
FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

IMPORTANT RULING FOR FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND RELIGION BY THE U.S. EIGHTH CIRCUIT

The following is excerpted from David French, “A Federal Court Strikes a Powerful Blow for Freedom of Speech and Religious Freedom,” *National Review*, Aug. 24, 2019: “Earlier today, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the constitutional order, limited the reach of expansive nondiscrimination laws, and protected a Christian couple from having to choose between their business and their conscience. The facts of the case are simple. The plaintiffs, Carl and Angel Larsen, are



Carl and Angel Larsen

videographers who create ‘commercials, short films, and live-event productions.’ While they work with anyone of any race, sex, sexual orientation, or religion, they will not produce videos that advance viewpoints that violate their Christian beliefs. That includes videos that ‘contradict biblical truth; promote sexual immorality; support the destruction of unborn children; promote racism or racial division; incite

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POOREST 20% OF AMERICAS ARE RICHER ON AVERAGE THAN MOST NATIONS OF EUROPE

The following is excerpted from James Agresti, “Poorest 20%,” *The Stream*, Aug. 27, 2019: “A groundbreaking study by *Just Facts* has discovered that after accounting for all income, charity, and non-cash welfare benefits like subsidized housing and Food Stamps--the poorest 20% of Americans



consume more goods and services than the national averages for *all people* in most affluent countries. This includes the majority of countries in the prestigious Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), including its European members. In other words, if the U.S. ‘poor’ were a nation, it would be one of the world’s richest. Notably, this study was reviewed by Dr. Henrike Schneider, professor of economics at Nordakademie University in Germany and the chief economist of the Swiss Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises. After examining the source data and *Just Facts’* methodology, he concluded: ‘This study is sound and conforms with academic standards. I personally think it provides valuable insight into

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violence; degrade women; or promote any conception of marriage other than as a lifelong institution between one man and one woman.' The Larsens hoped to begin producing wedding videos, but Minnesota interpreted its human-rights act to require them to 'produce both opposite-sex- and same-sex-wedding videos, or none at all.' Minnesota would also require them to produce videos that depicted 'same- and opposite-sex weddings in an equally *positive* light.' This raised the possibility that a gay couple who didn't like the subjective quality of a video the Larsens produced for them could seek state sanctions based on alleged sexual-orientation discrimination. With the assistance of my friends and former colleagues at the Alliance Defending Freedom, the Larsens filed suit, claiming that Minnesota's rule would compel them to speak in support of messages they oppose. The trial court ruled in favor of the state, and the Larsens appealed. One of the key constitutional questions of our time is whether the First Amendment will retain its supremacy and potency even as nondiscrimination rules and regulations expand in scope and reach. In this case, the Eight Circuit answered with an emphatic 'Yes,' and it did so through a majority opinion that provided a clear roadmap for future courts and future controversies. Judge David Stras's majority opinion begins with a simple, obvious, but crucial conclusion. The Larsens's wedding videos are a 'form of speech that is entitled to First Amendment protection.' ... To put it plainly, Minnesota was attempting to engage in one of the most intrusive state actions on the First Amendment. It was attempting to compel the

Larsens to deliver a message they opposed. ... Judge Stras understands this reality quite clearly. 'Even anti-discrimination laws, as critically important as they are,' he writes 'must yield to the Constitution. And as compelling as the interest in preventing discriminatory conduct may be, speech is treated differently

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Judge David Stras

under the First Amendment.' ... We can expect that Minnesota will appeal to the Supreme Court, and if the Court accepts review it will be difficult to see SCOTUS reversing the court of appeals. The case that wedding videos represent protected speech is very strong, and once it's deemed to be protected speech, the Court would have to contradict key prior precedents to overcome the Larsens' rights of conscience and compel their speech as a condition of doing business. One should always be cautious when projecting case outcomes, but the Eighth Circuit has laid the judicial foundation for a ruling that should, ultimately, reaffirm the primacy of the Constitution in American law."

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poverty measures and adds considerably to this field of research.' [This refutes] a July 1st *New York Times* video op-ed that decries 'fake news' and calls for 'a more truthful approach' to 'the myth of America as the greatest nation on earth,' *Times* producers Taige Jensen and Nayeema Raza claim that the U.S. has 'fallen well behind Europe' in many respects and has 'more in common with developing countries than we'd like to admit.' ... The high consumption of America's 'poor' doesn't mean they live better than average people in the nations they outpace, like Spain, Denmark, Japan, Greece, and New Zealand. This is because people's quality of life also depends on their communities and personal choices, like the local politicians they elect, the violent crimes they

commit, and the spending decisions they make. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the privilege of living in the U.S. affords poor people with more material resources than the averages for most of the world's richest nations. ... The *Times* closes its video by claiming that 'America may once have been the greatest, but today America, we're just okay.' In reality, the U.S. is so economically exceptional that the poorest 20% of Americans are richer than many of the world's most affluent nations. Last year, the *Times* adopted a new slogan, 'The truth is worth it.' Yet, in this case and others, it has twisted the truth in ways that can genuinely hurt people. The *Times* makes other spurious claims about the U.S. in this same video, which will be deflated in future articles."

KING KANGAROO

The following is from CreationMoments.com, Aug. 17, 2019: "Australia, as we have frequently noted, is a land of exotic animals. And of all the strange and wonderful creatures of that continental country, perhaps none captures the imagination so much as the mighty kangaroo and its smaller cousin the wallaby. Although it's native to Australia, I remember as a child being fascinated by the mysterious sightings of wallabies in England's Peak District National Park, which was very close to where I grew up. A colony of sixty had, by 1975, grown from five individuals that had escaped from a zoo in 1940. Kangaroos are marsupials. Though many species of marsupials – mostly opossums – live in the Americas, Australia and New Guinea are replete with a wide variety of



them. The main distinguishing feature of a marsupial is that the female gives birth to its young at a very early stage of gestation (about 36 days), and the baby is then sheltered, usually in a pouch, where it continues its development. A baby kangaroo, or joey, will be in its mother's pouch for about nine months before it begins to venture out for short periods. One fascinating feature of the reproductive cycle is that a female kangaroo can have one embryo in its womb and a developing joey in its pouch. It seems to be able to freeze the development of the embryo and restart it when the joey is ready to leave the pouch. It would seem that God designed this mechanism to allow for the long migration of such marsupials to Australia after the Flood."

EVANGELICAL HOMESCHOOLING CLASSICAL EDUCATION

The cover story for the August 2019 issue of *Christianity Today* is “The Rise of the Bible-Teaching, Plato-Loving, Homeschool Elitists” by Louis Markos. It describes the growth of evangelical homeschooling curriculum that provide a classical education that aims to “raise up a generation of Christians who know the Bible and who live virtuous lives, and who are also firmly grounded in the pagan classics of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as the Roman Catholic classics of the Middle Ages.” An example is Mars Hill Academy, which “balances pagan (i.e., Homer, Aristotle) and medieval Christian (i.e., Dante, Chaucer) authors with major authors from the last 500 years of European and American literature (i.e., Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Faulkner).” The author claims the movement began in the 1940s with Dorothy Sayers, who was influenced by C.S. Lewis and “was a lover of all things classical and medieval.” Based on Sayer’s work, Douglas Wilson founded Logos School in 1981. The mention of C.S. Lewis is a loud warning to those who have ears. *Christianity Today* thinks it is a good thing that “increasing numbers of evangelicals” have “followed Lewis” to “fantasy lands populated by wizards” and “to the Catholic Middle Ages” and to the pagan “works of ancient Greek and Rome.” *Christianity Today* thinks it is a good thing that “Lewis helped unlock in the evangelical soul a longing for things of which they had been taught to be suspicious: tradition, hierarchy, liturgy, sacrament, numinous awe, and

literature that was not specifically Christian.” We consider this, rather, to be evidence that C.S. Lewis was a dangerous man. To be familiar with pagan works can be helpful to the Christian life and ministry (in the sense of understanding world history, for example), if carefully examined through the lens of Scripture, but to sit at the feet of pagans and to search for light in their gross darkness is unscriptural foolishness. *Christianity Today* admits that “this tectonic shift in the evangelical world has led significant numbers of conservative Protestants to become Catholic, Orthodox, or Anglican--not only out of a longing for liturgy and sacrament but because the classics brought with them a re-encounter with the early church fathers.” But that’s OK, they say, because “they maintain much of their passion for the Bible” and “stand at the forefront of a new conservative ecumenism.” This is nonsense. To accept false sacramental gospels that damn souls to eternal hell is neither biblical nor “conservative.” *Christianity Today* has been leading God’s people astray since its founding by Billy Graham in 1956. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1-3).

INFORMATION

The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature’s Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. It is God’s will that we know the times (1 Ch. 12:32; Mat. 16:3) and that we be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord’s coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:11-14). This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click “Manage My Subscription.” Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.
