

Should Christians sign prayer-in-school petition?

Ireceived a petition via e-mail the other day, asking me to add my name to the list of supporters of re-instituting prayer in school.

The petition said it was to be forwarded to President George W. Bush when there are 2,000 names.

Do we really need prayer in school? Is this something Christians should support?

The petition cited 1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing," as the reason to support it.

While it is true that Christians should pray frequently, constantly, as often as they can, a law is not required to allow Christian youths to pray in school. Prayers can be said silently at any time. Prayers out loud, that involve all in a class, whether having Christian beliefs or not, are not a requirement for worshipping God.

1 Samuel 1:12, 13 says, "And it occurred that while she prayed ex-



sharon corcoran

- use it or lose it

tendedly before God, Eli was watching her mouth. As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart; only her lips were quivering, and her voice was not hear. But Eli took her for a drunk."

Hannah prayed silently, and God heard. A continued reading of 1 Samuel reveals that her prayer was answered. Now, some may want to be more careful of what people think they are doing than Hannah was, but Christians can pray quietly, by themselves, and God hears.

Mark 1:35 says of Jesus: "And early in the morning, while it was

As part of our worship, prayers should only be addressed to God. Matthew 4:10 says, "Then Jesus said to him: 'Go away, Satan! For it is written, "It is God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service."'"

John 14:6 says, "Jesus said to him (Thomas): 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

While prayers are only to be addressed to God, they are sent through Jesus. 1 John 2:1, 2 says, "My little children, I am writing you these things that you may not com-

mit a sin. And yet, if anyone does commit as sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one. And he is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also the whole world's."

Since Jesus is a helper, we pray through him, and one thing we can pray for is forgiveness of our sins. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and leaving them will be shown mercy."

We can also pray about other matters that affect our relationship with God.

Philippians 4:6, 7 says, "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by

means of Christ Jesus."

An example of a prayer by King David is found at 1 Chronicles 29:10-13. In the prayer, he praised God's "mightiness and the beauty and the excellency and the dignity" and said in verse 13, "And now, O our God, we are thanking you and praising your beauteous name."

While David's prayer of thanks was said in public and in behalf of a group, we can say such prayers of praise and thanksgiving in private. When David prayed in behalf of "the congregation," as mentioned in verse 1, he was praying on behalf of people who shared his faith.

Christians can also pray for comfort and help when their faith is being tested. Psalm 120:1 says, "To God I called in the distress of mine, and he proceeded to answer me."

But there are some prayers God does not respond to. Proverbs 28:9 says, "He that is turning his ear

away from the law — even his prayer is something detestable."

Those who do their best to obey God's laws found in the Bible and who pray for forgiveness when they sin can pray to God whenever and wherever they want, out loud or to themselves, without a law from the President to give them permission.

Christians are urged to pray often and about anything that affects their relationship with God, and to pray in behalf of others.

Ephesians 6:18 says, "while with every form of prayer and supplication you carry on prayer on every occasion in spirit. And to that end keep awake with all constancy and with supplication in behalf of all the holy ones."

How could any law passed by humans help or prevent us from praying to God, who hears us no matter where we are?

Schwarzenegger takes imaginative approach to ending terrorism

By Dick Morris

Former Presidential advisor

We'll never change the Constitution to let him become president, but Arnold Schwarzenegger is conducting a one-man revolution aimed at providing presidential leadership.

The East Coast media has missed the full dimensions of the California governor's accomplishments and bold proposals. Together, they constitute one of the most astounding, imaginative and forward-thinking agendas in our recent history.

Start with the War on Terror. While President Bush hunts the terrorists down and pressures nation-states to give up their sponsorship of terror gangs, Schwarzenegger is working to solve the problem of Islamic terrorism once and for all — by ending our dependence on for-



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eign oil and stopping the worldwide economic and climatic distortions that global oil usage causes.

He's doing it by providing aggressive state leadership to open the way for hydrogen fuel cell cars. While President Bush speaks of the advent of these vehicles in the indefinite future, Gov. Schwarzenegger is bringing them to the here and now by converting gas stations along California's Interstate highways to provide hydrogen fuel as well as gasoline.

With financing projected to come

and the leaders of Washington, Oregon, Baja California and British Columbia will work together to create a "hydrogen highway" that will run from B.C. (British Columbia) to B.C. (Baja California).

The Schwarzenegger plan calls for state-subsidized production of hydrogen and for tax incentives for those who purchase hydrogen cars.

Replacing gasoline engines with hydrogen fuel cells would eliminate two-thirds of America's need for oil, a demand that we could meet entirely from domestic wells.

Since California accounts for 20 percent of U.S. new-car purchases, the tail will wag the dog and a national hydrogen grid will become almost inevitable.

But Arnold's revolution also aims to restore democracy at home.

Disgusted by the gerrymandering that led to the re-election of all but a handful of members of Congress in 2000 and 2002 (including all 54 California congressmen in 2002 and everyone but Gary Condit in 2000), Schwarzenegger is acting to end the disgrace on our democracy. He is pushing a voter initiative to adopt the Iowa Plan to have legislative and congressional districts drawn by independent jurists who aren't permitted to take account of incumbency or party.

The cynical political deals that underscored the post-2000 Census reapportionment made the incum-

bents of both parties invulnerable and limited the number of swing seats to a mere 5 percent of the House of Representatives. Governor Arnold will change all that in California. And, as with hydrogen cars, his action will likely awaken voters across the nation to take back their democracy.

Finally, Schwarzenegger is striking at the root of the problem with public education by seeking to smash teacher tenure and pay and promote teachers based on merit, just like other employees in America. The privileged classroom enclave, where incompetence is not punished and excellence is not rewarded, will be ended in California.

Too bad that so-called education reformers like Hillary Clinton dropped merit-based promotion (which she once supported in Arkansas but dropped when she came

to New York, with its virulent teachers' union).

If the legislature does not pass the "governator's" tenure-reform and redistricting programs, he'll put these issues on the ballot, where they will most likely pass.

In energy, the environment, anti-terrorism, democratic reform and education, Arnold Schwarzenegger is showing us what a governor can do. Are there other governors willing to follow his bold example?

Dick Morris was an advisor to former President Bill Clinton for 20 years. Look for Dick's new book "Because He Could" about Clinton. © 2005 Dick Morris, All Rights Reserved. Distributed by Cagle Cartoons, Inc. www.caglecartoons.com Call Cari Dawson Bartley at (800) 696 7561 or e-mail: cari@cagle.com e-mail for Dick Morris is dmredding@aol.com

Farmers and ranchers are bracing themselves for certain cuts in 2007 farm bill

By John Schlageck

Kansas Farm Bureau

Never think of the future — it comes soon enough.

That said, it appears farmers and ranchers are already bracing themselves for the round of cuts they are sure to experience in the upcoming 2007 farm bill. Political resolve to support a level of spending in the '07 farm bill comparable to the '02 farm bill has diminished.

In Washington and across our nation, fewer and fewer members of Congress have any direct link with agriculture or rural communities.

Congress will continue to wrestle with budget issues, and while there is support for farm programs by some in Congress, expecting the same level of spending for the '07 farm bill as the '02 program is not going to happen.



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Growth in federal spending during the next decade will focus on health care, Social Security and higher interest on the federal debt.

More than ever before, provisions of the '07 farm bill will be linked to global trade negotiations. This means our leaders in the international trading arena must nail down agreements that will provide American farmers with the edge they need to export farm and ranch products in today's global market.

It's the way we do business today.

But make no mistake about it: every country involved in these global trade negotiations will be scratching and clawing to secure these same marketing advantages for their farmers.

While continuing to look at this global issues, it is still important to keep things in perspective.

The entire farm program is roughly 1 percent of this country's federal budget. That sum helps sustain an agricultural industry that is responsible for 15 percent of our nation's gross domestic product. It

also helps ensure 25 million jobs and a food, fuel and fiber supply that is the safest, most affordable and most abundant in the world.

At the same time, our farm policy helps keep smaller family farms in business.

Farms with sales between \$2,500 and \$5,000 received 64 cents in payments for every dollar of sales. Farms with sales of \$1,000 or less, received \$3 in subsidies for every dollar in sales.

U.S. price support programs go far beyond the bottom line of individual farmers and ranchers.

This is particularly true in rural states like Kansas, where the wellbeing of so many of our small, rural communities depends on the farmer.

Such dollars are spent in rural communities as many as seven

times in some cases. Farm subsidies pay for fuel bills on the farm, groceries at the local market, kids' clothes at the Main Street merchant, offerings for Sunday's collection, local property taxes to help run our schools and checks to pay down debt on the family farm.

In spite of the changing landscape of agriculture, farmers and ranchers will remain tied to the land they love. The flame burning within our producers has been passed on from generation to generation in small towns across Kansas.

Continued budget cuts in farm spending won't be easy. Discussions on the '07 farm bill are already under way by those who have a stake in this debate.

Farming and ranching will persevere. There has always been something special about the men and

women who till this state's soil. Call it tenacity, perseverance, guts or plain hard work — whatever it is, Kansas farmers will continue to feed us in good times and bad, while protecting the land.

What they need is a government that stands behind them. Our government needs to support the Kansas and American farmer. It is such a vital industry.

Our country must maintain a secure food policy that involves a stable farm economy. This country's agricultural future depends on it.

John Schlageck of Kansas Farm Bureau has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for 25 years. He is managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.

Hospital provides living will help, keeps them on file

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

With a family's battle over a Florida woman's right to live or to die making headlines across the country, the question of how to fill out a living will has been on many people's minds.

Though Terry Shiavo's battle was waged miles from Goodland, the issues raised in her final weeks of life can hit close to home.

The Goodland Regional Medical Center board talked at its meeting Monday, March 28, about what provisions the hospital has for people to make end-of-life and other health-care decisions.

Board member Gennifer House asked if there are people admitted to the hospital who have living wills. Brenda McCants, director of patient relations, said some people have living wills on file already.

Whenever anyone is admitted, even children, said Mary Ann Elliott, a registered nurse, the hospital has to give them information about advance directives, a form to make health care decisions.

House wondered how people go about filling out a living will and asked if people can buy a kit or something. There are kits on the

Internet for \$29.99, McCants said, but people can fill them out free at the hospital and keep them on file here.

Ron Vignery, a Goodland lawyer, conducted training on the subject at the hospital, McCants said. There are forms to fill out that include a blank space to add specifics. If there are a lot of specifics, she added, hospital officials recommend consulting a lawyer.

Many people need some educa-

tion on the subject, however. Many don't know that a durable power of attorney and a durable power of attorney for health care decisions are not the same, McCants said.

And people need to keep a copy of the form where family can find it and be sure their family knows what they want.

A lot of elderly people have given their kids power of attorney, said Chief Financial Officer Jim Precht, and haven't ever told them.

In other business:

• Hospital Administrator Jay Jolly said an architectural firm will look over the facility's floor plan and use of space Tuesday and Wednesday to see whether remodeling may be needed.

• The board voted to have management get back to them with information on accrediting and quality organizations to consider.

• The board set the next meeting for 5 p.m. Monday, April 25.

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