

Readers' Forum

Who removed the words "In God We Trust"

Who removed the words "In God We Trust" from the Yancey County Court Room? That some may cite the Jefferson letter constitutionally buttresses "wall of separation", thereby, demarcating church and state boundaries. This letter is not constitutional. A Christian is neither religion nor a church but 24/7 life which cannot be conveniently shelved. However, Godly fear and ascending hierarchy compels referencing another letter and citing the authority.

The epistle of Paul, the Apostle to the Romans wrote, and even as they did not like (chase) retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind..." Romans

1:28, author Jesus Christ. Life and his wonderful works which he made to be remembered declares earth and heaven hierarchy pinnacle, Jesus Christ. Therefore, return and retain "In God We Trust" to Yancey County Court Room.

That a Christian, church, and religion are not synonymous; thereby, legislated church and state laws are not pertinent to Christian worship. That a Christian does not cease when entering any vertical structure (school, court, Congress or whatever). The Constitution and the Jefferson letter intended to protect and defend Christian worship, not prohibit. God's church is where ever. These privileges empower, thereby,

test and reveal our character.

Abraham Lincoln credited stating "that if you want to test a man's character, give him power," Paul Russell. Historically, George Washington prevailed the power test; thereby, supporting and possibly inspiring Lincoln's prophecy. That power giving often the derivative which tempts the conscience destroys and facilitates failure. Washington recognized as stating "discipline resides in the conscious," unknown source. Also, the innate (God-given) knowledge of right and wrong resides in the conscience which guarded that neither suppressed or severed.

Gene Munoz
Burnsville

Appreciation to the doctors and midwives

We, the nurses of labor and delivery, of Blue Ridge Regional Hospital, want to take a moment to express our heartfelt appreciation to the doctors and midwives who have been by our side caring for OB patients throughout the years.

Your unwavering support and kindness are greatly treasured. Having worked so closely with you all, we have seen the depth of your devotion and compassion, and we can say that the dedication and care that has been given to your profession and patients is unparalleled. Thank you for standing up for and beside us.

Thank you for loving our community. It has been an honor working with you all.

We also want to thank our amazing patients for choosing

to come to our hospital and trusting us with something so precious as your baby's birth. We cherish each time we were allowed the opportunity to see a new life come into this world and be a part of this momentous event.

Your support and kindness mean so much to us. We also want to thank the community and BRRH board members who stood up and fought for our department to stay open

We really appreciate each thing you did to show your support: especially the letters and birth stories you shared, and messages you wrote that touched our hearts beyond words.

Thank you for every kind word spoken, for each community gathering, for each sign

held, and every prayer offered! We also want to thank everyone who came to be a part of our "Birth"-Day Party on 10/14/17. It was a special day to honor all those who chose us over the years. Thank you BRRH for giving us such a special day.

As humans and nurses, we are not perfect but we loved our job in labor and delivery. To each of us, it was not just a job but also a calling.

It breaks our heart that we will no longer be able to provide this type of care for our community anymore, but we are beyond grateful for the years we have had the opportunity to do so. We have been blessed!

God bless,
Wendy Allen Registered Nurse-BRRH OB nurses

NC legislators should reform thyself

By Tom Campbell

If there were one theme that defined North Carolina's legislature this decade it would be that they are a body of reformers. Lawmakers have reformed elections, taxes, education, healthcare, the courts and state government - and those are just the ones that come to mind.

Too often these reforms result in costly lawsuits and our legislators don't have a good won-loss record. It's not that courts are packed with Democrats, as some maintain. The truth is that too many decisions are quickly made behind closed doors with too little consideration given to potential unintended consequences and there is no attempt to seek consensus or compromise.

For this and other reasons, our General Assembly needs to reform the one area they have conspicuously ignored - their own structure and process.

Sitting in the galleries above either chamber one quickly realizes that the legislature isn't a representative sampling of our state. Our legislature is largely old, white, male and either retired or wealthy. The working class can neither afford to run nor take the required time away from their livelihoods.

The current leadership has strived to keep both the long and short sessions from running interminably long, but they have

failed to control the growing number of called special sessions and, when not in session, committee meeting that require many to be in Raleigh several times a month. Our state pays the price when potentially good candidates are unable to make the sacrifice. We need better discipline regarding the time required to serve.

Speaking of price, we don't pay legislators adequately. If we want better legislators we need to pay them better. Each legislator receives compensation of \$13,951 per year, plus an expense allowance of \$559 per month and per diem expenses when in Raleigh averaging around \$89 a night for room and \$51 per day for meals. In exchange for fairer compensation, we would do away with the legislative retirement plan.

If we truly have a part-time legislature we should not be socking money into a retirement plan that rewards lawmakers based on how many years they serve.

Term limits are also needed. Too many serve too long. We would suggest leadership serve no more than 8 years and all legislators are restricted to twelve years. Fresh blood will have fresh solutions to problems.

Another needed reform is to change the length of a legislator's term from two to four years. When lawmakers con-

stantly have to seek re-election they have to be constantly raising money. To win a seat in our legislature costs a minimum of \$100,000, and when you have to raise that amount every two years you go where the contributions money is...mostly lobbyists and PAC groups, who either want to pass or to block legislation from passing.

No reform is more badly needed than redistricting. It is incontrovertible that lawmakers currently choose voters, not the other way around.

If we want competitive elections with good candidates North Carolina must rid itself of gerrymandering by establishing an independent redistricting commission.

Why would anyone want to run in a contest where the outcome is essentially already determined? This one change could easily make our legislature more accountable and more effective.

Finally, we need to reform the legislative process itself and return to times when the budget was fully heard and debated in sub-committee meetings, then taken to the respective revenue or finance committees for further discussion and debate before coming to the floor for final debate and a vote.

We've made the case and suggested solutions. Legislature, reform thyself.

Taking Moral Mondays to the country

By D.G Martin

Is the Rev. William Barber, leader of North Carolina's Moral Monday protests, going to take the movement to the rest of the country?

Beginning in 2013, the Goldsboro minister has led demonstrations at the state's legislative building and in other state offices and properties. The groups he led often used civil disobedience to protest against actions that he said resulted in unfair treatment, discrimination, voting suppression, damage to the environment, unfair taxes, and cuts to public education.

Next year, as he explained in a lecture at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill last week, he plans a series of Moral Monday-type protests and civil disobedience that will occur in public buildings and facilities across the country.

Barber's Chapel Hill speech was this year's Weil Lecture on American Citizenship, part of a series that began in 1915 when former President William Howard Taft gave the first lecture.

In his stirring speech, Barber shared his plans for 40 days of protests, beginning on Mothers' Day next year and continuing until the beginning of summer. The name of the organizing entity is "The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival."

According to the campaign's web site, "By engaging in highly publicized civil disobedience and direct action over a six-week period in at least 25 states and the District of Columbia during the spring of 2018, the campaign will force a serious national examination of the enmeshed evils of systemic racism, poverty, militarism and environmental devastation during a key election year while strengthening and connecting informed and committed grassroots leadership in every state, increasing their power to continue this fight long after June 2018."

As Barber concluded his speech, he itemized wrongs against poor people that the campaign will address. After

each wrong, the mainly white audience shouted back, "And we won't be silent anymore." It was a call and response that is standard in many black churches, but not in many white ones. How did these white people know what to do? At the beginning of the program, musical assistant Yara Allen came on stage. She trained the audience in call and response and had them practice for five minutes before Barber began his lecture.

People ask if Barber is trying to be the new Martin Luther King. Barber only acknowledges that the new campaign is inspired by King, but it is not the same thing. Barber views the upcoming season of protest as part of a third Reconstruction. The first Reconstruction came after the Civil War and ended with the establishment of Jim Crow white control. Reconstruction came after the Civil War and ended with the establishment of Jim Crow white control.

The second Reconstruction came as a result of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s led by King and others. It has been brought to an end, Barber says, by the current times of backlash and retrenchment.

Barber hopes next year's campaign will bring about a third Reconstruction, with its leaders inspired by King, but using modern tactics and strategies that were not available in King's time. Barber may not be another Martin Luther King, but if the new Poor People's Campaign mounts a successful 40-day effort next year, he will become North Carolina's best-known national figure.

Our national anthem is merely symbol of Country

As a child, I found it strange that allowing the US flag to touch the ground was considered disrespectful.

My reasoning was that since the people and the land are the primary components of our country, how can it possibly be considered disrespectful to allow the flag to touch the ground of our nation? I still believe that.

This current controversy over kneeling during the national anthem seems to me to fall into the same category. How can kneeling be considered disrespectful?

Touching one's knee to the ground of the United States is disrespectful? Horsefeathers! Our flag and national anthem are

merely symbols of the country. The ground is one of the components of the country itself. Consciously kneeling on it, in my view, is an expression of profound respect - similar to kneeling to pray.

My personal opinion is that not singing along with the national anthem is disrespectful to the country.

However, am I going to boycott a business because an employee of that business fails to sing along to the national anthem? Of course not. I wouldn't boycott the business even if the owner failed to sing along to the national anthem. I recognize that everyone has a right to opinions that differ from my own.

One of the great things about this country is that we have the right to express our beliefs in many varied ways. Another great thing about the country is that most of its citizens respect the right of others to hold and express their beliefs. Not to respect this right is a slap in the face of our people, the most important component of our country.

NFL players and others who choose to kneel during the national anthem to call attention to a very real societal problem are showing much more respect for the country than those who would seek to punish them for doing so.

Ron Greene
Bakersville

Bare is a good man who loves Burnsville

As former Director of the Yancey County Economic Development Commission, we have worked for over five years with School of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill and their doctoral students, Mr. Lemenski, who was involved in the redevelopment of downtown Durham, developers from Asheville and others, who all say the same thing.

The only way any redevelopment can work with this property to allow the Town of Burnsville obtain parking for the Town Center (within their budget) is to get a developer to purchase and renovate the building and help revitalize Downtown Burnsville, is to form a private/public partnership.

This happens in cities and

towns across the Country. We have studies that suggest this very thing for Burnsville and this property!

This property has been for sale for years and Town of Burnsville could purchase the entire property if they choose.

Warren Bare did not seek out this investment, he was asked to participate and purchase the building in order for Town to obtain land for permanent parking for Town Center and other Town venues.

Another investor changed his mind and would not invest but Warren in his desire to help downtown revitalization agreed to participate!

No one would purchase the building and invest another \$1 Million for renovations,

without having adequate space around building for plantings, landscape, and green space. Burnsville's own Design Guidelines require it!

We have a good man who loves Burnsville and Yancey County and wants to help and willing to invest his money for people of Burnsville and Yancey County...when for years we have tried desperately to make something happen and find someone willing to do this. For him to be attacked publicly and his integrity questioned is appalling!

He only has good intentions to help and it is Burnsville's loss!

Wanda Proffitt
Burnsville

We need to come together and really talk

In a society where everyday violence has escalated and become commonplace, the Las Vegas massacre is just the latest expression of the unimaginable to which we are perhaps becoming comfortably numb, or we might likely react to stressful experiences by falling into traumatized states that cause PTSD.

Rather the stress response system is built to be calmed by social contact with caring people according to the timely book, Born For Love! Why Empathy Is Essential And Endangered by Dr. Bruce Perry and Maia Szolovitz.

Could we then respond, as our wise son says, by asking the real questions about creating a culture where people can talk about and address their feelings of fragmentation, confusion, depression, anger, and fear and begin to get their real needs met?

Have we (I) evolved into a culture that is shooting itself to death? Are we becoming increasingly polarized and disconnected from one another, magnifying the potential for addictive and violent behavior?

Sorry to read Mayor's comments in paper

I was sorry to read the Mayor's comments in your paper. I don't know much about the real estate deal, but I do know Warren Bare.

He is a good neighbor and I know for certain that he cares deeply for our town and our community.

My husband and I have met with Warren many times over

the past several years just to lift up Burnsville and Yancey County in prayer. It's clear to me that he loves the people of Yancey

County as much as anyone and more than many others.

Letters must be signed to be published, with address and phone number included for verification purposes only. Please keep comments civil and refrain from hate speech, name-calling and personally attacking others for their views. Deadline is noon Friday. Send to: Times Journal, PO Box 280, Burnsville, NC 28714 or email: david@yanceypaper.com.

Pat Vess,
Burnsville

across the spectrum of incomes, race, denomination, and gender to form connections that are slower, kinder and more respectful, a revitalization of our neighborhoods that realizes our security depends on knowing and caring for one another and not our superficial material attachments.

Pat Tompkins-Bakersville-Jim Plato-Spruce Pine

Life skills class

The Bakersville Community Health Center hosts Mayland Community College's Life Skills program. The class meets in the Integrative Health Center on Mondays and Tuesdays from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. The Life Skills Class is designed for adults with intellectual disabilities or similar barriers. Students learn reading, writing, math, and technology skills and practice decision-making and interpersonal skills. Anyone interested in more information about this class may call 828.766.1329 and speak with Virginia Alvarado, the Student Support Specialist for the program.

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