

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL BIBLE
WEEK

HON. ROSCOE G. BARTLETT

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 6, 2003

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today as the House co-chairman of National Bible Week that will take place in 2003 during the week of November 23–30. The National Bible Association is organizing nationwide recognition of the importance of the Bible in our daily lives during this week. I would like to speak briefly about the importance of the Bible in the history of our nation, and the foundation of the government of the United States of America.

George Washington, our first President wrote:

It is impossible to govern the world without God and the Bible. Of all of the dispositions and habits that lead to political prosperity, our religion and morality are the indispensable supporters. Let us with caution indulge the supposition, that is, the notion or idea, that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that our national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

John Adams, our second President, was also President of the American Bible Society and this is what he said:

We have no government armed with the power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and true religion.

And now listen to these words of John Adams:

Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

John Quincy Adams, son of John Adams, also served as President of the American Bible Society. He told his friends that he valued his presidency of the American Bible Society above his presidency of the United States. These are his words:

The highest glory of the American revolution was this. It connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity. From the day of the declaration, they, that is, the founders were bound by the laws of God which they all acknowledged as their rules of conduct.

In the 1920's, President Calvin Coolidge said:

America seeks no empires built on blood and forces. She cherishes no purpose save to merit the favor of Almighty God.

He later wrote,

The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country.

The Bible has come up many times in cases before the Supreme Court. In 1811, there was a case the People v. Ruggles. This was a person who had publicly slandered the Bible. This case got to the Supreme Court and this is what they said:

You have attacked the Bible. In attacking the Bible, you have attacked Jesus Christ. In attacking Jesus Christ, you have attacked

the roots of our Nation. Whatever strikes at the root of Christianity manifests itself in the dissolving of our civil government.

In 1845, there was a case *Vida v. Gerrand*. This was a lady teacher who was teaching morality without using the Bible. I have no idea how that case got to the Supreme Court, but it did, and this is what they said, "Why not use the Bible?" This is the Supreme Court:

Why not use the Bible, especially the New Testament? It should be read and taught as a divine revelation in the schools. Where can the purest principles of morality be learned so clearly and so perfectly as from the New Testament?

Consistent with this philosophy, the Continental Congress bought 20,000 Bibles to distribute to their new citizens, and for 100 years, at the beginning of our country, this Congress appropriated money to send missionaries to the American Indians.

The Bible has been an important foundation of learning in our schools. The Congress in 1854 made this statement about our schools. It said:

The Congress of the United States recommends and approves the Holy Bible for use in our schools.

Consistent with that, it was used.

The New England Primer was used for over 200 years. Notice how they taught the alphabet:

A. A wise son makes a glad father but a foolish son is heaviness to his mother.

B. Better is little with the fear of the Lord than abundance apart from him.

C. Come unto Christ, all you who are weary and heavily laden.

D. Do not do the abominable thing, which I hate, sayeth the Lord.

E. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

The "McGuffey Reader," was used for 100 years. Not too many years ago it was brought back to some of our schools when for a number of years the achievement scores had considerably dropped and we graduated over 1 million people who literally could not read their high school diplomas, and, out of desperation, they brought the "McGuffey Reader" back to some of the schools, because when we had that in our schools, the graduates could read when they graduated from school.

This is what the author says about The "McGuffey Reader":

The Christian religion is the religion of our country. From it derived our notions on the character of God and on the great moral Governor of the universe. On its doctrines are founded the peculiarities of our free institutions. From no source has the author drawn more conspicuously than from the sacred scriptures. For all of these extractions from the Bible I make no apology.

There has been a determined movement over the last 50 years to denounce the Bible as a document that is irrelevant in our modern society. Worse than irrelevant, there has been a concerted effort which has succeeded in removing the Bible and even prayer from schools on the grounds that it is dangerous and offensive.

A couple of years ago a young woman in a high school in Oklahoma wrote this poem as a new school prayer:

Now I sit me down in school

Where praying is against the rule.

For this great nation under God,

Finds mention of him very odd.

If scripture now the class recites

It violates the Bill of Rights.

Any time my head I bow

Becomes a Federal matter now.

Our hair can be purple, orange, or green.

That's no offense; it's a freedom scene.

The law is specific, the law is precise.

Only prayers spoken out loud are serious vice.

For praying in a public hall

Might offend someone who has no faith at all.

In silence alone we must meditate,

God's name is prohibited by the State.

We are allowed to cuss and dress like freaks,

And pierce our noses, tongues and cheeks.

They have outlawed guns, but FIRST the Bible.

To quote the Good Book makes me liable.

We can elect a pregnant Senior Queen,

And the "unwed daddy" our Senior King.

It is inappropriate to teach right from wrong.

We are taught that such 'judgments' do not belong.

We can get our condoms and birth controls,

Study witchcraft, vampires and totem poles.

But the Ten Commandments are not allowed,

No word of God must reach this crowd.

It is scary here I must confess,

When chaos reigns the school's a mess.

So Lord, this silent plea I make:

Should I be shot, my soul please take.

The Bible is as relevant today as it has been since it was written for very simple reasons. The Bible is the word of God for Jews and Christians around the world. Every American should be taught to understand that the foundations of our government are rooted in the moral teachings of the Bible. For people of all faiths, the Bible offers universal ethical guidelines of right and wrong, good and bad and simple rules to follow to lead a virtuous life and establish a just society.

RECOGNIZING TRAVIS A. LUETHJE
FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

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Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Travis A. Luethje, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 175, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Travis has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the eight years Travis has been involved with scouting, he has earned 29 merit badges and has held numerous leadership positions, serving as Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Quartermaster, Assistant Patrol Leader, Scribe, and Chaplain Aid. Travis has also participated in High Adventure and is a Brave in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say.

For his Eagle Scout project, Travis re-striped the parking lot of St. Peter United Methodist Church, including handicap spaces and new turning lanes.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Travis A. Luethje for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.