

Editorial: The Supreme Court's batting a thousand. How about us?

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As the U.S. Supreme Court issued decisions throughout June on cases watched by many in the faith community, I found myself thinking again and again, "Well, that's going to be very disappointing to somebody." On that score, it seems the court is batting a thousand.

Since the Supreme Court of the United States is one of three branches of our government, we are right to watch the court's decisions and to critique them. In doing so, Christians need to keep the Supreme Court's decisions in perspective. As influential and longstanding as its decisions may be, they are temporary. And they do not impair our ability to follow Jesus.

Keeping this perspective in mind, here is a brief summary of four decisions watched and critiqued in religious journalism.

Four important decisions

LGBT employment rights: In [Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia](#) and [R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes Inc. v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#), Justice Neil Gorsuch surprised many with his interpretation of the word "sex" in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In stating "only the written word is the law," he ruled employers firing an employee for being gay or transgender violate Title VII of the Act. Analysis of the decision is available [here](#).

DACA: In [Department of Homeland Security v. Regents of the University of](#)

[California](#) Chief Justice John Roberts ruled the department's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program violated the Administrative Procedure Act, leaving open the door for another challenge to DACA on procedural grounds. Analysis of the decision is available [here](#).

Abortion rights: In the majority opinion on [June Medical Services LLC v. Russo](#), Justice Stephen Breyer wrote that states cannot require doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals, seeming to prevent that restriction on abortion. An analysis of the decision is available [here](#).

Education funding: In [Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue](#), Chief Justice Roberts ruled that states providing tuition assistance for private education cannot discriminate against religious schools as recipients of funds, thereby allowing public funds to be distributed to private religious schools. Analysis of the decision is available [here](#). See the news story about it [here](#).

In each of these cases, some saw a perfect pitch while others saw a curveball. What Christians do in response should be grounded in something more permanent than nine innings or even an entire season.

How Christians respond

Christians—those who proclaim with one voice, “Jesus Christ is Lord”—have differing opinions and voices on each one of the decisions summarized here. Despite such differences—and the Scripture and theology in which varying opinions and convictions are based—Christians need to remember and operate from the commands given unequivocally to them all.

Jesus summarized God's law when he said: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first

and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:37-40).

Jesus did not equivocate. He did not mince words. And if anyone should question the meaning of his words, all they need to do is refer back to the record from which he quoted. Beyond the written word, his hearers also had his lived example.

In disputing such things as whether LGBT persons should have equal employment rights, the status of DACA and abortion rights and what is an appropriate funding source for private religious education, the undergirding and overarching frame for Christians is not the status of morality in the United States but is how faithfully we are following Jesus.

Our response in action

To reduce this principle to one example among the four cases mentioned here: If a person is opposed to abortion and is in favor of any and all restrictions on it, that person should not abort love of neighbor by vilifying those who provide or advocate for abortion.

All too often, Christians have demonized abortion providers and pro-choice advocates. Through their words—and even in some of their actions—they have contradicted their professed belief in the sanctity of life by making advocates and providers the objects of their anger.

The more difficult way is maintaining one’s convictions while maintaining the dignity of those with whom one disagrees. Even more difficult is doing so in relation to those we might despise or who might despise us.

But isn’t the more difficult way the one Jesus called us to follow? Isn’t the more difficult way the one Jesus embodied and modeled for us as our own?

No, we may not agree with all the Supreme Court's decisions, and we may be angry about some of them, but we aren't called to agree with the court. We are called to agree with Jesus. And nothing the court does can change that.

The court's batting a thousand by some measures. By the measure that matters most for us, what's our average?

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