
WEEKLY BULLETIN

for May 21, 2006

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)

Christians Respond to “Da Vinci” Movie Blitz

With the “Da Vinci Code” movie hitting the theaters this weekend, many Christian churches and ministries have swung into action to defend the integrity of the scriptures, the person of Christ, and Christianity itself from this latest juggernaut against the faith.

Many books and video programs have already been produced, and churches are offering special classes and other events emphasizing the historical accuracy of the biblical record. The movie’s promoters have tried to deny that the movie attacks Christianity, saying it is purely a work of fiction, but Dan Brown, author of the book that spawned the movie, has made extensive claims for the truthfulness of key elements of his story, and surveys are showing that many readers have been influenced by the book’s pseudo-historical tone and its skepticism of Christ’s divinity.

Lead actor Tom Hanks admits “the story we tell is loaded with all sorts of hoovey,” but when fellow-actor Ian McKellen was asked whether the movie should have opened with a disclaimer clarifying that it was fiction, he said it would be better to put such a disclaimer on the Bible. An atheist and homosexual, McKellen says he tears the Book of Leviticus out of Gideon Bibles at every opportunity. Brown claims there are thousands of known documents that prove Christianity false, but had declined invitations to publicly debate that proposition.

Ted Baehr, chairman of the Christian Film and Television Commission (CFTC), raises another issue about the movie. Most of the \$200 million that financed the project came from a Muslim tycoon, he says, which Baehr sees as a “terrible double standard” considering how violently Muslims react when they believe their own faith is attacked (see 2-12-06 and 2-26-06 *Weekly Bulletins*.) Baehr says “The Da Vinci Code” is clearly an anti-Christian and anti-Semitic film.

For discussion: Does “the faith” need defending? What does **Jude** say about this in **verses 3-4**? Discuss Paul’s defense of the true gospel in **Gal. 1:6-12**, and his grim curse on alternative gospels.

Websites to check: Three of many online sources are www.apologeticsindex.org/d50aa.html, www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=5016, and www.go.family.org/davinci. CFTC’s position on the movie is at www.movieguide.org/index.php?s=news&id=165.

Roe Lawyer’s Letter on Eliminating the Poor is Revealed

A letter from 1992 telling presidential candidate Bill Clinton he should “start immediately to eliminate the barely educated, unhealthy and poor segment of the country” has come to light this month. The letter was written by Ron Weddington, victorious co-counsel with his then-wife Sarah Weddington, in the 1973 *Roe v Wade* Supreme Court abortion case.

The letter goes on to insist that the “president-to-be” should legalize and promote the use of the abortion pill RU-486, which President Clinton did during his terms of office. Judicial Watch, the organization that discovered the letter in the archives at the Clinton Presidential Library, expressed surprise that the inflammatory letter was not thrown away or simply put into a file for unsolicited comments. Instead, it appears to have been the first document placed in a new file on RU-486, a drug that has since caused illness and death to a number of pregnant women.

Weddington writes that the “religious right has had 12 years to preach its message,” (the Reagan and Bush years), and the time had come to “prevent as many poor babies as possible.”

For discussion: Review Backgrounder #29, *Realities of “Planned Parenthood,”* for more information on abortionists targeting certain social and even racial populations. You can have a fascinating discussion of how God wants us to treat the poor (in contrast to the Weddington approach) by simply surveying the Book of Job. Start with **Job 20:19, 24:9+14, 29:12+16, 30:25, 34:19+28, and 36:15**. You’ll find more if you look!

CA Students to Major in Homosexuality, not Basic Skills?

The coincidence was a tragic irony, but in a single week the state of California made two radical moves, one toward making homosexuality a major theme in public schools, and the other away from requiring basic academic skills for graduation. The combined message seemed to be that if time allows only one or the other, time is better spent on inculcating admiration for sexual aberrations in the minds of children who cannot necessarily read or compute.

The state Senate voted 22-15 to pass SB 1437, requiring all textbooks to praise “the contributions of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender,” while teachers are forbidden from speaking “adversely” about homosexuality. No similar requirement will favor people who are sexually normal. The vote was remarkably partisan, with every Republican in the Senate voting against it. No state has ever passed a law singling out individuals for special praise based on their sexual habits. Apparently SB 1437 would also end the use of terms like mother, father, husband and wife in textbooks. Observers worry that the law could affect other states because of the power California has as the number one purchaser of texts in the nation.

The State Assembly is expected to pass the bill sometime this summer, leaving Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger with the decision of whether to sign it into law or veto it.

Meanwhile, a Superior Court Judge ruled that California’s high schools must give diplomas to thousands of students who repeatedly failed the “required” 8th grade and 10th grade English and math exit exams. He said the tests are unfair to poor and minority students who “might otherwise be accepted to a four-year institution” but would lose the opportunity without a diploma.

For discussion: See Backgrounder #24, *Normal Christian Education*, especially the “focus on teachers” paragraph. Use those **scriptures** to evaluate public education in California, and throughout America.

Another Judge Overturns Voters on Marriage Amendment

Alliance Defense Fund attorneys are optimistic that Georgia’s Supreme Court will uphold the voters and overrule a trial court judge who declared the state’s defense of marriage amendment unconstitutional last week. They say the case exactly parallels what happened in Louisiana when a judge voided that state’s amendment for the same reason, alleging that the law dealt with two separate issues: marriage and civil unions. The state Supreme Court said that was one issue.

Conservative leaders said the incident illustrates the importance of a marriage protection amendment being passed at the federal level, and there was some progress on that front as the Senate Judiciary Committee approved the proposal last week on a straight party-line vote. The whole Senate will take up the issue, probably within two or three weeks.

For discussion: Review Backgrounder #4, *Marriage*, and especially the paragraphs on **Matt. 19**. Consider what happened in American culture that produced a generation of judges with such a deep determination to overthrow traditional values and biblical standards. Are we working on the remedy?

Misleading Reports from Three More “Scientific Studies”

Recent weeks have produced three more misleading reports of “scientific studies,” starting with a much-publicized Harvard study alleging that teenagers’ abstinence pledges don’t work. Widely quoted in the media this month, it turns out that the study was done ten years ago when the pledge idea was new and little progress had been made on abstinence curricula.

A report in *Journal of Adolescent Health* maintaining that abstinence education is “scientifically and ethically problematic” was widely quoted without acknowledgment that its author also argues that pre-adolescents have “human rights” to confidential sexual information and services.

A third study was simply misreported by the Associated Press which claimed that a Swedish researcher had found evidence of a physical basis for homosexuality. The researcher herself disputes the AP’s report, but has been unsuccessful at getting them to print a retraction.

NEXT WEEK: *Mississippi has passed a law assuring teachers and students of academic freedom in discussing questions of life’s origins. By contrast, an influential Catholic leader has said that six-day creationists believe in a “pagan superstition.” Are any Mississippi Catholics conflicted?*