

Separation of Church and State - Epilogue

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By Pastor Tim White

Seven thousand signatures!* That is how many signatures R-101 fell short of reaching the required 200,000 to get it on the ballot in November. While disappointing, it is impressive that volunteers across the state came so close to the 200,000 needed signatures in only six weeks. Sadly, unlike in “horseshoes or hand grenades,” close does not count.

(*Correction: 5,000 short of the required 162,000, but they were hoping for 200,000 in order to have a safety margin to account for errors).

The newly enacted SB 5599 law, passed solely by Democrats and signed by our Democrat Governor, is called “*An act relating to supporting youth and young adults seeking protected health care.*” On page three of last month’s South Stevens County Times edition, David Lewis wrote an excellent article about this new law saying it “...undermines the family unit and has serious consequences for our youth.” Specifically, any minor child from ANY state can “run away” to a Washington State agency and be hidden from their parents because the dad and mom do not support their child’s desire to change genders or get an abortion.

For those of us who believe that parents should be the ones to raise their children according to their chosen faith and values, SB 5599 reeks of the ever-increasing stranglehold of the soft totalitarianism within our state government. By signing Referendum 101, signers said that the people of Washington state should vote on whether the newly enacted law should stand. How is it possible that R-101 did not get enough signatures?

Last month I wrote about the fallacy of the “Separation of Church and State” that began in the mid-1900s. Along with the “Johnson Amendment” from the 1950s, many American pulpits have been intimidated into silence on the issues of the day. As a pastor for over forty years, I have felt the pressure of this intimidation and seen the angry looks of congregants who do not want to hear what they consider “political” issues from the pulpit.

Unfortunately, the erroneous doctrine of “Separation” is ingrained in so many of us pastors and fellow church members that we get really uncomfortable when something like R-101 is presented to the church leadership. Thankfully, the many pastors I fellowship with helped to get these petitions out. But others in the county would not even allow it in their foyers.

I know of fourteen churches in Spokane County, several very large, that refused to allow these petitions in their buildings for people to sign when asked by a volunteer. The total number of attendees of just those fourteen churches could be as much as twice the number of signatures needed to get this measure on the ballot. And that is just Spokane County.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German pastor who stood up to Hitler’s evil regime, is credited with saying, “*Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act. God will not hold us guiltless.*” When State agencies can secretly harbor a “runaway” child because they reject the parent’s traditional values about sex, gender, and life, it is nothing less

than evil. The evil deepens when one realizes the extent to which the state will drag a child further down the road of self-delusion, sterilization, and bodily mutilation.

The question must be asked: Why are all of the elected Democrats in Olympia so determined to do these things to our children? What child has not rebelled at some time against the rules of the home? As a people and society, how far have we fallen from those foundational Judeo-Christian values that graciously shaped our culture for generations (not to mention the U.S. Constitution and The Bill of Rights)?

It is troubling to realize that when it came down to the state saying it wanted to take a child from their parents during their formative years, some churches felt that was not serious enough to bring up in their services. As of the third weekend of July, Governor Inslee and all of the elected Democrats in Olympia view the child as the one who knows what is best and the parents as a threat to their child.

It would be unfair to measure the entirety of these fourteen churches by their decision regarding R-101. I do not doubt that each of these pastors focuses on preaching the saving message of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection and that forgiveness and new life come through turning from your sin and committing your life to Him. And we can celebrate that.

As already stated, I, too, struggled for years with how I should handle petitions, elections, and similar issues in which the false notion of "separation." But in this case, we are talking about immature children! We are talking about the ability of the state to harbor vulnerable, impressionable, confused, and sin-natured runaway children from parents because the latter reject the godless, anti-biblical narrative of the Left.

The Bible directs the parents to educate their children (Duet. 4:9; 6:6-7; 11:18-20; 32:46-47; Prov. 3 & 22:6; Eph 6:4). It is your God-given right to your children according to your faith and values. In the end, if R-101 had received enough signatures to make it on the ballot in November, there is still no guarantee that it would pass.

However, one thing is sure. Today, in Washington State, parents who hold to traditional values are considered dangerous by a godless power-hungry state government. *There is hope*, however. I know of a growing hunger among believers across our region who are gathering for prayer. We understand that the first step must be taken on our knees. He is called the "God of hope" in Romans 15:13, and His power and wisdom are ours for the asking. Now, let us pray.