

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

THE GOVERNMENTAL POTTER

"Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future." John F. Kennedy penned these words of truth, and they serve as a vivid reminder of the importance of our children. Paul, through inspiration, admonished the fathers in Ephesus to bring their children "up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). The Bible is replete with both commands and examples of the parental responsibility of rearing children to fear God and keep His commandments. Indeed, children are unmolded clay that will forge future governments, businesses, and the church. However, if many politicians have their way, the molding process for those children is about to be transformed and placed squarely into the hands of the government.

A piece of legislation is quietly resurfacing in the United States. Christians need to familiarize themselves with it. All countries except two (the United States and Somalia) have adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As such, America is under heavy pressure to adopt this treaty and join the other nations that have signed on. While the basics of this treaty sound appealing—protecting children from various types of abuse and neglect—the truth reveals that veiled under legal jargon is the undoing of the American family home. **This treaty strips away parents' rights and elevates children's rights, allowing the United Nations to dictate how American children are brought up.**

A Quick History Lesson...

From the beginning of our country's inception there has never been a question as to parents possessing the right to raise their children. Parental rights were so fundamental and basic that not much thought was ever given to laws declaring the parents' rights. Even though parental rights are not specifically mentioned in the United States Constitution or the amendments, there have been several court opinions that make it clear that the state does not control the upbringing of children. For instance, eighty years ago the Supreme Court declared that "the child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations." *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510 (1925). More recently the Court upheld this line of reasoning with the declaration that the "primary role of the parents in the upbringing of their children is now established." It was unspoken that parental rights were a part of the fundamental foundation of our nation's heritage.

Change is in the Wind...

These rights are in real danger of being completely stripped away. Because of the UNCRC status as a "treaty," the U.S. Constitution mandates that it is supreme to any state law. And sadly, this treaty has the support of many Washington politicians. For instance, President Obama supports the UNCRC, as does Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In fact, Clinton has been promoting this treaty for over twenty years. One of the most liberal senators in office, Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) has "promised" that this treaty will be ratified during this term of Congress. So exactly what changes do these politicians want to bring to the American family? Carefully consider what the UNCRC proposes:

- Good parents would no longer be entitled to the legal presumption that they act in the best interests of their children. Instead, the government would have the authority to overrule all parents on any decision concerning the child if the government believed it could make a better decision.
- Parents could no longer spank their children—even in the home.
- Children would have the legal right to choose their own religion. Parents would be permitted only to give advice.

- Children would acquire a legally enforceable right to leisure.
- Christian schools that refuse to teach “alternative worldviews” and teach that Christianity is the only true religion “fly in the face of article 29” of the treaty.
- Allowing parents to opt their children out of sex education has been held to be out of compliance with the UNCRC.
- Children would have the right to reproductive health information and services, including abortions, without parental knowledge or consent.
- A murderer aged 17 years and 11 months and 29 days at the time of his crime could no longer be sentenced to life in prison.
- American would be under a binding legal obligation to massively increase its federal spending on children’s programs because it states the nation cannot spend more on defense than on children’s welfare.
- A child’s “right to be heard” would allow him (or her) to seek governmental review of every parental decision with which the child disagree.

(Adapted from “20 Things You Need to Know About the UN Convention on the Rights of the child” <http://www.parentalrights.org>).

An Experiment Gone Bad...

Several years ago, Washington state tried to adopt an UNCRC-type policy. The result was a legal nightmare for both parents and children. As evidence, consider the following two cases that occurred as a result of the law as reported by Michael Farris on www.parentalrights.org:

Case #1: A thirteen-year-old boy in Washington state was removed from his parents after he complained to school counselors that his parents took him to church too often. His school counselors had encouraged him to call Child Protective Services with his complaint, which led to his subsequent removal and placement in foster care. It was only after the parents agreed to a judge’s requirement of less-frequent church attendance that they were able to recover their son.

Case #2: In the early 1980s, a landmark parental rights case reached the Washington State Supreme Court. The case involved 13-year-old Sheila Marie Sumey, whose parents were alarmed when they found evidence of their daughter’s participation in illegal drug activity and escalating sexual involvement. Their response was to act immediately to cut off the negative influences in their daughter’s life by grounding her.

But when Sheila went to her school counselors complaining about her parents’ actions, she was advised that she could be liberated from her parents because there was “conflict between parent and child.” Listening to the advice she had received, Sheila notified Child Protective Services (CPS) about her situation. She was subsequently removed from her home and placed in foster care.

Her parents, desperate to get their daughter back, challenged the actions of the social workers in court. They lost. Even though the judge found that Sheila’s parents had enforced reasonable rules in a proper manner, the state law nevertheless gave CPS the authority to split apart the Sumey family and take Sheila away.

In an interview years later, Sheila stated that what the court should have done was rebuke her and send her back to her parents. By breaching the door into our homes, the courts have allowed more and more judges to deny the role of parents, opting instead for governmental intervention for the family. If the UNCRC passed it would give Congress the power to directly legislate on all subjects necessary to comply with the treaty. The family home would become a ward of the federal government. It would also set precedent and become the largest shift of power from the states to the federal government in American history.

“What Can We Do About It”

One of the questions I’m asked most frequently by Christians is this: “What can we do about it?” That’s a valid question, and one that needs to be addressed whenever problems are presented. The three things I would strongly urge Christians to consider are: (1) contact your state representatives and let them know you don’t want them supporting this treaty; (2) visit www.parentalrights.org and read the information they have on creating an amendment to protect children by empowering parents through passage of the Parental Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (while I’m not one who favors adding lots of amendments to our Constitution, I think this one is now necessary); and (3) help get the word out. Isn’t it time Christians lead the way and protect our most valuable resource?

Brad Harrub, Ph.D.
Think Magazine (July, 2010)

**THE CITIES OF REFUGE –
A TYPE OF THE CHURCH—2**

The roads of entrance to the cities of refuge were plain and simple. They were not ornate, decorated with all the bells and whistles of a parade-lined route. In fact, in the preparing of these cities God commanded: “Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it. Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither” (Deuteronomy 19:2-3). There was nothing glamorous or particularly spectacular about the means of entrance to these protective places, but the way was to be very simple. Is that not true of entrance to the church as our protective place? Of our particular means of entrance, even Christ Himself never described it as more than a “strait and narrow way” (Matthew 7:13-14). It is not marked by special miraculous feats or spectacular shows. But rather the effective and only means of entrance to the church is as plain and simple as the gospel itself. In Acts 2, those three thousand who entered that Pentecost day did so by, after hearing and believing the gospel of God’s Son, repenting of their sins and being immersed in water in order to wash away their sins (vs. 36-42). Many in the religious world still maintain that some special and supernatural sign accompanies the salvation of the soul, but the Bible declares the simplicity of entrance to the body of Christ, just as was the entrance to the refuge cities.

Those who would be protected had to remain in the cities of refuge. If ever the “slayer” departed the city, before the death of the high priest, the “avenger of blood” could justifiably kill them without guilt. Why? “Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge...” (Numbers 35:28). Protection could only be guaranteed in that designated location. Does the church not serve in the same capacity? It is obvious from scripture that spiritual and eternal protection is available only in the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). Thus is it not obvious that to depart the church would be to depart the only measure of protection available to us in looking forward to the judgment? No wonder John encouraged the first century Christians to remain faithfully serving in the church even if it meant their death (Revelation 2:10). That was the only means by which they could receive the crown of life. If we are going to receive the fullness of God’s protection from sin and eternal suffering, we must remain in His church just as those in times of old had to remain in the cities of refuge.

So many other similarities exist in the great type/antitype relationship that is pictured between the cities of refuge and the church of Christ. However, one final must be mentioned. How terrible for the innocent soul to have had the protection of the cities of refuge available to them only for them to refuse its service and suffer the consequences? And yet how much more terrible for you to have the protection of the blood bought church available to you only for you to refuse its blessings and suffer the consequences that are eternal?

-Andy Brewer

I WISH YOU ENOUGH

Recently while waiting for a flight, I overheard a father and daughter in their last moments together. They had announced her flight’s departure, and standing near the security gate, they hugged, and he said, “I love you. I wish you enough.”

She in turn said, “Daddy, our life together has been more than enough. Your love is all I ever needed. I wish you enough, too, Daddy.”

They kissed, and she left. He walked over toward the window where I was seated. Standing there I could see he wanted to cry. I tried not to intrude on his privacy, but he welcomed me in by asking, “Did you ever say goodbye to someone knowing it would be forever?”

“Yes, I have,” I replied. Saying that brought back memories of expressing my love and appreciation for all my Dad had done for me. Recognizing that his days were limited, I took the time to tell him face to face how much he meant to me. So I knew what this man was experiencing.

“Forgive me for asking, but why is this forever goodbye?” I asked. “I am old, and she lives far away. I have challenges ahead, and the reality is, her next trip will be for my funeral,” he said.

“When you were saying goodbye, I heard you say, ‘I wish you enough.’ May I asked what that means?” He began to smile. “That’s a wish that has been handed down from other generations. My parents used to say it to everyone.” He paused for a moment, and looking up as if trying to remember it in detail, he smiled again. “When we said, ‘I wish you enough,’ we were wanting the other person to have a life filled with just enough good things to sustain them,” he continued and then turning toward me, he shared the following as if he were reciting it from memory:

- “I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright.
- I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun more.
- I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive.
- I wish you enough pain so that the smallest joys in life appear much bigger.
- I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.
- I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.
- I wish you enough ‘Hello’ to get you through the final ‘Goodbyes.’”

As he walked away, I wished him enough.