

Hobby Lobby Wins: Supreme Court Sides With Religious Conscience

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday ruled that business owners can object on religious grounds to a provision of President Barack Obama's healthcare law that requires closely held companies to provide health insurance that covers birth control.

The court held on a 5-4 vote on ideological lines that such companies can seek an exemption from the so-called birth control mandate of the healthcare law. The decision means employees of those companies will have to obtain certain forms of birth control from other sources.

In a majority opinion by conservative Justice Samuel Alito, the court said the ruling applies only to the birth control mandate and does not mean companies would necessarily succeed if they made similar claims to other insurance requirements, such as vaccinations and drug transfusions.

In the majority opinion, Alito indicated that employees could still be able to obtain the birth control coverage via an accommodation to the mandate that the Obama administration has already introduced for religious-affiliated nonprofits. The accommodation allows health insurance companies to provide the coverage without the employer being involved in the process.

Under the accommodation, eligible non-profits must provide a "self-certification", described by one lower court judge as a "permission slip" authorizing insurance companies to provide the coverage. The accommodation is itself the subject of a separate legal challenge.

The justices ruled for the first time that for-profit

companies can make claims under a 1993 federal law called the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).

The decision will affect similar cases brought by employers around the country. There are 49 cases in total, according to the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. Religious institutions are already exempt from the requirement.

The company owners involved in litigation around the country do not all oppose every type of birth control. Some, including Hobby Lobby and Conestoga, object only to emergency contraceptive methods, such as the so-called morning-after pill, which they view as akin to abortion.

The cases are *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* and *Conestoga Wood v. Burwell*, U.S. Supreme Court, No. 13-354, 13-356.

Reporting by Lawrence Hurley; Editing by Howard Goller

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How to Conquer the Porn Epidemic in the Church

Are we really supposed to buy into the idea that 68 percent of men in church watch porn regularly? Could this just be sensational rhetoric?

Not according to a national survey among churches. The survey conducted over the past five years revealed that 68 percent of Christian men and 50 percent of pastors view pornography regularly. But even more shocking is that 11-17 year-old boys

reported being its greatest users.

The church is in the sexual battle of its life. As these boys become adults, the church will be flooded with porn addicts. Pastor James Reeves of City On A Hill Church DFW has successfully tackled porn addiction in his church. He warns, "This problem is going to sweep through the church like a tsunami wave of destruction and we're not prepared for it."

A Grassroots Movement for Change

In response to this growing epidemic in the church, a group of filmmakers took it upon themselves to create a DVD teaching curriculum on sexual purity called the Conquer Series. The series is the first of its kind to show men how to retrain a brain that's hooked on porn, using biblical principles and powerful insights.

"The shocking statistics were the game-changer for me," says director, Jeremy Wiles. "So, we spent two years developing a five-hour discipleship curriculum, interviewing top Christian experts on this subject and shooting battle reenactments to illustrate the war that every man faces with sexual temptation. I wanted to give men proven principles on how to find freedom," adds Wiles.

The team recruited Dr. Ted Roberts, a former U.S. Marine fighter pilot, to be the host of the Conquer Series. As a former pastor and head of Pure Desire Ministries, Dr. Roberts has counseled men for over 30 years—mainly dealing with pornography issues. "Our goal with the Conquer Series is to give men a battle plan for purity. We've got a great tool here that will change lives, but we need pastors to partner with us to fight this battle," Dr. Roberts said.

The Typical Church Approach Doesn't Work

According to Dr. Roberts, churches often treat this issue as a moral one, but fail to recognize it's mainly a brain problem,

“We tell men to try harder, pray harder, love Jesus more.” Dr. Roberts adds, “But, what starts off as a moral problem, quickly becomes a brain problem. Telling a man to try harder is only tightening the ‘noose’ of bondage.” Today, science sheds new light on biblical truth regarding strongholds of the mind and how a person becomes enslaved to sin.

A Hijacked Brain

Understanding the brain is pivotal. When a woman is nursing her child and she’s skin-to-skin with her baby, her brain releases a neurochemical called oxytocin, which emotionally bonds her to her child. The same thing happens during sex. God designed oxytocin as the glue for human bonding. During a sexual release, oxytocin, along with other neurochemicals, are released and cause us to emotionally bond with our partner.

When you watch porn these neurochemicals are also released, which bond you to those images. This is why Satan attacks our sexuality so much, because in attacking human sexuality it actually interferes with human bonding.

According to neuropsychologist, Dr. Tim Jennings, “Any type of repetitive behavior will create trails in our brain that are going to fire on an automatic sequence.” The result is years of bondage. This is how 68 percent of Christian men can love the Lord with all their heart, but be trapped in sexual bondage. The repeated viewing of porn literally changes the physical structure of their brain.

A Weapon to Fight Pornography

Wiles is confident the Conquer Series will embolden church leaders to tackle the problem by giving them a high-quality video curriculum and study guide that can be used by leaders in small men’s group meetings. “Pornography is a really tough subject for a lot of pastors to openly confront,” said Wiles. “This cinematic series will give them confidence that they can restore men using proven Bible-based principles.”

The Conquer Series has been getting a lot of positive feedback. Jason Royalty, a men's group leader from Springfield, Tennessee, said, "This DVD series has been so helpful to the 15-18 men that meet together for this class. Understanding how God has made us and also understanding the enemy's tactics has been key to seeing victories in these men's lives."

Paul Cole, President of Christian Men's Network, agrees.

"When the Conquer Series begins to be a part of who we are, it will begin to change what we do and who we are as a church," Cole said.

The Conquer Series is a 6-disc DVD set, which includes five 1-hour long teaching DVDs and a leader's DVD.

Why Gay-Affirming Christians Can't Accept the Inspiration of the Bible

Editor's note: On Saturday, June 28, Michael Brown debated Matthew Vines on the topic of homosexuality and Christianity. That debate can be viewed for free [here](#).

For the last few decades, there have been gay-affirming Christians who reject the full authority of the Bible and who have no problem saying that Moses or Paul were wrong on certain subjects. But it is only in the last few years that there has been a rise in gay-affirming Christians who claim to be orthodox believers in the full inspiration of the Scriptures.

The simple fact is that it is impossible to fully affirm the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, which includes a full affirmation of the deity of Jesus, while at the same time claiming that God approves of committed homosexual relationships.

For example, gay-affirming Christians commonly claim that while the Bible's prohibition of homosexual practice is categorical, it is not talking about homosexuality as we know it today. Instead, we are told that the biblical authors were speaking against abusive homosexual relationships involving pederasty or prostitution or rape or excessive lust. (Another argument would be that they were denouncing homosexual practices involved in idolatrous rites.)

It can be easily demonstrated that this is not true, as other scholars have done, and as I seek to demonstrate as well in *Can You Be Gay and Christian?*

But for the sake of argument, let's say that this was true and that Moses and Jesus and Paul knew nothing about long-term, committed homosexual relationships or that they had no notion of modern concepts of allegedly inborn, fixed homosexual orientation. That would mean that God inspired the biblical authors to write in such a way that homosexual men and women would be rejected and marginalized and judged for almost 3,500 years (from the time of giving of the Law to Israel until the late 20th century).

It would mean that God inspired Moses to write that it was an abomination for a man to lie with a man even though he didn't mean committed men lying with committed men, and even though Old Testament Israel (and religious Jews to this day) and the New Testament church (including conservative Christians to this day) would think God was prohibiting all homosexual relationships.

That is what a loving God would do? That is how He would

inspire His children to write?

The same could be said for Paul's clear words in Romans 1:24-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Why would God inspire him to write in this way if He knew that the words would be so terribly misconstrued and misused?

You might object and say, "Well, that's exactly what happened with slavery!"

Actually, that's not true. (I have a whole chapter in *Can You Be Gay and Christian?* where I address this; for a free video lecture on the subject, go here.)

God did intend to legislate slavery in ancient Israel, but in a humane way and as part of a larger economic system, but already in the Old Testament, there were seeds planted for the long-term liberation of slaves. (Let's not forget that every Sabbath, slaves rested as the nation remembered Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery.)

And in New Testament times, God did inspire His servants to address slavery in the Greco-Roman world pragmatically, knowing that there was no way that this new movement in its infancy could tackle the customs of the entire empire. At the same time, seeds of liberation were planted in the New Testament as well, along with calls for fair and humane treatment of slaves by their Christian masters—as brothers in the Lord—which is why the abolitionists used the Bible as their textbook for liberation.

There's also not a single verse in the Bible praising slavery itself, nor is there anything in the Bible that could rightly be used to support the African slave trade. (Old Testament law explicitly condemned kidnapping.)

In contrast, there is not a single verse in the entire Bible that says one positive thing about homosexual relationships (I hope we're beyond people trying to claim Jonathan and David

were gay) while every reference to homosexual practice is entirely negative.

This means that gay-affirming Christians must believe that God, who certainly understood "sexual orientation" and was aware of every human relationship that would ever exist, inspired His servants to write words that, if fairly and honestly interpreted through the centuries, would be used to condemn homosexual practice.

What's more, gay-affirming Christians must believe that Hebrews 4:12 is not true, since it claims that God's Word "is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Put another way, the Word of God reaches to the very depths of our nature and yet somehow, according to gay-affirming Christians, it entirely missed and misunderstood homosexual men and women.

This also means that Hebrews 4:13 is not true, since the verse states that "no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

In contrast, gay-affirming Christians must believe that some human creatures have been hidden from His sight and have not been naked and exposed before God, since the writers of Scripture didn't write with sufficient inspiration to really understand committed homosexual relationships.

Even in terms of practical life application, gay-affirming Christians must say that Paul did not give valid instructions, since he wrote, " 'It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.' But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband" (1 Cor. 7:1-2).

Over and over, I have heard gay-affirming Christians quote Paul's words, reminding us that he wrote that it's better to marry than to burn with lust, which is why we need to allow two homosexual men or women to "marry." But that's not what Paul wrote, and if you want to quote him in part, then quote him in full: "each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband."

Once again, you have to say that Paul wasn't really inspired, since he still leaves out same-sex partners. Instead, he was inspired to write words that leave out homosexual relationships.

Of course, we're told that Paul had no concept of long-term, committed homosexual relationships, but that the position is easily refuted. (I plan to address this at length in a future blog post or article.) But again, even if that wrong argument were true, it would mean that God didn't really inspire him to write these words but rather allowed him to write harmful words that reflected the spirit of the age.

It would also mean that the biblical writers didn't really understand human nature, since sexual desires and romantic attractions are deeply ingrained in our nature, yet again, according to gay-affirming Christians, the prophets and apostles just didn't get this right. As other Christian leaders have pointed out, this has grave implications for the gospel.

Worst of all, gay-affirming Christians must believe (and do believe!) that Jesus Himself, who saw into the hearts and souls of human beings, really didn't "get it."

We're not talking about the Lord having limited knowledge about future events before His resurrection. We're talking about the Son of God not understanding people, not hearing the heart-cry of a desperate same-sex attracted person who came to Him, not recognizing that the person He was looking at—and

looking into—was cast out because he or she was “different.”

John 2:25 tells us that Jesus “knew what was in man.” Gay-affirming Christians tell us He did not.

The choice then, is simple: You can embrace the full authority and inspiration of the Scriptures, in which case you will be filled with love and compassion for those who identify as LGBT and proclaim the good news of forgiveness and new life to them, or you can endorse same-sex, committed relationships. But you cannot do both.

Given time, gay-affirming Christians will make their rejection of the authority of God and His Word all the more clear.

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Buyer Beware: Not All Green Teas Are Equal

Green tea has long been touted as one of the healthiest things you can put in your body.

It has been shown to fight many serious diseases, including heart disease, cancer, and Alzheimer's. But, as it turns out, not all green tea is created equal.

The amount of the key health-giving ingredient in green tea—the antioxidant EGCG—varies greatly by brand. Further, a recent study by found that some teas contain substantial amounts of lead.

After the Mayo Clinic and other major institutions published studies showing the benefits of green tea, retailers seized the opportunity to market the drink heavily.

Buyer beware, according to Tod Cooperman, M.D., president of , which conducted independent testing on green tea. The company analyzed commonly sold bottled and brewable green tea products as well as green tea oral supplements.

Popular, ready-to-drink bottled brands Arizona Green Tea with Ginseng and Honey, and Diet Snapple contain very little EGCG and were laden with sweeteners, the study found. And bottled Honest Tea contained only 63 percent the amount of EGCG claimed on the label.

Green tea bags fared better, with Lipton containing the highest amounts of EGCG. Bigelow tea bags also did well.

In the loose tea category, Teavana's Gyokuro Imperial contained the highest quantity of EGCG.

found significant amounts of lead in many of the Chinese grown teas. But if you make sure that the leaves remain out of your cup, you'll be mostly protected. About 90 percent of the lead remains in the leaf after brewing, said Dr. Cooperman.

"As long as you're not eating the tea leaves you'll get little lead," he told Newsmax Health.

To be on the safe side, some experts recommend avoiding tea from China, which grows much of its tea in polluted areas that have lead in the soil.

"All you have to do is read the label to see where it comes from," said Barbara Tea Specialist, a certified tea expert who

uses her nom de plume professionally.

If you don't know where tea was grown, opt for another brand that's clearly labeled, she advised. Teavana, recently acquired by Starbucks, lists the regions where its teas come from, she said.

And if you're drinking tea for its health properties, avoid bottled varieties.

Medical Miracle?

Worldwide research increasingly indicates tea, especially green tea, is a medical magic bullet. The polyphenols in green tea have been shown to benefit patients with colitis and irritable bowel syndrome. And the leafy brew's potent antioxidant EGCG has been credited with preventing heart attacks, Type 2 diabetes, leukemia, stroke, high blood pressure, Alzheimer's, and cancer.

The full version of this article appeared in Health Radar newsletter. To read more, [click here](#). © 2014 NewsmaxHealth. All rights reserved.

'Justina's Law' Introduced in Wake of Pelletier Nightmare

It's hard to determine where the tragedy begins and the travesty ends. It's a story that has gripped and enraged a nation. It's a sordid tale of governmental tyranny, child imprisonment and endangerment, harmful and unethical medical experimentation, as well as a number of gross conflicts of interest.

This is the story of a child, Justina Pelletier, who faced 16 long months of child abuse and incarceration at the hands of both Massachusetts government officials and callous medical personnel at Boston Children's Hospital.

Thankfully, due to the actions of Liberty Counsel, a Christian civil rights law firm, powerful media voices like Glenn Beck and tens of thousands of outraged and outspoken Americans, 16-year-old Justina is now home.

But the saga is not over. This sort of travesty is happening all over the country at the hands of underqualified, overzealous government officials. And it's all being done in the name of "child and family" welfare.

Now Congress is getting involved.

Justina Pelletier's story is that of a 15-year-old ice-skating competitor who was taken from her parents by the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF), locked up for 16 months and is now confined to a wheelchair because of maltreatment for a metabolic disorder.

Here is an abbreviated timeline of events (for greater detail see this report):

- Before she was admitted to Boston Children's Hospital by her parents, Justina was being treated for mitochondrial disease, a rare genetic disorder, by one of the leading experts in the field, Dr. Mark Korson, originally at Tufts Medical Center.
- At Boston Children's Hospital a young, inexperienced doctor in just the seventh month of his internship inexplicably changed the working diagnosis from mitochondrial disease to somatoform disorder, shifting Justina's treatment from physical to mental.
- When Lou and Linda Pelletier tried to discharge their daughter the following day, Feb. 14, 2013, and return her to care at Tufts Medical Center, they were refused,

and DCF arbitrarily took Justina into custody as a ward of the state and moved her to a psychiatric ward, where she remained for 11 months. DCF egregiously accused the Pelletiers of “medical abuse” with absolutely zero evidence.

- Justina was then confined to a nonmedical treatment facility where she suffered every day with excruciating pain, and her health rapidly plummeted.
- In Massachusetts, prisoners are entitled to regular visits, education and medical care. Justina was treated worse by DCF than incarcerated felons. She had a one-hour, supervised visitation per week, no education and abysmal medical care. Seeking to silence her parents, DCF filed a complaint to hold the father in contempt of court for violating an alleged (and unconstitutional) gag order that was never put in writing.
- BCH psychologist Dr. Simona Bujoreanu put a self-serving stamp of approval on the Somatoform diagnosis after only 25 minutes with Justina, likewise without contacting other physicians. Dr. Bujoreanu is researching Somatoform Disorder under an NIH grant.
- Here’s the kicker: Any ward of the state is subject to research being performed upon them, without their consent, even if that research is not primarily for the ward’s benefit. This is a blatant conflict of interest. DCF makes the child a ward of the state and the psychologist has her lab rat. Great deal for them, horrible deal for the child.
- After tremendous media and legal pressure, on Friday, June 6, Massachusetts Health and Human Services (HHS) filed a motion for review of reconsideration and dismissal in the case of Justina Pelletier. This action followed Liberty Counsel’s motion to return Justina home.
- On June 18, after 16 months of being held prisoner by the bureaucracy of the state of Massachusetts at the behest of Boston Children’s Hospital, Justina Pelletier

was finally released and returned to her home with her parents, Linda and Lou Pelletier, and her three older sisters.

Now Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., and other lawmakers are getting involved. Yesterday they introduced a bill in the House of Representatives, "Justina's Law." It's a bipartisan bill intended to insulate children and families from this kind of outrageous treatment.

While bringing this kind of government and medical abuse to a standstill may be difficult, Justina's Law aims to at least offer some level of child protection.

At issue is a portion of BCH's policy that states, "Children who are Wards of the State may be included in research that presents greater than minimal risk with no prospect of direct benefit." On page two of the policy, BCH defines "ward" to include "foster children, or any child under the control of DSS in the state of Massachusetts."

It works like this: Boston Children's Hospital needs guinea pigs and the Massachusetts DCF provides them.

Rep. Bachmann was joined by Reps. Karen Bass, D-Calif., Tom Marino, R-Pa., and Jim McDermott, D-Wash., the co-chairs of the Foster Youth Caucus, to introduce this bipartisan legislation that will prohibit federal funding for medical experimentation on any ward of the State.

Mark Trammell is with Liberty Counsel Action (LCA). He and LCA led the charge to get the legislation introduced, and will likewise lead the charge to get it passed.

"The purpose of this bill is to protect children, plain and simple," said Trammell. "This is not about partisan politics, it's about advocating for the health and safety of children. It is irresponsible and inexcusable to subject foster children, or any child who is a ward of the state, to medical

research that presents a greater than minimal risk of harm to the child with no prospect of direct benefit. These are children, created in the image of God; they deserve to be treated that way, not like human lab rats.

“We are thrilled to see bipartisan support for this bill,” Trammell added. “Liberty Counsel Action is proud to support Justina’s Law and commends Rep. Bachmann, Rep. Bass, Rep. McDermott, and Rep. Marino for their compassion and collective leadership in protecting the rights of foster children—in protecting all children.”

In a statement late Friday, Rep. Bachmann observed, “Whether it is one child or thousands, it is our duty to guarantee that children are kept safe from harm while in the custody of their respective states. Not all these children have families like the Pelletiers willing or able to advocate on their behalf. Sixteen months ago, Justina was a figure skater. Today, she cannot stand, sit, or walk on her own. It is unconscionable what happened to Justina, and we must do all we can to prevent it from ever happening again. Removing federal funding from such experimentation is an important first step.”

The bill’s co-sponsors, Democrats and Republicans alike, weighed in with similarly strong statements.

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Billy Graham's Daughter: 'Pray Before It's Too Late and Judgment Falls on Our Nation'

Blow the trumpet ... sound the alarm ... for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand. ... Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God... Joel 2:1,13

While at home caring for my husband, I have had time to be quiet and listen more to the whispers of the Spirit. He has revealed things to me in the stillness that I'm not sure I would have heard in my former busyness. One of the things He has impressed on me is that we are living at the end of human history as we know it. In light of this, He has given me some practical assignments. One was to be the Honorary Chair for the National Day of Prayer 2014 this past May. He gave me the message I was to deliver, which was from Joel 1: The Day of the Lord is at hand. It was a message warning of judgment that is coming.

Just recently, He has given me another assignment, which is **to call His people in our nation to prayer.**

This assignment came indirectly from a Syrian pastor through a National Day of Prayer attendee. In obedience, I am blowing the trumpet, sounding the alarm, and issuing a national prayer initiative entitled *7 7 7: An Urgent Call to Prayer*. The call is for God's people to pray for each of the first seven days in the seventh month—July 1-7. Then on the seventh day, July 7, we are to pray and fast for seven hours.

The purpose is threefold:

- **For God the Father to restrain, protect and deliver His**

people from the evil that has come into our world.

- For God the Son to be exalted, magnified and glorified in His church, in our nation and in our lives.
- For God the Holy Spirit to fall on us in a fresh way, compelling the church to repent of sin and our nation to return to faith in the living God, resulting in a great national spiritual awakening.

For those who sign up, I will provide a prayer for each of the seven days to help unite us in one spirit and one voice as we cry out to God. You can sign up for the daily email prayers on that will help give focus to our worship, repentance and intercession.

I'm urging you to participate, as well as send out word to everyone on your email list, or who follows you on Facebook or Twitter. Please help pass the word.

God's people need to pray before it's too late, and judgment falls on our nation.

WATCH: 9 Minutes in Heaven

Crystal was molested at 3 years old and didn't believe she was worthy of love. Here's how God stepped in during a minor surgery.