



### NEWS & NOTES

■ Earlier this week, a group of students and parents in North Carolina brought their own lawsuit against the Obama administration's lawsuit that threatens to withhold federal educational funds from those who comply with North Carolina's bathroom bill. The administration has reinterpreted Title IX, which that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs receiving Federal financial assistance, to make "gender identity" synonymous with "sex." On Friday, May 13, the Obama administration sent a letter to all public schools in America notifying teachers and administrators of the regulations they must comply with in regards to their students' "gender identity."

Transgender is independent of sexual orientation, and those who self-identify as transgender may consider themselves to be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, or

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asexual. As the letter states, "Under Title IX, there is no medical diagnosis or treatment requirement that students must meet as a prerequisite to being treated consistent with their gender identity." The letter further states that accommodation must be provided "even in circumstances in which other students, parents, or community members raise objections or concerns."

Although Congress is responsible for creating laws, they have ceded much of their authority to define what laws mean to the other two branches of government. Though the judiciary is responsible for interpreting the law, in reality most interpretation is done by the executive branch, whose departments act as regulatory agencies. When Congress passes a new law it usually goes to a regulatory agency to determine how the law will be put in place. School districts who do not comply with the new interpretation would be considered by the Obama administration to be in violation of Title IX, and could lose Federal funds for their school(s).

■ While continuing to cater to transgenders, the retail giant Target is also adding more family restrooms to its stores. "We're going to continue to embrace our belief in diversity and inclusion, just how important that is to our company. But we're also going to make sure our focus

on safety is unwavering," said Target's Chief Executive Brian Cornell. The American Family Association, which hand-delivered a petition with one million names to Target executives demanding the retailer overturn its "transgender" policy, will continue their boycott.

FACT, 5/13

■ New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio is urging locals to boycott Chick-Fil-A because the chain founders support one-man, one-woman marriage. In response Chick-fil-A release a statement saying. "The Chick-fil-A culture and service tradition in our restaurants is to treat every person with honor, dignity and respect — regardless of their beliefs, race, creed, sexual orientation or gender."

FACT, 5/13

■ Mississippi is now headed to federal court over its effort to protect the religious freedom of individuals who object to same-sex marriage and restroom use based on gender identity. When Gov. Phil Bryant signed the state's Protecting Freedom of Conscience From Government Discrimination Act in early April, Southern Baptist religious freedom leader Russell Moore commended the measure, saying it "doesn't discriminate against anyone or imperil civil liberties... What it actually does is prohibit the government from taking sides in a culture war and discriminate against those with religious convic-

tions." However, the ACLU described Mississippi's new law as unconstitutionally discriminatory and asked a federal judge to block enforcement of the measure before it takes effect July 1. The lawsuits now put Mississippi in the company of North Carolina as legal battlegrounds involving lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights.

BP, 5/11

■ An Alabama judicial oversight body on May 6 filed a formal complaint against Roy S. Moore, the chief justice of the state's Supreme Court, charging that he had "flagrantly disregarded and abused his authority" in ordering the state's probate judges to refuse applications for marriage licenses by same-sex couples. As a result of the charges, Chief Justice Moore, 69, has been immediately suspended from the bench and is facing a potential hearing before the state's Court of the Judiciary, a panel of judges, lawyers and other appointees. Among possible outcomes at such a hearing would be his removal from office. In 2003, he was ousted by the same body from his position as chief justice after disobeying a federal court order to remove a two-ton monument of the Ten Commandments that he had installed in the rotunda of the state judicial building.

NY Times, 5/6

■ Wyoming's Commission on Judicial Conduct and Eth-

ics has recommended to the state's Supreme Court that Municipal Judge and Circuit Court Magistrate Ruth Neely of Pinedale, Wyoming, be removed from office for vocalizing her belief to a journalist that same-sex "marriage" was wrong. The commission started investigating Neely after she told a reporter in 2014 she would not perform same-sex marriages because of her religious beliefs . . . Neely is fighting removal, arguing she has a constitutional right to voice her opinion. Her lawyers have said no same-sex couples have asked her to preside over their weddings.

FACT, 5/13; National Review, 5/11

■ A Memphis teacher in the suburb of Collierville was fired without warning for showing a video by Rick Warren to her classroom. Mary Simms, who had been subbing for a 10th-grade English honors class for nearly a month said her reason for showing the video was to contrast the hedonistic lifestyle promoted in a book by James Joyce, which she said was already listed on the curriculum. "So the

parallels were perfect," said Simms. Warren is the author of the best-selling "The Purpose-Driven Life." Warren's TED Talk "A life of purpose" has been viewed 2.6 million times. "Why am I here, what am I here for, where am I going?" Warren asks in the video. "These are not religious issues. They're human issues." Apparently, the school didn't think so.

FACT, 5/13; OneNewsNow, 5/9; WREG, 5/12

■ Iowa's Supreme Court has ruled that unborn babies have the right to parental care and comfort. The ruling came about after a woman, who was three to four months pregnant at the time, sued her husband's doctors for contributing to his death and leaving her unborn child bereft of a parent. Iowa allows lawsuits on behalf of minors who were under the age of eight when a parent died due to something such as medical malpractice. The court then faced the decision of whether an unborn baby was considered a minor--a decision with obvious implications for the pro-life/pro-choice debate.

Christian Headlines, 5/11

Our government rests upon religion. It is from that source that we derive our reverence for truth and justice, for equality and liberty, and for the rights of mankind. Unless the people believe in these principles they cannot believe in our government."

— PRESIDENT CALVIN COOLIDGE (1924)

President Coolidge further stated, "There are only two main theories of government in the world. One rests on righteousness, the other rests on force."

■ Physician-assisted suicide is not a fundamental right in New York, an appeals court has ruled. The panel of judges upheld a state Supreme Court finding that state laws forbidding assisted suicide are not a violation of civil rights. The case seeks legal protection for doctors who provide euthanasia drugs to mentally competent terminally ill adults. State lawmakers this week introduced the Medical Aid in Dying Act allowing for physician-assisted suicide in New York. *LifeSiteNews*, 5/10

■ The University of Oregon has established a Bias Response Team composed of seven administrators that are charged with responding to complaints however petty by anyone who feels offended, harassed, ignored, undervalued, or objectified because of their race, gender, gender identity, disability, size, etc. Although the BRT evidently lacks the power to sanction the offenders, that might not have been clear to students who were accused of bias and made to have a chat with campus officials working for the Dean of Students. *FACT*, 5/13; *Reason.com*, 5/10

■ Over 100 United Methodist clergy members have come out as LGBT as part of an effort to convince the

UMC to rethink their stance on gay marriage and the LGBT community. Leaders of the United Methodist Church are scheduled to meet in Portland to consider around 1,000 legislative petitions in favor of embracing the LGBT community in the UMC. *Christian Headlines*, 5/11

■ An alert reader who served as a Marine pointed out the fallacy in the claim of a Lance Corporal that was unfavorably discharged from the Corps apparently for displaying Bible verses, as reported in last week's *Impact*. Further investigation reveals that she had two other more serious incidents of insubordination, had disobeyed direct orders and had failed to follow Marine protocol when disagreeing with an order. -Editor

■ Over 80 Muslim refugees from Iran and Afghanistan have converted to Christianity and been baptized in Hamburg, Germany. Albert Babajan, the pastor who conducted the mass baptism, said that the converts were dissatisfied with Islam and were looking for something more. "I've been looking all my life for peace and happiness, but in Islam, I have not found it," one Christian convert said. *Christian Headlines*, 5/11

■ Christian and Muslim

leaders met in Rome to discuss how they can work together to care for the poor. The fourth Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies agreed that Help to the poor should be extended out of compassion and for the sake of obeying God. "It should never be used to proselytize." *Christian Headlines*, 5/9

■ A major aid agency said Wednesday that 27.8 million people around the world were internally displaced by conflicts and natural disasters last year, calling it a global crisis. That's as many as the combined populations of New York City, London, Paris and Cairo — or an average of 66,000 people displaced every day in 2015. Yemen alone accounted for one quarter of conflict-related displacement worldwide last year, with 2.2 million people uprooted, or 20 times more than in 2014. Yemen was followed by Syria with 1.3 million displaced and Iraq with 1.1 million, the report said. *AP*, 5/11

■ Terror group ISIS has launched an app aimed at indoctrinating children, whom the group refers to as "cubs of the Caliphate." The app is meant to teach children their letters, but does so using illustrations of guns, bullets, rockets, cannons, and swords. Refugees attempting to flee ISIS have described the terror group's brainwashing techniques, especially aimed at children. *Christian Headlines*, 5/12

## GOD'S CREATION, NOT OURS

### Light at Conception

by John Stonestreet

God's active act of creation, as described in Genesis 1, begins with those familiar words "Let there be light," or, as my Latin-loving colleagues prefer, "fiat lux."

Throughout the Scriptures, God's presence and power is associated with light. This is most obviously true in all of the writings the Apostle John. In fact, as 1 John tells us, "God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all."

But this is more than history and metaphor. As it turns out, it's observable in the microscopic realm as well.

The lead to a recent article in the U.K.'s Telegraph newspaper sums up a remarkable discovery by researchers at Northwestern University near Chicago: "Human life begins in bright flash of light as a sperm meets an egg, scientists have shown for the first time, after capturing the astonishing 'fireworks' on film. An explosion of tiny sparks erupts from the egg at the exact moment of conception."

Think about this for a moment. At the moment that you, I and everyone else who has ever lived were conceived, the microscopic equivalent of "fireworks" went off. A kind of mini "Big Bang."

As Simcha Fisher wrote at Aleteia, when she saw the headline, her response was, "It's almost . . . as if something amazing is going on! Something that shouldn't be messed with!"

Unfortunately, that's not how the people behind this discovery responded. After seeing nature's "fireworks" their minds turned to how they could use what they saw to control and manipulate nature.

One of the co-authors of the study called the results "transformative" and "important." Why? Because, she said, it makes in-vitro fertilization more reliable. As she told the Telegraph, "There are no tools currently available that tell us if it's a good quality egg. Often we don't know whether the egg or em-

bryo is truly viable until we see if a pregnancy ensues."

The "fireworks" suggest that there may be "a non-invasive and easily visible way to assess the health of an egg and eventually an embryo before implantation." This, she continued, "...will help us know which embryo to transfer, avoid a lot of heartache and achieve pregnancy much more quickly."

This, this, is what they saw as "transformative" about this amazing discovery?

I remember John Piper once saying that no one looks out over the Grand Canyon and thinks, "I am awesome." Apparently, however, there are those who — in the words of Fisher — "behold the brilliant spark of life itself" and say "Think of the commercial possibilities."

For Fisher, this story brought to mind a scene from C.S. Lewis's "The Magician's Nephew." The magician of the title, Uncle Andrew, is privileged to be present at the creation of Narnia, as Aslan sings the world into being. Yet, like these researchers, all he can think of is growing iron trees in Narnia and selling them back home for a profit.

To which Frank the Cabby replies, "Oh stow it, Guv'nor, do stow it. Watchin' and listenin's the thing at present; not talking."

Frank the Cabby and Fisher are both spot on. For those of us privileged to witness something amazing, even holy, our response should be awe and reverence, including reverential silence. Since we have nothing to do with the miracle unfolding before our eyes, our response should be wonder and gratitude, and ultimately worship - not plans to exploit our knowledge and play God for profit.

Of course, the right response requires acknowledging that we have nothing to do with that miracle and, thus, it is not ours to exploit. And that kind of humility, which is a prerequisite for wonder and gratitude, is in increasingly short supply.

#### ENTERTAINMENT NOTES

##### ★★NEW MOVIES

*Money Monster*

##### Quality Moral Age

R +2 -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](http://movieguide.org)