
The Times and the Scriptures

A Christian citizenship curriculum for developing people with an understanding of the times, to know what America ought to do (cf. First Chronicles 12:32)

WEEKLY BULLETIN *for July 3, 2011*

Happy Independence Day! As you honor America this weekend, think of John Adams' exuberant prediction upon the signing of the Declaration of Independence, that the event would be honored as *"the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated as the Day of Deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty... to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations [fireworks], from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever."*

The Declaration Today: A Rasmussen survey released Friday shows 66% of American adults agreeing with the Declaration's tenet that "governments derive their only just powers from the consent of the governed," up from 56% three years ago. (16% disagree.) Only 23% of likely voters, however, think the current government has the consent of the governed. Agreement with the "consent principle" by category was: Males 80%, Females 52%, Republicans 73%, Independents 73%, Democrats 51%.

For a timely reminder of the biblical foundations of the great document, read our Backgrounder #33, *The Declaration of Independence*.

Parents' Quest for School Freedom Finding Success

Propelled by the conservative reshaping of state legislatures last November, lawmakers in 42 of the 50 states have introduced legislation to create or expand school voucher or tax credit programs that would restore freedom of choice to many parents who presently feel their children are trapped in schools that are academically inferior and spiritually unfriendly.

Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom says existing school choice programs have given the lie to old anti-choice arguments raised primarily by government teachers unions. One criticism, that choice programs benefit white children over racial minorities, has now been thoroughly debunked. Florida's choice experiments, for example, show Hispanic and Afro-American children dramatically closing the achievement gap that is nearly universal in standard public schools.

The Milwaukee, WI, program has shot down the claim that voucher programs drain dollars from "traditional public schools." The vouchers cost taxpayers just \$6,442 per child per year, compared to the \$15,000 "entitlement" spent on each child in the government schools, and high school graduation rates at the choice schools are 18% higher than their counterparts.

The new laws, many allowing vouchers to be used at religious schools, would benefit parents who have been fighting anti-choice forces for years. In Colorado the Institute for Justice is now battling the ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State to defend such a program.

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed a bill to restore a voucher program for D.C. children that was axed by the White House, but the bill is likely to be vetoed if it clears the Senate. Hispanic and black leaders have called the Obama position "hypocritical and wrong" considering that as a child he himself attended private school on a choice scholarship, and his actions have taken several low-income children out of the same private school where his own daughters attend.

For discussion: Review the significant advances for parental choice reported in our 4-10-11 and 5-15-11 *Bulletins* to understand this article more fully. Consider Backgrounder #24, *Normal Christian Education*, for a biblical and historic survey of Christianity and American public schools. Does "public school choice" go far enough to restore the Bible's doctrine of education? (Notice especially Backgrounder 24's treatment of **Prov. 1:7** and **Col. 2:2-3**.) Discuss Backgrounder #12, *Separation of Church and State*, for analysis of the anti-constitutional doctrine that is so often used by secularists (cf. the Colorado reference in this article).

HOT-TOPIC ROUNDUP, A Collection of Discussion-Starters

This Week's Topic: MARRIAGE REDEFINITION IN N.Y.

A multi-year battle over redefining wedlock culminated June 24 when New York's state senate passed a same-sex "marriage" law and Gov. Cuomo eagerly signed it. (Review our 6-19-11 lead article, and Backgrounder #61, [Marriage: A Man and a Woman.](#)) Here are several relevant points about this development not being reported in most media:

- * NY becomes the sixth state to have same-sex "marriage" imposed by its legislature, but only the third where the legislature did so without being "forced" by the state supreme court.
- * No other state House or Senate controlled by Republicans has ever voted to redefine marriage. Four Republicans joined all the Democrats in the NY Senate to create the 33-29 majority.
- * Wealthy Republican donors promised the four cross-over Republicans more than a million dollars in campaign funds if they would switch their votes and support "gay marriage." National Organization for Marriage (NOM) says they will at least double that figure to support primary opponents of the four.
- * NOM's survey shows 57% of New York citizens believe that marriage should be for one man and one woman, and that voters, not the legislature, should make that decision.
- * Alliance Defense Fund attorneys say the so-called "religious protections" in the NY law give only vague guarantees to clergy and no protections at all to categories such as counselors, fertility doctors, attorneys, and private business owners who could be deliberately forced to violate their consciences.
- * The NY Dept. of Corrections is already remodeling its rules and facilities to accommodate sexual encounters between inmates and their "spouses."
- * The Empire State Building, famous for coloring its night lights for special occasions, was already prepared on the night of June 24 to blaze a rainbow design across the city celebrating the new law. (Contrast the light of **Isa. 60:1-3.**)

A *TIMES & SCRIPTURES* ISSUE ANALYSIS...

Celebrating "LGBT" Has a High Teen Fatality Rate

President Obama and the full power of his cabinet departments (particularly Education and HHS) declared June as "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Month." *Times & Scriptures* gave considerable coverage to the tax-funded celebration in our June 12 and June 26 editions, pointing out the inappropriateness of the government promoting behaviors that many (most?) Americans regard as undesirable, sinful, or both. But so far we've only hinted at the tragic medical consequences of the practice that the Bible calls an "abomination" (**Lev. 18:22**), partly for medical reasons (**Ex. 15:26**).

The government's Center for Disease Control says the rate of new HIV/AIDS cases among practicing homosexual men is 44 times higher than normal, and new cases are on the rise, not diminishing. How can we not blame a government and its schools where the often-fatal behavior is celebrated? CDC also says homosexuals are twice as likely to get cancer as heterosexuals. Infectious disease expert Dr. Ruth Jacobs, who has studied the STD outbreak for years, says the behavior peculiar to male homosexuality is anatomically 20 times riskier than normal sexual contact.

Imagine how government would respond to any other behavior with such extreme medical risks! We don't have to imagine. Just consider the intense legal attack on smoking, an attack that may be morally justifiable but targets a behavior with a slight fraction of the medical risks that homosexual behavior presents. Consider the increasing government interventions into the food choices of its citizens, outlawing or restricting thousands of products on the bare possibility that they may be harmful. Meanwhile some victims are dying while still in their teens, and many more are having their life expectancy reduced by decades. What could possibly justify the promotion of homosexuality, especially to our children, coupled with the virtual censorship of crucial medical information?

For discussion: Consider Backgrounder #42, *Psalm 2: When Nations Defy God*, and its account of government leaders determined to shake off all divine restrictions. (Notice especially **Ps. 2:2-3.**)

NEXT WEEK: *Christian lawyers defend a teacher fired for having an unopened Bible on his desk.*