



ILLINOIS Family Institute

Boldly bringing biblical principles to public policy in the Land of Lincoln.

Newsletter | February 2018

VOTE
Your **Values**
on **March 20th**

www.illinoisfamily.org



from the **Executive Director — David E. Smith**

The year that was, 2017, is now fading in the rearview mirror. As we look out on the unfolding expanse of 2018, as far as the eye can see, the culture war rages — a hard-pitched battle between a culture of life and a culture of death.

Our opposition in this world is visceral and cunning. If we dare to stand for Biblical principles, our opponents stoop to ridicule and tweet or stream a noxious spew of profanities.

When we turn on the nightly news, we are assaulted with reports of gang violence, road rage, and terrorist attacks. Even nature batters us on all sides with a whirlwind of one natural disaster after another.

Taking into account all of these pressures, it is understandable that our passion fades and we grow weary of fighting an unending cascade of immorality, evil, and death. And yet, as believers, followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to live joyful, light-filled lives in our ever-darkening world.

How can we live a victorious life in the midst of this struggle? In Philippians 2:14-16, the Apostle Paul exhorts us to “Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. **Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky** as you hold firmly to the word of life.”

As the culture in which we live grows further away from God and His principles, the world grows darker, becoming more chaotic, unkind, and tyrannical. Yet in spite of this downward spiral, we are instructed to proceed in our lives **without** mumbling and grumbling in this warped and crooked generation! Paul tells us **if we have a thankful attitude**, rather than being dissatisfied cranks, **we will shine like stars!**

**Shine like
Stars**

A thankful attitude flies in the face of a culture that finds reasons to complain about everything. But, as Christ followers, we have received God’s unmerited favor instead of the well-deserved consequence of our sin. How can we be anything but grateful?

When our lives are marked by thankfulness and gratitude, rather than moaning and groaning, **we shine like stars!**

Additionally, in Philippians 4:4 Paul tells us to “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” Not only does Paul ask us to go about our lives without grumbling, but we are also instructed to **rejoice!** Unlike the off-putting persona of a cranky complainer, someone who displays gratitude and joy in all circumstances is like a cup of cold water to a thirsty, dying world.

So, how can we live with joy and thanksgiving in this dark world? **First, we must intentionally make deposits in eternity!** When we pray, read God’s Word, and share the good news of Jesus, we are showing love to a lost world. We are effectively holding “firmly to the word of life” and making priceless deposits into God’s kingdom.

The Gospel of Matthew reminds us “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Once we re-order our priorities in life and choose to focus on the long view and become eternity-minded, the petty stuff of this world that tempts us to grumble and complain will become unimportant.

Second, we must determine, with our hearts firmly anchored in eternity, to NOT look back, but press forward.

continued inside...

Planned Parenthood in Flossmoor

We recently learned that Planned Parenthood opened a new location in Flossmoor, Illinois, in the southern suburbs of Chicago. Here they commit both surgical and medical abortions.

We have every reason to believe that the passage of HB 40 (government funding of abortions) was the extra motivation they needed to get this location opened. In other states they are closing abortion mills down, but in Illinois they are expanding their business.

Moreover, we hear rumors that up to four additional abortion mills will open in Illinois by Planned Parenthood in an effort to

capitalize on taxpayer funding.

It grieves me greatly to think that even more babies will be slaughtered by the prophets of Baal and a disproportional number of these victims will be from black and brown mothers (also victims).

Why do so many within the Body of Christ remains silent? Please pray for God's forgiveness and implore Him for a revival in our state. ★



Shine like *Stars* from the Executive Director — David E. Smith

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Paul sets the example for this behavior in Philippians 3:13b-14 as he declares, "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

This is the mindset of a believer — one who knows with certainty that **their treasure is in heaven, therefore their heart yearns for heaven**. With our sights set on eternity, we are able to forget the baggage of the world we choose to put behind us and press on to "win the prize" — eternity with the Savior.

Third, we must remember we are not alone! In the 6th chapter of 2 Kings, we read how the Lord protected the city where the prophet Elisha was staying. The army of the King of Aram had surrounded the city and when Elisha's servant saw the forces that were massed against them, he was terrified. But the prophet told him, "Do not be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then he prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." The Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw that the hills surrounding the city were filled with horses and chariots of fire! An army of God's angels, bright and shining like fire, had surrounded the enemy's army.

Now, it is not likely that we will be allowed to see a heavenly host of angels standing by to do battle. But it is tremendously encouraging to know that we are not alone, and that God the Father has given all followers of Jesus the Holy Spirit — **the Helper**. And He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world! (1 John 4:4)

This is a vitally important truth. In the Gospel of John we read:

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

Thanks be to God, **we have the power of the Holy Spirit within us always!**

Looking ahead, the trajectory of 2018 is uncertain. Will Planned Parenthood be eviscerated and *Roe v. Wade* overturned? Will the cultural bullying of Christians become outright persecution? Will activist judges continue to push a radical agenda via the judicial system?

Yes, uncertainty abounds, but despite the darkening culture and fear of the unknown, we above all people have every reason to live victorious, joy-filled lives. When we are tempted to be fearful or worry, we need to remember these four points:

- ★ We are the unworthy recipients of God's grace and mercy and, as such, ought to live lives of exuberant gratitude, devoid of grumbling, and overflowing with joy.
- ★ With great joy and as a sign of our deep gratitude, we must make deposits in eternity to advance the kingdom of God.
- ★ If our heart and affections are anchored in eternity, our eyes will be focused forward, fixed on the prize of Christ Jesus that awaits us in heaven.
- ★ We are never alone. We are surrounded by God's heavenly host, mighty warriors who are ready to do battle for us **and** we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Will you join me in striving to make a difference in the new year? I challenge you to be salt and light in your families and communities, to be that vital cup of cold water that brings refreshment and life to our thirsty, dying culture.

Each one of us can make a tremendous difference. We can be used by God to impact the eternal destination of our fellow human beings. What an amazing privilege!

Finally, I challenge you to "do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. **Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky** as you hold firmly to the word of life."

In 2018, I pray we will all shine like stars in the sky to the glory of God! ★

Trump Speaks to March for Life

President Trump became the first President in American history to make live remarks to participants at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. last month.

Trump spoke to the hundreds of thousands of pro-lifers who descended on the nation's capital to memorialize the 45th anniversary of the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing the killing of children in their mother's womb.

In remarks delivered from the Rose Garden, President Trump described the March for Life as a "movement born out of love."

"You love your families, you love your neighbors, you love our nation, and you love every child, born and unborn, because you believe that every life is sacred--that

every child is a precious gift from God."

Trump announced the creation of a new federal agency dedicated to protecting the conscience rights of pro-life doctors and nurses, as described in the adjacent story.

He also reaffirmed his desire to sign legislation banning abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy, the point at which it is believed that the preborn child is able to experience extreme pain from the violence of an abortion "procedure."

On the same day as pro-lifers assembled on the National Mall, the U.S. House approved a bill called the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R. 37). This legislation is cosponsored by 90 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, including



the following Illinois Congressional members: **Mike Bost** (R-Carbondale), **Peter Roskam** (R-Barrington), **Rodney Davis** (R-Champaign), **John Shimkus** (R-Effingham), and **Daniel Lipinski** (D-Chicago).

The legislation would establish criminal penalties for abortionists who fail to provide medical care to infants who survive failed abortions. The bill would institute penalties for the intentional killing of a born-alive child of up to five years in prison. ★

Religious Freedom Gets a Boost

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) introduced a new division last month that will help to ensure religious freedom and conscience protections for individuals and organizations in the healthcare industry. The new Conscience and Religious Freedom Division will be part of the DHHS Office for Civil Rights, and was "established to restore federal enforcement of our nation's laws that protect the fundamental and unalienable rights of conscience and religious freedom."

It is refreshing to see this level of commitment to defending conscience protections and religious liberty across our nation. The U.S. Constitution clearly stakes out these fundamental rights for all Americans, and the establishment of this new Division within the DHHS will highlight the importance of protecting these rights, especially in the health care arena.

Healthcare workers can face situations where they are asked to perform actions, such as abortion or assisted suicide, that go against their religious convictions.



There are multiple federal statutes that are designed to protect healthcare workers from discrimination based on these religious convictions, but those statutes and similar constitutional rights have not been properly enforced, and have even been opposed, by government leaders in recent years. The Conscience and Religious Freedom Division will work to ensure that these laws are enforced and that physicians, nurses, and other healthcare workers are not punished for living out their religious convictions.

"Laws protecting religious freedom and conscience rights are just empty words on paper if they aren't enforced," said **Roger Servino**, the Director of the Civil Rights Office at DHHS. "No one should be forced to choose between helping sick people and living by one's deepest moral or religious convictions, and the new division will help guarantee that victims of unlawful discrimination find justice. For too long, governments big and small have treated conscience claims with hostility instead of protection, but change is coming and it begins here and now."

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★ Listen to the weekly Illinois Family Spotlight podcast on iTunes, Google Play, Sound Cloud, Pocket Casts, and Stitcher.

★ You can also listen to our podcasts on our website: ifiaction.org/podcast.



Apparently, the Trump Administration is continuing to make good on the pledge to protect and defend religious liberty. First, **President Trump** issued an Executive Order in May 2017 promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty, then Attorney General **Jeff Sessions** issued his October 2017 Memorandum for Executive Branch agencies, outlining all the federal laws and policies that protect religious liberty in our nation. Now the DHHS has announced the establishment of this new Division, and more is likely on its way. All of these bode well for the future of religious freedom in America. ★

Marijuana Experts Speak Out

As lawmakers move to legalize marijuana, the strong evidence of its negative impact is being ignored. **We believe voters want to know the facts and especially how legalization will impact their children and families.**

If you missed the Marijuana Panel of Experts, which was live-streamed on Facebook on January 25th, you can

view it here: [Facebook.com/illinoisfamilyinstitute/videos](https://www.facebook.com/illinoisfamilyinstitute/videos).

On February 6th, we are hosting another Panel of Experts. You can watch it live at [www.Facebook.com/IllinoisFamilyInstitute](https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisFamilyInstitute) or on our Youtube channel. ★



Prayer Requests . . .

Scripture exhorts us to pray for our elected officials and all those in authority so that **“we may live peaceful and quiet lives, godly and dignified in every way.”** (1 Tim. 2:2) Please join us in praying regularly for those in authority.

We must remember to keep in our prayers our members of Congress in Washington D.C., the lawmakers at the Illinois General Assembly in Springfield, local county board members, as well as our township and municipal officials. Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.”

- Pray that government officials and their staffs would heed those words of wisdom and reject the fallen humanistic voices

Please Pray...

...for the sanctity of life

- That Planned Parenthood’s plans to profit from the destruction of preborn babies would collapse here in Illinois and across the nation.
- That the U.S. Supreme Court would strike down laws that coerce pro-life medical professionals to give abortion referrals.

...for parental authority

- That parents, pastors and other community leaders would get involved in expressing their opinions — and moral outrage — at the godless philosophies that are being taught to children in government schools.
- That Christian parents would be convicted to intentionally impress Biblical values upon their children.

~ Proverbs 29:18

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.”

of the day. Pray for an outpouring of God’s Spirit in these gates of power, and for a revival of Judeo-Christian truths and principles in the law and culture of Illinois.

Pray for the upcoming elections. Pray for the wisdom and discernment to understand all the issues, and that Christians in Illinois would be motivated to vote their biblical values. ★



...Illinois families

- That voters in Cook County would vote to reject the referendum question on the primary ballot asking if marijuana should be legalized in the state of Illinois.
- That there would be a return to prayer and godly values in our families, churches and across the nation, and that Biblical wisdom would permeate Illinois communities, culture, and policy. Pray that God would raise up bold leaders in our churches who would not shrink back from engaging our culture for Christ.

...for Illinois Family Institute

- That IFI would continue to increase in favor at the state Capitol, with media, on social media, and with our allies in preserving the future for families.
- That God would continue to bless IFI with the resources to engage the culture with Biblical truths. ★

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