

briefly noted

A New Threat to Free Speech

Infringing on free speech seems to be a growth business. The latest twist comes in complaints that Google and its YouTube subsidiary—which thoroughly dominate public circulation of videos on the Internet—are arbitrarily and unfairly making it harder for viewers to find and experience some viewpoints than others.

Educational charities like PragerU have recently gotten good at producing short videos that educate the public on policy and current-affairs issues. Many of PragerU's five-minute productions—on topics like “Why Did America Fight the Korean War?,” “Is the Death Penalty Ever Moral?,” “What’s Wrong With E-Cigarettes?,” and “Are the Police Racist?”—have been viewed a million or more times online. Since its inception as a 501c3 producer, PragerU videos have been watched a total of 998 million times, and 70 percent of viewers say they have changed their mind on an important issue after taking in PragerU content.

Now PragerU has filed a lawsuit in the U.S. Ninth Circuit federal court, alleging that the nonprofit's content has been discriminated against since Summer 2016 because of its (center-right) political identity. The plaintiff says this happens in two ways.

“Demonetizing” a video means that Google won't place ads on your video's viewing page, resulting in loss of the revenue stream that other videos enjoy. Google says it does this because content is too extreme, hateful, graphic, or controversial.

“Restricting” a video prevents it from appearing on the computers of families, libraries, schools, universities, and employers that have turned on Google's “Restricted Mode” setting to block nudity, profanity, gratuitous violence, and other unsafe content.

PragerU maintains it is absurd to apply these filters to its high-toned educational content, and that Google and YouTube are actually using these tools to restrict public consumption of content their staff dislikes on subjective grounds—ideological censoring, or a “political gag mechanism” as the lawsuit puts it. The nonprofit maintains this “breaches the warranty of good faith and fair dealing implied in Google and YouTube's own Terms of Use,” and demands legal remedy.



In 2016 the Christian aid organization Samaritan's Purse helped 12 million people in 149 countries.

Dozens and dozens of PragerU videos have been restricted or demonetized by Google—including all of the ones listed in the second paragraph of this story. Other center-right videomakers also report that their content has been obstructed by Google.

The PragerU suit has backing from some legal heavyweights, like former California governor Pete Wilson and Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz. Included in the suit is an interesting table listing PragerU videos that were restricted or demonetized, compared side by side with videos on the very same topic, depicting similar events, using equivalent language and images, but produced by left-of-center producers—and posted by Google without any impediments to wide circulation.

PragerU's foundation is supported by 40,000 online donors. They cumulatively provide four tenths of the organization's funding. The rest comes from institutional donors or earned income.

Funders of nonprofit filmmaking of all stripes, and defenders of free speech in general, should keep an eye on this legal challenge. For Google and YouTube now dominate many platforms vital to public debate, and indeed operate virtual monopolies in some important spheres. Google and YouTube operate “the largest forum for public participation in video-based speech in not only California, but the United States, and the world,” notes the PragerU lawsuit.

Google says it is “committed to fostering a community where everyone's voice can be heard.” But

PragerU CEO Marissa Streit suggests, “It’s clear that someone inside Google doesn’t like what we teach and so they intend on stopping us from teaching it. Can you imagine what the world would look like if Google is allowed to continue to arbitrarily censor ideas they simply don’t agree with?”

Beyond the Box

It’s not uncommon, in late November every year, to see mounting piles of green-and-red shoeboxes in church lobbies and social halls across America. That’s a sign of “rally time” for Operation Christmas Child, an annual outreach of Samaritan’s Purse, the aid and evangelism organization begun in 1970 and now led by Franklin Graham. The boxes are packed with toys, school supplies, and hygiene products by willing volunteers, inspected by Samaritan’s Purse, and shipped around the world to those in need (and distributed domestically, as well). Recipients are invited to then participate in “The Greatest Journey,” a 12-week evangelistic outreach.

And that’s only one of the charitable operations at Samaritan’s Purse. A swarm of aid projects takes place year-round at this nonprofit with an annual budget of \$607 million. There is speedy domestic and foreign disaster relief. Agriculture support for subsistence farmers overseas. Medical missions. Water and sanitation projects. Marriage retreats for U.S. veterans. And more. Taking its cue from Jesus’s story of the Good Samaritan, the group aims to locate the world’s poor, sick, and suffering, and then aid them however possible.

The support for all of these activities comes primarily from individual givers, who donate money, time, and in-kind gifts. Total contributions in 2016 were a whopping \$633 million (which includes not just cash, but the value of all those items in the shoeboxes, plus donated medical supplies, and equipment gifts). While aid is offered regardless of the background of the recipient, the charity is not shy about proclaiming the Christian motivations for its assistance, and it offers people spiritual as well as material aid. In 2016 Samaritan’s Purse helped 12 million people in 149 countries.

Some of them lined up at an emergency field hospital in Iraq outside Mosul. A team of over 80 doctors, nurses, and staff, plus all their gear, piled into an airplane in Greensboro, North Carolina, then set up a 50-bed hospital on the plains of Nineveh. They took in patients and started operating almost immediately after their arrival. “Because Samaritan’s Purse is here, thousands—tens of thousands—of people will survive,” said the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Iraq.

This behemoth among Christian charities relies on countless volunteers, some of whom benefited from its aid in the past. In North America alone, nearly 15,000 people volunteered 367,000 hours of succor last year for

The Success of a Failure

Businessman Tom Clements started the first Catholic college in Georgia by investing \$1 million of his own resources and rallying leaders from faith and business communities to join him. Southern Catholic welcomed its first class in 2005 and grew to 200 students. But in 2010, the college stalled and had to close its doors. Valuable things can come out of even failed charitable ventures, suggests Clements, who translated his many other business and philanthropic experiences into a new readable book, How to Run a Nonprofit. Philanthropy caught up with him to learn more about his surprising view of a shuttered project.

We raised about \$20 million over the course of the school’s life. It was up and running for six years, and it graduated two classes. Some people ask me if I feel bad about the school not being in business anymore. I say, “No, not at all.”

Two groups out of our community have started new grade schools. We have one person who became a priest. We have about 50 marriages of students who married other students. I think they average something like three kids apiece. A lot of our graduates are in leadership positions in their Catholic community. My son is the teacher of theology at a Catholic high school. There are many students who are youth ministers at their parish. The fruits of the school have been fantastic. Maybe somebody who went to this school is going to be the person who moves the mountain, and we were just part of helping that person on their way.

We did what we felt called to do. Yet it ended up driving me deeper in my faith too. Building this school was meant to be giving back to God, when in fact, it was a tremendous gift to me. Charitable activities can be a reinforcing process for the givers as much as the receivers.

And the things you learn even in a failure often have value later. In 2005, a friend of mine who is a Catholic priest moved back to Ghana, Africa, where he’s from. My wife and I went to visit, to encourage him in his faith in a pretty tough environment. While I was there a group of eight people came to talk with me. They said they wanted to build a Catholic high school and explained why they needed it. I left the room saying I would talk to my network back home.

That Catholic high school in Africa now has 800 students. We’ve built nine buildings, and have just started the fundraising campaign for a final one. There are 525 students who live there, and it has become one of the top high schools in its region in just a few years. So our experience with Southern Catholic has been an entry point into many other productive things.

museum in Washington, D.C., will get a taste of the profession, if only for a few hours.

The museum is located underground, across from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, which was dedicated in 1991 to honor America's fallen law enforcement and lists by name each officer killed in the line of duty since 1791. Leaders of the nonprofit that maintains the memorial began to consider what more they could do to honor America's law enforcers. They set out to tell the stories of the people whose names are carved into their walls, now numbering over 20,000.

The fund began a capital campaign in 2007, and construction began at the museum site in late 2016. The goal is to complete the structure and open to the public in 2018. The National Law Enforcement Museum will immerse visitors in the artifacts and culture of policing. The collection will include 16,000 artifacts, like mobster Al Capone's bulletproof vest, and a car and weapon used by the Beltway Snipers who terrorized metropolitan Washington in 2002.

In addition to presenting the history of law enforcement and how it has changed over time, interactive exhibits will allow visitors to experience the fast-paced decision-making that is part of police officers' daily lives. A 911 Emergency Ops exhibit will allow visitors to listen to actual emergency calls and determine how to respond in real time. A training simulator will allow visitors to participate in some of the thousands of scenarios used in police academies across the country. At the Hall of Remembrance, visitors can also learn more about each of the fallen officers commemorated by the nearby memorial.

Thus far, \$65 million has been raised for the project, including substantial support from corporations with ties to the law-enforcement community like Motorola, Glock, Maglite, Harley Davidson, and Bell Helicopter. New York philanthropists Adam Rose and Peter McQuillan, who both have personal ties to the law enforcement community, have also made a significant commitment. —*Rachel Verdejo*

Charters 2.0

After focusing for a number of years on expanding successful charter-school networks, some funders are now returning to the work of experimentation. They are putting money into reimagining the way classrooms are structured, particularly at the high-school



A new museum of law enforcement will display artifacts like Al Capone's bulletproof vest and the badges of different police forces.

PhilAphorism

We are the most individualistic country on the face of the earth... and yet this individualistic society is still one of the most communitarian and undoubtedly the most philanthropic... How can the most individualistic of societies also be the most philanthropic? Because of another great American tradition: that every individual is worthy, and no one is trapped by their circumstance.

—**CONDOLEEZZA RICE**

(from *The Almanac of American Philanthropy*, now available in a new Compact Edition!)

level, and testing new methods of helping students learn. Instead of just replicating high-quality schools with a proven track record, more donors are incubating from scratch wholly new school designs in the hopes of reaching different groups of students in fresh ways.

For example, local funder groups like the Silicon Schools Fund in the Bay Area, New Schools for New Orleans, the Mind Trust in Indianapolis, and the newly created “Invent” portfolio of the NewSchools Venture Fund are seeding schools that try uncommon approaches.

In the District of Columbia, CityBridge Education’s “Breakthrough” effort awarded grants to start ten new schools that will take an unusually personalized approach to each child’s education. The donor made additional grants to schools already in existence so they could make their teaching more individualized. The ultimate goal is 25 effective re-engineered schools in five years.

This fall, ABC, CBS, FOX, and NBC all aired an hour-long television special about another effort to reimagine learning—the XQ Super School Project. Chaired by Laurene Powell Jobs of the Emerson Collective, XQ is distributing \$10 million grants to ten social entrepreneurs to create model “Super Schools” over a five-year period.

The charter-school movement grew initially out of concern that our public schools had become fossilized around old ideas, and that revised methods might benefit students who weren’t being well-served by existing approaches. Then came an extended period of replication, where philanthropists circled around the most successful models, and concentrated on increasing their numbers of schools and seats.

If the school-reform and charter movements are now returning to some experiments aimed at connecting better with students who have not yet been

reached by the 7,000 charter schools currently in operation, that is a sign of the field’s maturity, and a good omen for children still languishing in mediocre classrooms. —Pat Burke

A Little Shake-up

A Palm Springs reporter called the Coachella Valley History Museum and told them she was cooking up a story to air on the local CBS affiliate. They set up a time for her visit, got the camera equipment in place, pressed play, and started an interview. An interview that was interrupted on-air by representatives of the H. N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation—who walked in with a \$10,000 check. Surprise!

The museum was familiar with the Berger Foundation. It had applied but missed the final cut for the “Spotlight” award to a top area charity, which carries a \$25,000 grant and a television profile.

Berger, however, wanted to freshen its nine-year-old monthly prize, and encourage future applications. It decided that surprise grants and TV recognition of three valued Palm Springs nonprofits that had been runners-up in the past might do the trick. Each surprise check presentation this summer streamed on Facebook LIVE, then aired on CBS—as a spontaneous bouquet rather than a polished spotlighting. The organizations recognized included the local history museum, a church food pantry, and a group battling childhood cancers.

“We had absolutely no idea,” says Terry Cechin, head of the cancer support group. “I am still in shock. And so grateful that the Berger Foundation selected us for this special surprise grant.”

As to whether there will be additional surprises, the foundation asserts that its antics are finished, and is encouraging organizations to keep applying for its Coachella Valley Spotlight grant. But for those who aren’t selected for the Spotlight, it might be worth tidying up if a reporter from CBS decides to swing by.

A Philanthropic Physician and Founding Father

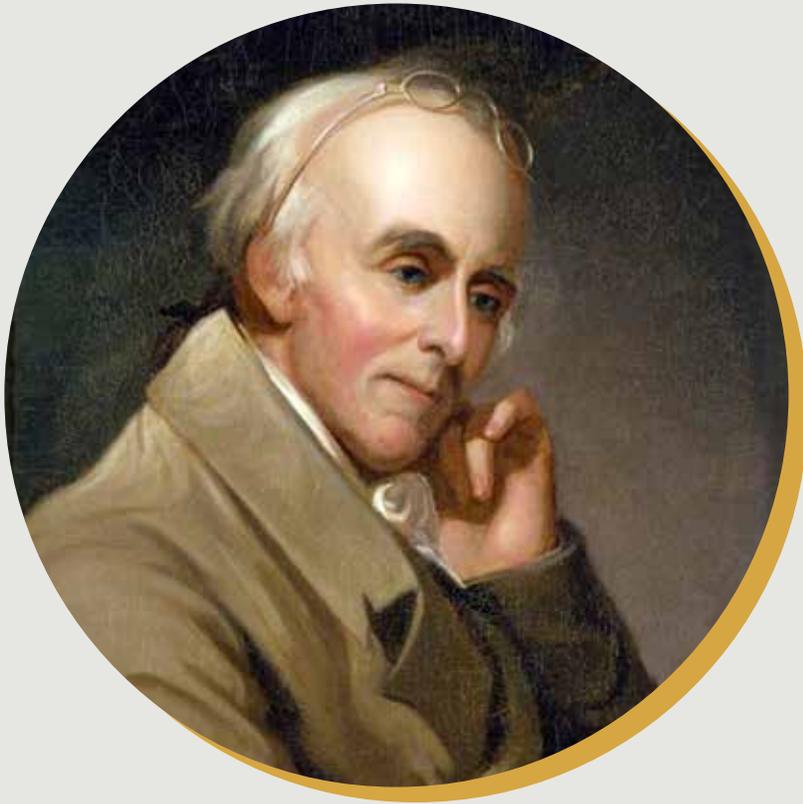
Which of America’s founding fathers was the most philanthropic? The signers of our Declaration of Independence and creators of our Constitution were all remarkably public-spirited. Benjamin Franklin has a claim to the top of the list. His giving created our first libraries, hospitals, fire departments, and other valuable helping institutions. George Washington was another hugely generous founder. He took care of the poor, and set aside large sums for education.

But in the judgment of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, the most benevolent of our early leaders was Benjamin Rush. If you don’t know his name, that’s because he only dipped into politics when his country needed him in crisis. His main career was as a physician—the only doctor to take a leading role in establishing our nation.

In debates leading up to the Revolutionary War, Rush was a fire-breather. After Britain cut off our gunpowder imports, he, as a skilled chemist, devised substitute homemade explosives. Meanwhile, as a battle surgeon, he dispensed merciful aid to friends and foes alike.

Rush’s vision for his nation was that it must be a moral society, not just a political power. During his schooling in Edinburgh he was impressed by the way his host city mixed Enlightenment wisdom with Presbyterian ethics. He commented that “the churches were filled on Sundays.... Swearing was rarely heard...drunkenness was rarely seen.... Instances of fraud were scarcely known.”

After completing the best-available medical training in Scotland, Rush immediately began to apply his scientific knowledge to improving life for his fellow Americans. He opened a medical practice ministering almost exclusively to the poor, then led creation of the first free charitable health clinic in the U.S. It treated 8,000 patients in its first five years, and spread to other cities. Rush



also became a medical educator, and nearly every prominent physician in America during our first hundred years was trained either by him or by one of his pupils.

Benjamin Rush was one of the first to recognize that most mental disorders were illnesses, not a result of bad character. He separated the insane from criminals, improved their care, and set them to productive work. He wrote one of the first books on mental illness, which caused him to be known as “the father of American psychiatry.”

Physicians in Rush’s era had few effective tools, and sometimes harmed as much as they helped, via their bleedings and dosings. But Rush was better than most. He improved our knowledge of many diseases, and was particularly helpful in advancing preventative medicine. He encouraged the use of soap, eating healthy food, and exercising. He formed a charity to provide immunizations to the poor without charge.

Rush also did merciful duty in military medicine. In most wars, he noted, “a greater proportion of men perish with sickness... than fall by the sword.” So he urged military leaders to pay attention to sanitation, diet, cleanliness, and camp locations.

In addition to his contributions to medicine, Benjamin Rush was a pioneering philanthropist in other fields. He became famous for his prison philanthropy, earning him another title as the “father of prison reform.”

Dr. Rush organized the first anti-slavery society in America, and urged that blacks should be taught to read and write, educated in virtue and religion, and instructed in trades and business. Rush poured his own money and energy into building up the most prominent black Christian denomination in America, the AME church.

As an education philanthropist, Rush raised the funds to create Dickinson College, giving backwoods students in Pennsylvania a path into good professions. He led a similar effort to set up what is now Franklin & Marshall College so that German-speaking young people—who made up about a third of his state’s population—would not have their education ignored.

Benjamin Rush reconciled science and religion in fascinating ways that influenced his philanthropy. He was a first-rate chemist, the producer of 85 serious

articles and books, and a true evidence-seeking scientist. At the same time, he rejected extreme rationalism that left no room for faith. He concluded that God was the primary cause of all things, and the ultimate source of human goodness.

By the end of his life, both medicine and politics had disappointed Benjamin Rush. During his day, Philadelphia’s horrific yellow-fever epidemics killed up to 10 percent of the city’s population in each outbreak. Rush was one of the few physicians to stay in town amidst the panic over these outbreaks. During the 1793 epidemic he personally took care of more than 100 patients a day, even though he was suffering from yellow fever himself. Despite his heroic efforts, Rush was attacked for his ineffectiveness at stopping the disease, leading eventually to a boycott that cost him nearly all of his paying customers.

Rush was also distressed late in life by the terrible political squabbling among the former colonies. This showed him that even the best-intended governments would always be hobbled by foolish, fearful, selfish human nature.

So later in his life, Benjamin Rush leaned on religious wisdom. His powerful acts of charity were driven by his vision of God’s mercy. And that is how America’s first great medical doctor also became one of our most benevolent givers.

Benjamin Rush is the newest entrant into the Philanthropy Hall of Fame. You can learn more about him in the new 2017 Compact Edition of *The Almanac of American Philanthropy*.

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