

February 2015

Dear Friends and Supporters,

You probably saw the U.S. Supreme Court recently agreed to review the federal Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals marriage cases. For Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio and Michigan that court ruled laws permitting marriage only between a man and a woman were constitutional. It is the only circuit court to have done so. The Supreme Court refused to review other circuits who had earlier ruled man/woman marriage laws unconstitutional. It is significant it decided to review the one circuit that upheld traditional marriage. It is true that a split between circuits on an important point of law is a reason for review. However, it is suggestive that the Court is only reviewing the circuit that upheld traditional marriage. We expect a decision by June 2015.

In spite of this imminent controlling decision, a federal trial court in Mobile struck down Alabama's marriage amendment and marriage statute. As we explain in this month's Educational Update, this is an unnecessary and premature interference with Alabama's laws protecting traditional marriage. It creates confusion and doubt. The role of law, explained by judges, is to clarify and assist citizens, rather than to place on them burdens of confusion, uncertainty and anxiety.

Religious freedom was at issue in the recent Supreme Court case of *Holt v. Hobbs*, which upheld the right of a Muslim Arkansas state prisoner to have a short beard. He claimed his religion required it. On review, the Supreme Court ruled it could not see a compelling prison policy reason requiring him to shave. We have no disagreement with that ruling. However, it is noteworthy that the liberal justices on the Supreme Court agreed with this, though in the recent *Hobby Lobby* case, they refused to agree that an employer had a right not to support abortion. This is an inconsistency due to the political correctness of supporting abortion and avoiding public condemnation of Islam.

Free speech in the name of religion also suffered recently. Of course we all know about *Charlie Hebdo*, where Muslim terrorists killed satire cartoonists for depicting Mohammad in an unfavorable light. About the same time, former Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran was fired because he wrote a book, though in his private capacity, which contained a brief comment that homosexual behavior is immoral. Politically incorrect speech may be offensive to some, but it is protected. Perhaps, we can compare Islamic terrorists to heterophobic terrorists.

Next month will begin the legislative session. We will be spending a great deal of time working on legislation, testifying and advising legislators. Please remember our financial needs to make this possible. Also, please pray for our efforts. Thank you for all of your support.

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston