



# Impact

## NEWS & NOTES

■ The overall number of abortions, especially among teenagers, continues to decline, according to a new report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The U.S. abortion rate fell by 15 percent between 2004 and 2013 and has fallen by over 40 percent since 1980. From 2004 to 2013, the percentage of abortions accounted for by adolescents aged 15–19 years decreased 31 percent and their abortion rate decreased 46 percent. The majority of reported abortions (66 percent) were performed by at eight weeks' gestation or sooner, and nearly all abortion (91.6 percent) were performed on or before the thirteenth week of gestation. Only 7.1 percent were performed between 14 and 20 weeks' gestation and only 1.3 percent were on or after the age of fetal viability (21 weeks' gestation). The long-term decline in the rate of abortion, says Michael New

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of National Review, is “perhaps the best evidence of the success we have had in enacting protective laws, shifting public opinion, and building a culture of life in the United States.”

The Weekly, 12/2

■ The House Energy & Commerce Committee’s Select Investigative Panel chaired by Tennessee’s Congressman Marsha Blackburn has referred Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast for criminal prosecution to the Texas Attorney General for fetal tissue trafficking. The panel vindicates what the Center for Medial Progress found in their undercover video investigation of Planned Parenthood’s illegal sale of baby parts. “[I]t is now up to us to build on this work, to hold our government accountable, and to stop these affronts to human dignity,” notes Blackburn. FACT, 12/2

■ While the media have made a big deal about the prolific level of evangelical support won by Trump, the real story may be elsewhere. Barna’s research indicates that perhaps the most significant faith group in relation to the Trump triumph was non-Christian Christians. These individuals – who consider themselves to be Christian, typically attend a Christian church, but are not born again – have supported the Democratic candidate in every election since 1996. On average, notionals have

given the Democratic candidate 58 percent of their votes. That trend was broken this year as Hillary Clinton took just 47 percent of the group’s votes while Trump was awarded 49 percent. Given that notionals are by far the largest of the five faith segments, that transition was a game changer. Catholics split their vote, awarding 48 percent to each candidate. This is the first election in the last 20 years in which the Catholic vote was not won by the Democratic candidate. Barna, 12/1

■ The Marines have agreed to integrate those who identify as “transgender” into the Corps, while maintaining grooming standards for their “preferred gender.” Commanders will be given some digression about treating personnel who interfere or whose service “is adversely affected by medical conditions or medical treatment related to their gender identity.” As a part of gender integration the Corps is remodeling bathrooms and showers in units concerned about privacy. FACT, 12/2; FRC, 11/29

■ The United Nations General Assembly’s Human Rights Council voted November 21 to affirm Vitit Muntarbhorn as Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, a position that was created in June to spread the LGBT’s agenda globally. The new position investigates alleged

violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. A concerted effort from 54 conservative African nations to block the appointment failed. FACT, 12/2

■ In an unsolicited letter, fashion designer Sophie Theallet, who has dressed the current first lady Michelle Obama, offered a pre-emptive refusal to dress the next first lady, Melania Trump, should she ask for some of her clothes. “As one who celebrates and strives for diversity, individual freedom and respect for all lifestyles, I will not participate in dressing or associating in any way with the next First Lady,” the letter reads. Her announcement was called “noble” while bakers and florists are called bigots for refusing to design or make something for an event that violates his or her religious beliefs. Federalist, 11/19; FACT, 12/2

■ A new report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that teenagers who choose to remain virgins are not only healthier sexually, but they are also much healthier overall than those who are sexually active. The study also found that those teens who engaged in sexual activity with the same sex or with both sexes were markedly less healthy than even their heterosexually active peers. High school students who are vir-

gins rate significantly and consistently better in nearly all health-related behaviors and measures than their sexually active peers, according to the report, the first ever of its kind. Sexually active teenagers are *dramatically* more likely to binge drink, to ride with a drinking driver, to smoke, to use pot, to inject drugs, to experience dating violence and to feel sad or helpless. They are *significantly* less likely to wear a seat belt, to eat breakfast and to get eight hours of sleep daily, while significantly more likely to suffer from asthma and to experience physical fighting. FACT, 12/2; Federalist, 11/29

■ Recently, the Marine Corps announced its plan to develop a program of “spiritual fitness training” in order to “build the kind of mental resilience necessary for war,” according to chaplain Rear Admiral Brent Scott. After a long time in the Middle East, Scott said

he “found that much of the resilience we saw was not necessarily attributed to something that somebody could do in the gym. A lot had to do with the heart and soul of the individual.” Training is needed to develop this spiritual component of our humanity as it relates to military service. It will be a success, Scott notes, “if Marines begin talking about spiritual fitness and maintaining spiritual health as openly as they discuss physical fitness and physical training.” The Commandant of the Marine Corps stated, “Research indicates that spiritual fitness plays a key role in resiliency, in our ability to grow, develop, recover, heal, and adapt. Regardless of individual philosophy or beliefs, spiritual well-being makes us better warriors and people of character capable of making good choices on and off duty.” FRC, 11/22

■ Studies by the Harvard

Marquette] explained to them the principal mysteries of our religion, and the end for which he had come to their country ... especially he preached to them Christ crucified.”— JACQUES MARQUETTE

In 1675, just prior to his death at age 37, French missionary Jacques Marquette preached to several thousand Indians: “Five hundred chiefs and old men, seated in a circle around the father, while the youth stood without to the number of fifteen hundred, not counting women and children who are very numerous, the town being composed of five or six hundred fires.” For the past two years, Marquette had traveled with French explorer Louis Joliette to explore the unknown Mississippi River, where they traveled south to just below the Arkansas River, hesitating to go further because of entering Spanish Territory. On their return trip up the Illinois River, he founded a mission among the Illinois Indians. Caught by a winter storm on Dec. 4, 1674, Marquette erected a rough log cabin near the shore of Lake Michigan. The settlement would grow into the city of Chicago.

School of Public Health have linked religious service attendance to a number of better health outcomes, including longer life, lower incidence of depression, less suicide, and a lower likelihood of divorce. On divorce, researchers controlled of those that stopped attending religious services and found that the results persisted: those who attended religious services were 47 percent less likely to subsequently divorce. *Family Studies, 11/29*

■ Shortly before ramming his vehicle into a group of students Ohio State's campus on Monday morning and then attacking them with a butcher knife, Ohio State University student Abdul Razak Ali Artan warned America to stay out of Muslim countries and to make peace with Muslims or else. Eleven students were injured before an Ohio State police officer Alan Horujko shot and killed Artan after he refused to comply with police orders. Prior to the attack, Artan had posted: "We are not weak. We are not weak, remember that. If you want us Muslims to stop carrying lone wolf attacks, then make peace. We will not let you sleep unless you give peace to the Muslims." No one

died in the attack besides Artan himself, and those who were injured are said to be in stable condition.

*Christian Headlines, 11/29*

■ The *All Families Are Equal Act*, which just passed unanimously in the Ontario Legislature this week, removes "mother" and "father" from all of family law and substitutes for those words the word "parent." Bill 28 makes parenting a contractual agreement among people, not a natural bond to children, which makes it far easier for the government to seize children because they now have only a contractual—not natural—bond to their parents. *FACT, 12/2*

■ Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, who died Nov. 25 at age 90, is being remembered as both an unwitting catalyst of revival and an opponent of religious liberty. When Castro led a revolt that overthrew then-Cuban dictator Batista in 1959, he instituted a communist regime that viewed Christians as "anti-revolutionaries," barring them from attending universities or entering certain professional fields. Castro's death, said Southern Baptists with ties to Cuba, is unlikely to yield significant increases in religious liberty for the island nation until the fall of

the communist government he inaugurated 57 years ago. In the meantime, Florida Baptists plan to continue sending an average of one mission team to Cuba every eight days. *BP, 11/28*

■ Russia's President Putin signed a package of laws in July that includes the most repressive legislation since the Soviet era against the right of freedom of religion or belief. The measure makes it a crime to engage in religious activities that range from preaching and teaching to religious publishing, anywhere in Russia besides government-approved sites. Since evangelicals attend house churches, many will fall under the law's reach. For example, Donald Ossewaarde, an American Baptist, was fined 40,000 rubles for holding religious services in his own home in Oryol. *USA Today, 11/22*

■ An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan has sentenced five men to death for their part in the mob killing of a Christian couple in November 2014. The men used a mosque loudspeaker to draw a crowd and incite them to violence against a 28-year-old and his 25-year-old pregnant wife. An investigator found that the couple had only burned some paper with Arabic writing, rather than Quran pages, which is a crime punishable by death in the Islamic nation. Of the hundreds who helped kill the couple, about 100 were charged with murder under the country's anti-terrorism act. *World, 11/28*

## Goodbye, Fidel Castro

by John Stonestreet

A brutal communist dictator has gone on to meet his reward. And too many seem confused about his legacy.

On Friday, Fidel Castro died at the age of ninety, far older than many of his opponents lived to be. If you've been subjected to the fawning epitaphs of many in the media (or read about one NFL quarterback's ridiculous defense of Castro) please keep this in mind: While exact numbers are difficult to come by, the number of Cubans murdered by Castro's regime numbers in the tens of thousands, if not more.

In 1998, I found myself standing less than a hundred yards away from Castro. I'd spent a year in Jamaica right after college, and while I was there, Castro came for a visit. Looking back, knowing what I now know about Castro, the esteem in which he was held was amazing: He was met with a hero's welcome by both public officials and the people... not to mention, streets and sidewalks that had been in disrepair for decades were fixed, and gutters were finally unclogged and cleaned up to honor him.

The obvious question was: Why? And the best answer my Jamaican friends could come up with when I asked was that Castro had "stood up" to the U.S. for decades.

Implicit in their answer is the idea that Castro had stood up to them because he had the best interests of the Cuban people in mind. A sentiment shared by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau when he called Castro "a larger than life leader who served his people for almost half a century."

But what twaddle that is! Castro certainly was larger than life, and as I learned that day, an amazing public speaker. But oratorical skills cannot mitigate the consequences of evil ideas. Only people who did not actually have to live under Castro's rule would call his treatment of the Cuban people "service." The Cuba Archive has identified at least 15,000 Cubans who were shot, hanged, or otherwise died in his notorious prisons.

This is the legacy of the man that to-

## WHY UTOPIANISM ALWAYS FAILS

day's version of what Lenin once dubbed "useful idiots" are praising.

In addition, Castro's idea of "service" included making Cuba a satellite of the Soviet Union. He allowed the USSR to place nuclear missiles on the island, thus giving his people a potential front-row seat for Armageddon.

And then of course, there's Cuba's horrendous human rights record. According to Human Rights Watch, "During Castro's rule, thousands of Cubans were incarcerated in abysmal prisons, thousands more were harassed and intimidated, and entire generations were denied basic political freedoms."

If this is "service," I'd hate to see "evil."

But let's be clear: what happened in Castro's Cuba is fully consistent with the historical record of communism and all other attempts at man-made utopias, a word which, you should recall, means "no place."

All utopian visions attempt to reinvent man and refashion him along ideologically-inspired lines by force of state-level coercion. And that never works. Human nature just isn't that malleable.

The 2001 film "Enemy at the Gates," about the siege of Stalingrad during World War II, offers one of the clearest and concise critiques of communism I've ever heard. As he lays dying, Danilov, a commissar whose job it was to try and create this "new Soviet man," tells the hero, "I've been such a fool, Vassili. Man will always be man. There is no new man. We worked so hard to create a society that was equal, where there'd be nothing to envy your neighbour. But there's always something to envy. A smile, a friendship, something you don't have and want to appropriate."

Danilov is only mistaken on one point: there is a "new man." But humans are only made new by a means that Castro tried so hard to destroy during his entire reign: the Christ of Christianity. And I pray this lesson isn't lost on the rest of us..

Breatpoint Commentary, 11/29/2016

### ENTERTAINMENT NOTES

#### ★★NEW MOVIES

	Quality	Moral	Age
<i>Believe</i>	PG	+3	+1 10+
<i>Loving</i>	PG-13	+4	-2 T/A
<i>Incarinate</i>	PG-13	+3	-3 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](http://movieguide.org); [pluggedin.com](http://pluggedin.com)