

Georgia

insight

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*"She hath done what she could."
Mark 14:8a*

Last Christmas as I wrote of my mother's illness, I knew she had only months to live. She breathed her last just before 4 p.m. April 8th. I held her hand all day, knowing the end was near. Others were there, but only I was close enough to see the astonishing transformation as she left us and entered the presence of the Lord. Her countenance was instantly changed into unblemished beauty I can compare only to exquisitely fine porcelain, so breathtakingly beautiful I consciously hoped the mortician wouldn't try to improve on God's handiwork.

This is my first Christmas as an orphan, but it's a, truly, joyful time. I know Mama's with Daddy in Heaven now. He's been waiting for her a very long time. After Mama's death, a dear friend from Arkansas sent me the following poem, written in the first person as though the author sent it from Heaven to comfort us here on Earth. Mama was something of a poet, so it's easy to read it as a message straight from her heart to ours.

My First Christmas in Heaven

Author Unknown

*I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below,
With tiny lights like Heaven's stars reflecting on the snow,
The sight so spectacular, please wipe away that tear,
For I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.*

*I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear,
But the sound of music cannot compare
With the Christmas choir up here.*

*I have no words to tell you the joy your voices bring,
For it is beyond description to hear the angels sing.*

*I know how much you miss me,
I see the pain inside your heart,
But I am not so far away, we really aren't apart.
So be happy for me, dear ones, you know I hold you near,
And be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.*

*I send you each a special gift, from my heavenly home above,
I send you each a memory of my undying love.
After all, love is a gift more precious than pure gold.
It is always most important in the stories Jesus told.*

*Please love each other as the Father said to do,
For I cannot count the blessings or love He has for you.
So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away that tear.
Remember, I am spending Christmas
With Jesus Christ this year.*

Speaking of Christmas

The Bad News from 2006

Representative Clay Cox's H.B. 950 was a good bill that passed the House January 31, 2006, 20 days after it was introduced. But it never became law. It died in Senator John Wiles' State and Local Government Committee after moving so quickly through the House, because representatives saw an urgent need to stop the ever-growing pressure to limit our freedom of religious expression. H.B. 950 reminded everyone that freedom of speech does *not* stop at the school house door or the threshold of government buildings. Religious speech, whether uttered or demonstrated, is protected throughout the year, including at Christmas time.

Before the 2006 session convened, Senator Chance pre-filed S.B. 369, but never officially introduced it. His bill, along with H.B. 950, referred to the freedoms of speech and religion assured by the U.S. Constitution, as well as Georgia's Constitution. Also cited was the U.S. Supreme Court declaration that students don't "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate". Both bills addressed serious problems that started years ago and surface with new vitriol and intolerance every Christmas season.

Neither bill mentioned Christmas, but Christmas was the subject. They mandated that no state agency or department; county, town, local board of education; or other political subdivisions of the state could adopt or implement a policy to prohibit free speech. Both, specifically, would have prohibited any action to unlawfully impair, restrict, or prohibit public employees and public school students from exercising constitutional freedom of speech or other expressions they may use to celebrate or observe a public or legal holiday. That was in 2006.

The Good News for 2007:

1. Representative Clay Cox of District 102 is trying again. He has already pre-filed **H.B. 12** to prohibit government entities in Georgia from impairing, restricting, or prohibiting public employees or public school students from verbal expressions relating to the celebration or observance of public or legal holidays. His bill, if passed, would repeal any conflicting laws.

H.B. 12 focuses on government and public schools since they're the primary tools used to gag Christian expression and transform the U.S. from Christianity to atheism. It quotes the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution requiring that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech...." Further, it refers to due process in the Fourteenth Amendment and, again, quotes the U.S. Supreme Court that freedom of speech is not stripped away at the schoolhouse door.

2. Representative Cox, also, pre-filed **H.B. 14**, another exceptionally good bill to remedy a big problem in public education. It returns to local school systems their choice to either elect or hire local school superintendents. Some years ago voters, unwittingly, gave up that right in a referendum, deciding to go the appointment route, not realizing that they were relinquishing a vital part of their local control of education. That change allowed applicants to be hired from anywhere in the world. So, voters got a uniform appointment system that resulted in cookie-cutter, lock-step superintendents who aren't hired unless they toe the line and conform to 40 to 50 hours of instruction and attitudinal indoctrination, regardless of local education needs.

NOTE: Neither of these bills will be assigned to committee until they are officially introduced in the 2007 session that begins January 8th. Updates will be provided as changes occur.

A New Year Thought: Making Abortion Legal Didn't Make It Right!

Representative Bobby Franklin of District 43 in Cobb County has the distinction of being the first to pre-file a House bill for the 2007 session in Georgia. **H.B. 1** would make *abortion a felony* with severe punishment as a crime against public health and morals.

Suffragette Susan B. Anthony called abortion “child murder” and the psychological havoc caused by abortion indicates most women believe that, too. Over 33 years of research says 81 percent of women who’ve had abortions are preoccupied with the aborted *child*, not with a “blob of tissue”; 54 percent have nightmares; 35 percent have perceived visitations with the aborted child and 96 percent believe the abortion took a human life. Some 60 percent of women reporting post-abortion trauma also reported suicidal tendencies; 28 percent actually tried to kill themselves; and half of them tried suicide two or more times.

The penalty for abortion providers would be death or life in prison, plus a suspended license for the indicted physician until the matter is resolved. Conviction means a permanently revoked license, indicating that licenses are revoked for the duration of the appeals process.

NOTE: H.B. 1 will go into committee after it’s officially introduced. Updates will be provided.

Connected: Your Taxes, Abortion and Planned Parenthood

If every abortion had *never* happened, those babies would’ve equaled the populations of 17 states – Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming! Some of the babies would be 33 years old by now. They could be governors, senators, representatives, teachers, artists, electricians, soldiers, inventors, truck drivers, translators, musicians, moms and dads. What loss has the world suffered by snuffing out their lives?

But, whether we like or despise abortion, our taxes pay to destroy babies during all stages of gestation and as late as the instant the fully developed baby’s head emerges during the birth process. In fact, our taxes pay medical practitioners to render death instead of life. Federal legislation authorizes Title X “family planning” services to pay for over 400,000 abortions every year. Result: taxes collected in the last 20 years by the federal government have paid for killing more than 9,000,000 babies. That’s the equivalent of Georgia’s entire population. Although Planned Parenthood cannot, technically, use federal funds for abortions, federal money can free up other income that *can be used* to abort babies.

How deeply into taxpayer pockets does Planned Parenthood dip?

Since 1987, PP has received \$3.9 billion (billion, with a b). President Carter increased PP funding over 67%. After removing limitations Presidents Reagan and Bush put on the use of Title X money, President Clinton flooded PP with over \$202 million the *last year he was in office*. Over the past two years, roughly a third of PP’s total income was from federal money, alone – for a total of \$551 million from *federal grants, plus local and state tax-payer funding*.

PP’s annual revenue is \$1 billion (billion with a b). In 1980 Title X funding to PP was \$162 million; in 2005 it was \$286 million. In 2002 PP performed 230,630 abortions; in 2003 PP performed 244,628. Up, up, up! No one knows where, when or whether it will stop.

Taxes probably funded the New Hampshire case PP lost trying to block a parental notification law in the Supreme Court and an Indiana case where PP wanted to keep secret records of 14-year-olds having abortions, despite a law presuming a pregnant 14-year-old is a rape victim.

Republicans Continue as Majority in Georgia House and Senate

So, will they pass the bill declaring English as Georgia's official language?

On January 8th, 180 representatives – 106 Republicans and 74 Democrats – take their oath of office, as 56 senators – 34 Republicans and 22 Democrats – take theirs. That means a clear majority of Republicans will control each body of the General Assembly. Therefore, *any* bill can be passed or defeated by Republicans. It'll be interesting to see what they do with H.B. 21, pre-filed by Republican Representatives Tim Bearden (a white man), District 68, and Willie Talton (a black man), District 145, demonstrating biracial support in the majority party.

H.B. 21 designates English as the official language and requires its use for documents and forms *printed* by state agencies, counties, municipal corporations and political subdivisions in Georgia. It specifies that English must be used to *record or file* documents with a state agency or the clerk of a county, municipal corporation or political subdivision. Original documents filed in foreign languages must be accompanied by English translations.

As obviously reasonable as H.B. 21 is, history proves passing it won't be slam-dunk. Consider H.R. 29, introduced January 24, 2005 by Representative Amos Amerson of District 9. It died an ignominious death when two different committees refused to pass it onto the floor for debate. Previous English-only bills have, also, died. Ironically, H.R. 29 didn't affect Georgia law. It, simply, asked Congress to designate English as the official language of the U.S. In 2004, District 43 Representative Bobby Franklin's H.B. 1119 was killed. It, also, required governments to print official documents and forms in English and do business in English.

So, why is English so important? Which driver do you want on the road you're traveling – one that has to take the driver's test in English, Spanish, Bosnian, Russian, Polish, Japanese, Laotian, Korean, Arabic or Vietnamese? I wondered how a person drives safely without being able to read English since street signs are written in English only. I learned from a driver's license employee that applicants are supposed to memorize street signs in English, take and pass the test in *their language*, get a driver's license and, hopefully, recognize traffic and street signs soon enough to obey them without causing traffic disasters.

I called almost a dozen offices in state government to learn how many languages are used to print such tests. The result was that most people didn't know what I was talking about and the one that *did* wasn't sure about anything. She kept muttering, "M-m-m-m. I think we do 13 different languages. The tests are available in other languages, but a law says any and all road signs must be in English only. M-m-m-m, I had to find that for somebody else. It was about commercial licenses. M-m-m-m, I'll have to look that up. I'll put you on hold." She must've gone home. The music played, played and played until I stopped listening, listening, listening.

The public library reference department *did* give me the information, but it was a while before she called me back. Since she couldn't find it in a law book, a coworker referred her to the Georgia State University Web site's Intensive English Program. There she learned that Georgia drivers' license tests may be taken in English, Spanish, Bosnian, Russian, Polish, Japanese, Laotian, Korean, Arabic and Vietnamese. Even the well-informed librarian admitted that little bit of research had been an education for *her*. Me, too!

NOTE: When it's officially filed, H.B. 21 will be assigned to committee. Updates will follow.

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