

AlbertMohler.com

Marriage Extremists, Angry Anglicans, and More

Arnold Schwarzenegger started the week an actor looking for a new job and ended the week as the governor-elect of the nation's largest state. Gov. Gray Davis now goes down in history as the only California governor to be recalled, and leaves his successor a mountain of unsolved problems. But, while the nation ponder the meaning of all that, other developments demand our attention.

Friday, October 10, 2003

Arnold Schwarzenegger started the week an actor looking for a new job and ended the week as the governor-elect of the nation's largest state. Gov. Gray Davis now goes down in history as the only California governor to be recalled, and leaves his successor a mountain of unsolved problems. But, while the nation ponder the meaning of all that, other developments demand our attention.

Controversy over Marriage Protection Week

In declaring October 12-18 "Marriage Protection Week," President George W. Bush put his administration on the record in defense of marriage. The President's proclamation stated that "marriage is a union between a man and a woman, and my administration is working to support the institution of marriage by helping couples build successful marriages and be good parents." The President's support of Marriage Protection Week also drew attention to efforts to begin the process of constitutional revision that would send the Federal Marriage Amendment to the states for ratification. This amendment, with wording very similar to the President's proclamation, would establish marriage in all 50 states as limited to a man and a woman.

As you might expect, the President's proclamation has met with opposition. Terry McAuliffe, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, described Marriage Protection Week as "a desperate move to attract the right-wing base of the Republican party." Furthermore, McAuliffe charged that the President's position on the issue of gay marriage "shows that the Republican Party is again moving further outside of the mainstream." Did McAuliffe make this statement with a straight face?

Poll after poll demonstrates that the vast majority of the American people are absolutely determined to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman and oppose homosexual marriage. Those who support the natural concept of marriage are now extremists?

Elizabeth Birch of the Human Rights Campaign described those behind Marriage Protection Week as "a coalition of extremist groups." Joan M. Garry of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation [GLAAD] released a statement: "It's critically important that the media ask the Bush administration and its supporters to defend their association with professional homophobes who seek to target, undermine, and destroy American families. Such attempts to deny protections to some American families are in fact an attack on all American families." Joining the chorus was Laura Montgomery Rutt of "Soulforce," a coalition of self-styled "gay Christians," who argue that "Bush's proclamation and the Marriage Protection Week are based on misguided religious teachings which cross the boundaries of church-state separation and the principles of religious liberty." Soulforce has also announced its first annual "Marriage Equality Forum" to be held at the First Christian Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. According to press reports, the conference is intended to encourage people "to separate civil and religious views of marriage."

These comments from McAuliffe and company demonstrate the anxiety of the secular left and the homosexual movement on the issue of marriage. They are pressing their calls for same sex marriage, expecting to win victories in the court, but know they are losing in the court of public opinion. The Federal Marriage Amendment represents the most

effective means of protecting the institution of marriage from this political and moral assault. Marriage Protection Week deserves our special attention October 12-18.

Victory for Marriage in Arizona

The Arizona Court of Appeals scored a great victory for constitutional sanity on October 7 when it rejected the attempt of two homosexual men to have same sex marriage declared a constitutional right.

Not so fast, said the Arizona court. The court found that marriage, procreation, and the raising of children are linked: “The history of the law’s treatment of marriage as an institution involving one man and one woman, together with recent, explicit reaffirmations of that view, lead invariably to the conclusion that the right to enter a same-sex marriage is not a fundamental liberty interest protected by due process.”

This is incredibly good news. Congratulations to the Alliance Defense Fund, whose attorneys made the case against same-sex marriage before the court. The Arizona Court of Appeals deserves our appreciation as well. As attorney Benjamin Bull, Chief Counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund, argues: “This is a huge victory because it repudiates the first homosexual assault after the Lawrence v. Texas decision. The Arizona Court of Appeals rejected any notion that Lawrence v. Texas legitimized same-sex marriage. That notion has now gone into the dumpster of history with all other hare-brained notions.” Bull went on to say that “marriage, by definition, has always been about one man and one woman. This is a win for the very principles on which our nation was founded. And to despite the claims of radical activists and their allies, such issues are best settled by state legislatures and ultimately that people of the state, rather than by a court. The opinion recognizes the rights of the people of Arizona to have their elected representatives decide vital public policy matters such as questions of marriage.”

The long-term impact of this decision will be evident in months to come. Nevertheless, the fact that this Arizona court found that homosexual marriage is not a “fundamental liberty interest” is extremely important. If same-sex marriage is ever granted the status of a fundamental liberty interest, the courts will have completely surrendered to the homosexual agenda.

Episcopalians Meet in Dallas

Gathering to confront the theological crisis in the Episcopal Church, conservative Episcopalians have been meeting in Dallas over the past several days in an unusual conference. The meeting is designed to unify conservatives in a common strategy as the Anglican primates are headed to London for will almost certainly be a critical showdown.

The conference, known as “A Place to Stand,” is sponsored by the American Anglican Council, a group of conservative Episcopalians who are calling on the larger Anglican Communion to force the Episcopal Church USA to rescind the election of its first openly homosexual bishop—or be removed from the Communion itself. Participants in the conference were presented with a draft resolution entitled, “A Place to Stand—A Call to Action,” that reads, in part: “We repudiate the actions of the General Convention that have rejected biblical truth concerning human sexuality, thereby grieving the Holy Spirit and bringing the Episcopal Church under God’s judgment.” Furthermore, “we call upon the Episcopal Church to repent and to reverse the unbiblical actions of the General Convention, and we state our rejection to the consecration of Canon [Gene] Robinson as a bishop of the church.” Addressed to the Episcopal Church, the statement also proclaims “commitment to our Lord’s life-giving teaching about sexuality in marriage embraced by Christians throughout all ages” even as it affirms “commitment to reach out and offer God’s transforming love to all those who struggle with homosexual brokenness.”

As the conference closed, attendees voted to create a new alignment for Anglicanism in North America. Only time will tell whether their effort will be successful. In the meantime, we will all watch and wait—and pray. John Stott, perhaps England’s most prominent evangelical Anglican sent a letter to the conference in which he stated: “It seems clear to me that the recent decisions of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church were so provocative, and so obviously in defiance of Scripture and of the longstanding traditions of the church, that some action by orthodox Episcopalians has been forced on you.”

Pray for the Anglicans

All eyes will be on next week's meeting of Anglican leaders in London. They have been summoned because of the crisis prompted by the Episcopal Church USA's election of Canon Gene Robinson as the church's first openly homosexual bishop. This unilateral action has sent shock waves through the entire Anglican Communion. Leaders of the Anglican Church throughout Africa, Asia and South America, joined by conservative stalwarts in North America and Western Europe are calling for the Anglican Communion to sever all ties with the Episcopal Church USA and to take other actions that would distance the Communion from these concessions to homosexuality.

The blatantly unbiblical action of the Episcopal Church USA has led to this almost unprecedented meeting of Anglican national leaders, known as primates—in order to confront the crisis. The Archbishop of Canterbury [Rowan Williams], himself known to be a proponent of gay rights, joined by the other primates [national leaders] of the Anglican Communion, will face very difficult choices in London. Christians of every denomination should be in prayer for our brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion. The decisions made in London will have world-wide implications. Let's pray that biblical conviction will prevail—and that the gospel will be uncompromised.

A Look Inside the Womb

America's conscience is increasingly turning against abortion. This is due, at least in part, to the fact pro-abortion arguments now run thin as the statistics add up, with millions of unborn children aborted for no cause higher than personal convenience and sexual liberty. But we should recognize that the post powerful message against abortion is not found in the arguments made by pro-life advocates, though these are vitally important. The most compelling witness to the sanctity of human life in the womb is none other than the unborn baby—seen through new 3D/4D ultrasound technology that can now show the baby in the womb from the very earliest stages. An obstetrician in England has developed the technology to the point that images of the baby smiling, frowning, and resting face can now be seen by mothers.

As National Review reports: "Until now, ultrasound images of children in the womb have revealed only fuzzy white blobs, which might as well have been remote galaxies seen through a badly focused telescope. Well, this newer technology delivers picture of astonishing clarity and depth of detail. They clearly show unborn infants smiling, yawning, blinking, and fidgeting, even sucking their thumbs." Of course, this is "very bad news for the abortion industry."

Allison Herwitt of the National Abortion Rights Action League accused pro-life advocates of using these images to our advantage: "They don't want women to go to Planned Parenthood, where they will get their full range of options. They just want them to go to crisis-pregnancy centers, where women will be exposed to this weapon at tax payer's expense."

The image of the baby in the womb scares NARAL and Planned Parenthood out of their skins. Allison Herwitt actually referred to this new imaging technology as a weapon. It is a very, very bad day for the abortion industry when an expectant mother can now see the baby in her womb. That baby has a much better chance of emerging from the womb alive when the mother has come face to face with the life God has created within her. Those afraid of these pictures demonstrate by their fear their hardening hatred of life itself.

