird."

LaRoche's confidence to be peculiar, even at the cost of \$13 million, comes from the fact that there's a lot more to life than the world would have us believe, but that God is waiting to show to us—maybe through a peculiar ball player..

ENTERTAINMENT NOTES

★★NEW MOVIES

	Quality	Moral	Age
<i>Elvis & Nixon</i>	R	+4	-2 OT/A
<i>The Huntsman: Winter's War</i>	PG-13	+3	-2 T/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