



Boldly Bringing a Biblical Perspective to Public Policy in the Land of Lincoln.

Newsletter | Fall 2023

For we are His workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God **prepared beforehand** that
we should walk in them.

EPHESIANS 2:10

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pro life. pro marriage. pro family.

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

On A Mission From God

The 1980 *The Blues Brothers* movie centered on a quest to raise property tax money to save an orphanage from being closed down.



Though targeted by a homicidal mystery woman, Neo-Nazis, and a country western band, and relentlessly pursued by Illinois State Troopers, they repeatedly reminded themselves that they were on “a mission from God.” They were **not** going to be distracted from their objective.

Jake and Elwood Blues cannot be mistaken for good role models, however, saving an orphanage from being shut down by the tax man is certainly a laudable mission. But what about us and our mission from God?

Many people in today’s culture forget that God calls them on a mission. To be honest, I even forget at times. It is way too easy to get distracted by life. Yet there are those around us who are wondering what the purpose of life is. They are asking, “What’s my mission?”

1 Corinthians 6:20 tells us that we were bought at a price... in order that we glorify God.

God Himself bought us, saved us, and cleaned us up to prepare us for the mission He has for each one of us. Ephesians 2:8-10 says,

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

We are redeemed – bought with a price through the broken body and shed blood of Jesus – and made alive *for His purpose!*

The Apostle Paul points out that the redeemed of God once walked according to the ways of this world and that we were dead spiritually, pursuing our own desires.

He tells us that by nature, we were children of wrath.

Now, some well-meaning people foolishly parrot the saying that “we are all God’s children.” No, that is NOT true. Paul tells us that before receiving God’s grace by faith we were children of wrath. In John 1:12-13, we are told that the redeemed of God become children of God *through faith*:

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 summarizes the Good News of the Gospel in two verses, stating that we are saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus’ perfect life, death, and resurrection. We cannot earn God’s grace apart from that. There is *nothing* we can do. No matter how good we are, we will always fall short of God’s perfect standard.

Faith is the act of trusting in Jesus Christ, the finished work He accomplished (“It is finished”) on Good Friday, and His victory over death on Easter Sunday.

Once we accept this free gift of God, we become adopted “children of God,” and we have a new mission. Some of the tasks in this mission are unique to each individual.

Other obligations, we all share. For example, God wants us to reflect Him and be His witness in this world. The Apostle Paul uses the phrase “Christ’s ambassadors” to help us understand that we should see ourselves as representatives of God.

God wants us to live our lives as a model for the world

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Illinois Family Institute



If You're Not Registered to Vote, Consider This

God has blessed America with the gift of self-government — a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” Voting is a privilege that millions of people in other parts of the world are denied.

But this unique blessing also comes with a tremendous responsibility. In Romans 13, we are told that all authorities are appointed by God. If you look at the first three words in our U.S. Constitution, you’ll find out who that authority is in America — “We the People...”

As Christians, we have a duty and a moral obligation to be involved in the democratic process. Imagine the IMPACT we could have on our government, its leadership, and our nation if we all simply registered to vote and voted our values! According to a 2020 Christian Post article,

“The share of registered voters in the United States who say they are Christian has declined by about 15% since 2008 while the number of religiously unaffiliated voters has nearly doubled, Pew Research Center data suggests.”

Add to this that various other trusted sources say between 15 to 30 million Christians are not even registered to vote. Is it any wonder that things are going in the direction pushed by humanists and atheists?

This is not good stewardship of God’s gift of self-government! In our apathy, we are shirking our responsibility to be salt and light. The results are what we see happening around us: LGBTQIA gender confusion all around us, godless indoctrination of our children, religious liberties eroding, violence and sexual deviancy abounding, and illicit drug use spiking. And the list goes on.

Edmund Burke said, “All that is essential for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”



Is it any surprise that Bible-believing Christians are sparsely represented in Springfield and Washington, D.C.? If we aren’t faithful in the little things that God has given us to do — like voting or communicating with our elected representatives — we shouldn’t be surprised that we aren’t successful when it comes to the bigger things.


Registering to vote is easy!

Did you know that you can register to vote online in Illinois? You can do so by visiting this State Board of Elections link: ova.elections.il.gov.

How many people do you know who have moved, gotten married and changed their name, or are turning voting age? If a teen is 17 years of age by the March 19, 2024 primary election, but will turn 18 by the November 5, 2024 general election, they are eligible to register and vote in the primary election. And for those who have not voted in recent elections, consider engaging them to become actively involved in impacting our nation’s future!

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ILLINOIS Family Institute

Faith, Family & Freedom Fall Banquet

Back by
Popular Demand!

Eric Metaxas

Author, Radio Host & Cultural Commentator



Friday, November 3, 2023

Bolingbrook Golf Club / 2001 Rodeo Drive, Bolingbrook, IL

Reservations before Sept. 4th / \$100

Eric Metaxas is the bestselling author of fourteen books, including his most recent *Letter to the American Church*; *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*; *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*; and *If You Can Keep It: The Forgotten Promise of American Liberty*. His books have been translated into twenty-five languages. The host of nationally syndicated radio and television shows and the acclaimed conversation series *Socrates in the City*, Metaxas is a prominent cultural commentator whose work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *the New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *The New Republic*, and *the Wall Street Journal*.

Proceeds Benefit Illinois Family Institute

For Reservations & Information

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“Leave The Kids Alone” Must Become a Cross-Cultural Demand of The Sane

Written by Peter Heck

Im pushing a new acronym: **LTKA – Leave the Kids Alone**. I’m an LTKA activist, and the number of things that concern those of us who champion this movement continue to grow.

Don’t get me wrong: Christians were warning that this assault on the innocence of young people was always part of the left’s agenda. You don’t champion someone like **Alfred Kinsey** and not have wicked intent when it comes to young people.

Like I said, you don’t revere a guy like that, you don’t build a monument and institute at Indiana University, you don’t formulate your entire “queer” ideology off his philosophies and methodologies, and not have child-endangering tendencies at your core.

And it’s a thorough corruption that we’re talking about.

At this point, everyone paying attention knows about the aggressive push for LGBTetc sex curriculum in elementary schools. Faux family-friendly corporations like the Walt Disney Company even go to bat for exposing children to sexual content in the classroom, willing to do immense damage to their brand for the cause. Viral video accounts like Libs of TikTok have done yeoman’s work in amplifying the perverted aims of more than just a handful of “queer” or “queer-friendly” educators.

But the damage extends well beyond manipulations of the mind. Think of all the politicians aligned on the left who have adopted the Orwellian language of the transgender cult, demanding legislation to safeguard “gender-affirming care” for kids.

To be clear, “gender-affirming care” is a euphemism for sexual mutilation and chemical castration. It is debatable that a grown adult should be considered mentally sound if they seek out such treatment. But to subject a minor to that kind of horror is an abominable form of child abuse that puts the West on par with some of the most primitive, indigenous cultures that mutilated their offspring to appease false gods.

Look at this gut-wrenching testimony about what we’re doing to our kids:

Scan Code.

This example of grotesque debauchery is anything but anecdotal. Hiding beneath a veneer of fun entertainment, pride parades occurring around the country regularly see children being willfully exposed to graphic nudity and simulated sex acts.

News reports and video surfaced from the Seattle parade where grown men were naked in front of several kids whose parents had placed them in the front row to observe the spectacle. *Newsweek* covered some of the outrage:

“I’m all for pride, but this is not that. Why were they not arrested?” William Scott Lowe tweeted. “Like I said, I believe in LGBTQ rights, but being naked in front of kids is a crime.”

“I believe it is called indecent exposure,” Chase Lanford wrote. “It is not an acceptable standard for anyone else, why should it

be acceptable for him to do simply because he is homosexual?”

It’s a good question. But Seattle wasn’t the only offending city. Reports and video out of Toronto cited

more of the same. And let’s not forget that pride parades were cancelled this year in several areas that banned nudity in front of children, as if the organizers felt the event lost its meaning if showing genitalia to kids was out.

The agenda seems clear, but for those who would doubt the ultimate objective of the LGBTetc movement here, allow them to speak for themselves: **LTKA. ▴**

Peter Heck is a writer, speaker, and teacher from Indiana. Peter is the lead opinion writer for “Not the Bee.” His opinions have also been published in the Washington Times, Washington Post, USA Today, and on CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News. A former radio host, Peter produces a daily podcast and has authored a number of books on Christians and the culture.



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For more information, scan the code or go to:
[settingthingsright.org/
summits/problem-solvers-conference/](https://settingthingsright.org/summits/problem-solvers-conference/)





Speech by Association *Written by Rick Claybrook, Esq.*

The SCOTUS decision in *303 Creative* gives those committed to free speech and the free exercise of religion much to celebrate. The Court held that a website designer's work is "speech" in a constitutional sense, and so she cannot be compelled to prepare messages for same-sex weddings, to which she has religious objections.

But artistic vendors are not the only ones who have religious and other objections to same-sex marriage. So do restaurateurs who cater receptions and rehearsal dinners or lessors of facilities for large events. What does *303 Creative* do for them? Nothing positive, and maybe something negative to the extent it leaves the impression that only "artistic" vendors have protection from civil rights and public accommodations laws that include the categories of sexual orientation and gender identity.

At base, all vendors who object to serving same-sex marriages, whether or not they are providing "artistic" services, have the same foundational problem: they all believe that same-sex marriage is wrong and that it would be immoral to assist or associate with such a wedding. If they all have the same foundational problem, why, then, do not artistic and non-artistic vendors have the same defenses to being compelled to support by their efforts a same-sex marriage (or be punished if they do not)? They do, on two levels.

First, refusing to service a same-sex wedding is not discrimination against sexual orientation; it is refusing to collaborate with a message, not refusing to serve because of the potential customer's status. For instance, if a black restaurateur refused to cater a white supremacist organization's banquet, no one would accuse him of racial discrimination against whites. That is because his discrimination is not against whites as a class, but against the message of these particular whites. The same was true for the web designer in *303 Creative*, as she gladly served gay customers when it did not involve preparing a message that violated her beliefs. Her refusal to service



same-sex weddings was not a substitute for discriminating against homosexuals as a class, and so it did not violate the public accommodations laws, as properly interpreted.

Of course, the civil rights and public accommodations laws are not always properly interpreted, as the Colorado courts proved in *303 Creative*. According to the Colorado courts, refusing to service same-sex weddings was unlawful discrimination against individuals due to their sexual orientation. Federal courts will hopefully not fall into this error when construing federal laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination against sexual orientation and gender identity, but they cannot do anything about states construing their own laws in this overly expansive way.

This brings us to the second defense for both artistic and non-artistic vendors objecting to serving same-sex marriages. The key speech involved is that of the gay couple, not that of the vendor. Even the artistic vendor, the website designer in *303 Creative*, is complaining that she is being forced to give voice to the message of the marriage participants, a message to which she has religious objections. Emanating from the First Amendment's rights of speech and assembly, there is a right not to associate with a message one finds objectionable, and that is the most fundamental right involved in these cases. Turning again to the black restaurateur, it is the difference between saying he

will not service any whites—which is discrimination against individuals because of their status as members of a protected class—and saying he refuses to facilitate or associate with a message of white supremacists, to which he has moral objections.

303 Creative reached the right result, and, certainly, artistic vendors can now safely rely on First Amendment protections for their "own" speech. Unfortunately, exactly when vendor services cross the line into speech is anything but clear.

The situation of wedding vendors is no different in essentials to that in *Hurley v. Irish-American Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Group of Boston*. The Court in the *303 Creative* opinion described *Hurley* as follows:

The Court held that Massachusetts's public accommodations statute could not be used to force veterans organizing a parade in Boston to include a group of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals because the parade was protected speech, and requiring the veterans to include voices they wished to exclude would impermissibly require them to "alter the expressive content of their parade."

While the Court identified the parade as "protected speech," that was not the crux of the case, which did not so much focus on the speech of the veterans as it did on the message of those the city would have required them to include in the parade. Thus, the city's action was unconstitutional because it would have compelled the veterans to facilitate the message of others (compelled speech) and also because it would force them to assemble with others with whom they did not wish to associate (compelled assembly or association). That was true irrespective of whether the veterans had a message of their own to proclaim.

Perhaps even more to the point is the SCOTUS decision in *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale*, in which it ruled that the Boy Scouts could not be compelled to accept a person who was openly gay because

continued ... ➤➤



Another BIG Win for Religious Liberty

WIN

As you may know, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) issued a number of key decisions as its “2022 term” came to a close. Much attention was given to the divided ruling in *303 Creative v. Elenis* (see article). Another important win, the case of *Groff v. DeJoy* received less attention, but also marked a major victory for religious liberty.

In this case, the Court unanimously ruled in favor of Gerald Groff, an Evangelical Christian who resigned from his job with the United States Postal Service (USPS) because he sought to honor the Sabbath by not working on Sundays. When he began work with the USPS in 2012, Groff was able to arrange his schedule to have Sundays off, but several years later the USPS began delivering packages for Amazon, which

required Sunday deliveries. Although some accommodations were made, Groff continued to receive “progressive discipline” for failing to work Sundays and ultimately resigned from his job in 2019.

The opinion began by stating: “Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires employers to accommodate the religious practice of their employees unless doing so would impose an ‘undue hardship on the conduct of the employer’s business.’” The Justices were undivided in their view about what employers must show to deny religious accommodations. Clarifying a rule from a previous case, the Court explained exactly what is meant by “undue hardship,” and said that employers have to show “more than a de minimis cost” in order to deny an employee a religious accommodation.



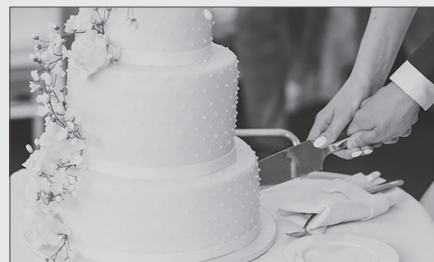
Looking at Title VII, the Court focused on the language of “undue hardship,” which it defined as accommodations that “would result in substantial increased costs in relation to the conduct of its particular business.” Importantly, the Court ruled out certain situations that cannot be used to suggest undue hardship and deny a religious accommodation, such as a “coworker’s dislike of religious practice and expression in the workplace.”

Praise God for another significant win for religious liberty. ▴

(continued from page 4)

“Dale’s presence in the Boy Scouts would, at the very least, force the organization to send a message, both to the youth members and the world, that the Boy Scouts accepts homosexual conduct as a legitimate form of behavior.” This, of course, was the message of another—a message the Boy Scouts did not wish to facilitate and with which it did not wish to associate. The Boy Scouts were not engaging in independent speech themselves when they accepted someone as a troop leader. Similarly, a vendor does not have to create speech as part of her services to facilitate the message of others through those services.

The rights of speech and assembly work hand in hand, or, as the Supreme Court has phrased it, they are “cognate.” And it is this combination right of expressive association that is under threat in the wedding vendors’ cases: public accommodations laws are being used to force vendors to associate with and facilitate a message of others. That unconstitutionally compels both speech



and assembly.

These close distinctions should not matter, because whether the vendor is an artist is not the source of the vendor’s objection to fostering the event with her services. The source is the message of the wedding participants, and that should be the focus. Both artistic and non-artistic vendors with the same objection to that message have the same protections from being forced to facilitate and associate with it. Refusal to serve because of an objection to facilitating their message is not discrimination against the marriage participants’ status or identity. But, if it is deemed to be, forcing any vendor to associate with the ceremony is unconstitutionally compelled speech and assembly. ▴

Mastercard Triggers Renewed Efforts to Legalize Pot

Mastercard has told U.S. banks to stop allowing marijuana purchases with its debit cards, highlighting the legal and financial gray area the industry exists within even as more states legalize the drug.



Mastercard said in an emailed statement Thursday that “the federal government considers cannabis sales illegal, so these purchases are not allowed on our systems.”

Josh Glasstetter, spokesperson for the U.S. Cannabis Council, said in a text message. “[The] announcement by Mastercard is a powerful reminder of the need for action by Congress.”

We can likely expect ramped up efforts to legalize marijuana at the federal level. ▴



Every Child Should Have a Chance to Flourish

Written by David E. Smith

Educational Freedom (aka school choice) is once again trending. There has been a noticeable domino effect over the past two years. Perhaps it's a delayed response to the crisis that many parents were forced to face as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns. Perhaps the renewed level of interest is born of parents growing increasingly weary of the far left-wing indoctrination going on in government schools. Perhaps it's an awareness that even with ample funding levels, year after year official reports demonstrate student proficiency and test scores are pitifully low.

Educational freedom initiatives promote and defend families as the primary foundation to society by acknowledging and strengthening the role of parents in their innate responsibility to educate and raise their children. The ultimate goal of educational freedom is to give parents the ability to educate their children as they see fit. No one wants to see their children thrive as much as parents. Moreover, applying free market principles to public, private, and home education opportunities will open new avenues for success in all areas of education. Where there is competition and innovation, there is success; where there is governmental

interference and control, there is stagnation.

Educational freedom is paramount to ensuring that every single child has an equal chance to flourish.

Teacher union lobbyists and government employees work against every school choice bill and scholarship program they can; they reject the need for parental control over their children's education. In doing so, they flatly dismiss the abilities of parents to educate their own children or even to make viable decisions on their behalf. Their assertions make it clear they disdain the role of parents in education by repeatedly showing that they don't respect parental input or opinions.

The education system is in crisis and there clearly needs to be a paradigm shift; a shift from fully taxpayer-funded government schools that spend absurd amounts of time and money on social engineering to those who focus on core subject matter, like math, science, history, and reading.

Educational Freedom would give every single K-12 student the ability to use a portion of their parents' taxes to choose which school or homeschool supplies/ curriculum they want their tuition to go towards. This would empower parents as



the chief educational decision-makers for their children.

Moreover, educational freedom wouldn't hinder or bind homeschooling families or private schools with any additional government regulations or supervisions. Let's do away with bureaucrats choosing which students get to be the winners and which students have to be the losers.

Parents, grandparents and taxpayers must rise up and demand change. The current system has failed and continues to fail our children. It is foolish to continue to stick with a system that is broken and that sacrifices the future of our children and our nation. How is this not "malpractice?"

It would be wise to end the reckless funding of bureaucratic systems and begin to empower parents. Parents, students, and taxpayers will reap the benefits.

If you want more information about home education, please call the IFI office or visit our friends at **Illinois Christian Home Educators (iche.org)**. ▲

Hunter Biden's Troubles Aren't Over

There is a good chance that you missed the big news out of Washington D.C. this summer with the testimony of two IRS whistleblowers who testified at a U.S. House Oversight Committee hearing in July. According to an article by *NewsBusters*, the so-called "mainstream" media failed to cover this important probe into the slow-walked Hunter Biden investigation.

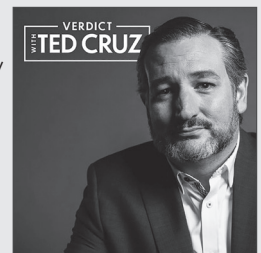
It all centers around the testimony of Gary Shapley and Joseph Ziegler, who allege that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) interfered in the tax investigation of Hunter Biden, the son of President Joe Biden.

Shapley is a supervisory special agent with the IRS Criminal Investigation Division. He testified that he and other IRS investigators had recommended charging Hunter Biden with far more serious crimes than what the court agreed to or what Biden agreed to plead guilty to. However, Shapley said that the DOJ intervened and pressured the IRS to drop the charges.

Ziegler is a 13-year IRS special agent with the Criminal Investigation Division. He testified that he witnessed federal prosecutors deviating from normal procedures in the Hunter Biden investigation. He also said that he was retaliated against after he raised concerns about the investigation.

The testimony of the two IRS whistleblowers has reignited a new push for potential impeachment proceedings against Attorney General Merrick Garland. U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, once again, said that he is open to an impeachment inquiry if the whistleblowers' claims hold up.

We highly recommend that you watch/ listen regularly to the "**Verdict with Ted Cruz**" podcast to learn more about this and other serious national issues. You can find this program on YouTube, Facebook and at **verdictpodcast.com**. ▲





On A Mission From God Written by David E. Smith (continued from page 1)

to see. And He wants to use us as His hands and feet to show His love to others. 1 Peter 2:15 tells us,

"For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men..."

These foolish men are those who live in open rebellion to His love, mercy, and grace.

But how do we know HIS Perfect will in *our* lives? Remember that in Ephesians 2:10, we are told,

"...we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

To be clear, good works are not something that we do to earn salvation. Rather, they spring up *as a result* of our salvation. When we are saved by grace through faith, we are given a new heart and a new desire to do good.

When we do good works, we are not only glorifying God but also helping to make the world a better place through sidewalk counseling, prison ministry, volunteering at a pregnancy center or food pantry, praying fervently for God to work in the hearts and minds of government officials, etc.

Take a look at Romans 12:2:

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. THEN you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — His good, pleasing, and perfect will."

I believe that the key to learning God's will for our lives is to be ready for the times when God wants to use us in special ways to bless, comfort, confront, or encourage others. We can do this by renewing our minds and understanding how God thinks by:

- Reading and meditating on the Word of God.
- Attending church.
- Fellowshiping with other Christians.
- Going to Bible studies.
- Mentoring younger Christians.
- Immersing ourselves in Christian conferences, videos, books, and events.
- Thanking Him for all His blessings.
- Praying:
 - For the Lord to guide you and guard your mind.
 - Asking God to search you and try you so that you know what to put off and what to put on in your life.
 - For the Lord for help in taking captive wrong thoughts and attitudes.
 - Scripture back to God.

In other words, we can soak God's thinking into our minds.

That's exactly how some of the great men and women of the Bible prepared themselves for God's purpose.

Remember, David prepared for that confrontation with Goliath long before that fateful day.

As a boy, he had spent his days out in the fields watching his father's sheep and meditating on the law of God "day and night" (Psalm 1:2).

So involved in this activity, David began to write songs that spoke of the glory of God found in Scripture, which he later

brought into the court of King Saul to ease Saul's tortured mind.

Thus, when David went out into the field to battle Goliath, he had long been prepared by this constant exposure to God's mindset and was able to say with confidence,

"You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied." —1 Samuel 17:45

David had allowed God's thinking to TRANSFORM his own. But there is a kind of thinking that competes with God's.

Our post-Christian culture constantly tries to conform us to its way of thinking with books, social media, news media, movies and TV shows, music, peer pressure, and even the video games that we play.

We've got to be careful and discerning about what we allow into our homes and our minds. In Galatians 6:7-9 the Apostle Paul warns us,

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

Why am I emphasizing Paul's warning against deception? Because it is possible that we could MISS OUT on God's will!

The Bible says I can miss out on God's will by:

1. Conforming my mind to the pattern of this world (Romans 12:2).
2. Putting myself first – thinking more highly of myself than I ought to (Romans 12:3).
3. Believing lies (2 Thessalonians 2:11).
4. Keeping bad company (1 Corinthians 15:33).

By contrast, Paul talks about the kind of thinking that will ALWAYS allow us to be in God's will. In 2 Corinthians 8:3-5, he praises the actions of the churches in Macedonia:

"For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God."

In other words, the churches in Macedonia were doing the will of God BECAUSE they put God first in the choices they made.

The churches in Macedonia were doing things beyond their abilities BECAUSE they prioritized the things of God, and as a result, God made great use of them.

I have zero doubt: if we put God first in our decision-making, He will use us. And the opportunities in this polarized culture abound. The contrast between good and evil is getting clearer and clearer.

Jesus's calling and mission is for you, and it's for me.

He tells us:

Follow ME. Seek Me. Love ME. Conform to My image.



Boldly Bringing a Biblical Perspective to Public Policy in the Land of Lincoln.





Celebrating Constitution Day (September 17th) *Written by David E. Smith*

The U.S. Constitution was created 236 years ago and ratified on June 21, 1788, when New Hampshire became the ninth state to approve it. The other states that ratified the Constitution in 1788 were Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, and South Carolina. Rhode Island finally ratified it on May 29, 1790.

It all started thanks to a five-man committee, which had the duty of drafting a formal statement of Independence from British rule. The truths and principles outlined in the Declaration of Independence have shaped the course of American history in many ways and continue to shape much of the work that we do at IFI to preserve, uphold and/or restore small government and a Christian culture.

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, ...”

Our Founding Fathers had the foresight to acknowledge these God-given rights were an integral part of the creation of a new country. In stark contrast to a monarchy, America was to have a federal government of the people, by the people, and for the people. This is why we have regular elections. This type of accountability helps to keep leaders from assuming too much power and from failing to act in the best interest of the people they represent.

The stands that Illinois Family Institute takes are based on many of the values expressed in our founding documents. In 2023, IFI upholds our own **Declaration of Pro-Family Values:**

As theologically orthodox, Bible-believing Christians, our faith in the infallible, authoritative word of God informs our faith, and is indispensable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

Without the Sanctity of Life, all other rights are moot. The right to life is self-explanatory, but bigger than this, we believe that Scripture teaches us that the unborn are every bit as human as the rest of us and deserve equal rights and protections. (See Psalm 139)

We believe that raising healthy, productive, and God-fearing children is the responsibility and right of parents. Mothers and fathers are the best ones to decide on where and how to educate them and involve them in Christian community (not a village). The government should not interfere with this except in cases of abuse or neglect.

As Bible-believing Christians, we believe that Satan is “the father of lies,” and that our Lord and Savior appeared on earth to testify to Truth. In fact, long ago, Jesus identified Himself as “the Truth, the Way and the Light.” Our call to follow Him and to be like Him means we can never intentionally lie or pretend that women are men or vice versa.

This pursuit of Truth prohibits us from using opposite-sex pronouns when referring to confused men who wish they were women or confused women who wish they were men.

The right to privacy, modesty, and safe spaces requires that we maintain separate restrooms, locker rooms, showers, and changing rooms to protect our wives, daughters, sisters, and children. Objectively male persons who are identifying as a female do not have the right to invade these spaces.

Scripture also exhorts us to be sober and alert to the schemes of the devil. The legalization and promotion of high potency marijuana, psychedelics, and other dangerous mind-altering drugs in our culture is undermining decades of warnings of the dangers of drug use and will create more deaths, crime, violence, and brain damage.

Going back to the part about the



consent of the governed, this is where you come in. We highly encourage you to vote in every election you are able. We also urge you to actively and effectively engage and communicate with your elected officials once they are in office. Sharing your opinions about important issues is a vital part of how our elective form of government is intended to operate.

As you know, some government agencies have become weaponized to punish and/or intimidate political rivals. Far left-wing activists are relentless in the pursuit of wicked goals. They are not above lying, cheating, defaming, and resorting to payoffs. Rhetorical, social, and political malfeasance is, in their view, a justifiable means to their destructive ends—especially when they know full-well we will not reciprocate in kind.

We will not sink to their level. We will not lie, cheat, or slander in our pursuit of good. But we can and should refuse to give ground! We should never allow atheists and humanists unfettered control of government.

Please understand, this is not merely an ideological fight between the right and the left or between conservatives and Leftists. This is a war between good and evil that has existed since the beginning of time. As Christians, we must gird ourselves as for battle. We must be prepared and willing to boldly engage in the public square.

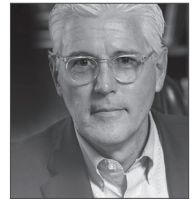
Our opponents have three powerful allies on their side: academia, media, and the entertainment industry. They control the culture-shaping megaphones that relentlessly blare their body and soul-destroying messages into the hearts and minds of Americans, specifically targeting our impressionable children.

continued ... ➤ ➤



An Open Letter to The Church About Pride Month

Written by Dr. Everett Piper



From the ubiquitous rainbow flags and public drag celebrations to the quasi-aborted attempts by retailers such as Target to normalize what, just five seconds ago, every average American would have said was absurd, the message is clear: “Join us in celebrating every sexual deviancy known to man, or we will cancel you, shun you, shame you, and punish you, for your intolerable intolerance.”

In the face of such societal deconstruction, how are we to respond? More specifically, how should traditional Christians react in a market square of ideas that is so laden with antipathy for the traditions and teachings of the gospel that just yesterday were assumed to be the cultural glue that held our country together?

The following is intended to be an

intramural discussion.

This message is for those who claim to hold to a biblical worldview and the redemptive truth of the gospel. If you’re not a follower of Christ, you can listen in if you want, but please recognize the context: This is for the church and those who say they believe in Jesus.

So here it is.

Dear Church:

What is wrong with you? How did you become so blind? Why did you stoop so low? Who removed your mind, and when did you darken your soul?

If I’ve said it once, I’ve said it a hundred times: When you buy the lie that your identity is nothing more than the sum total of your inclinations, there is no limit to the lengths you will go to normalize your sin.

Surely you can see that this is the exact opposite of biblical holiness, can’t you?

Do you no longer believe in 2 Corinthians 5:17? Are you not a new creation in Christ? Hasn’t the old passed away? Haven’t all things become new? Have you given up the blessed hope of transformation? Have you actually come to the point where you think you’re defined by your desires? Have you forgotten that Jesus himself explicitly said, “You must be born again,” and that he never affirmed anyone simply because they were “born that way”?

Your message of “love is love” is not love. It is enablement, and it is cruel. It is the opposite of sanctification. It is sinful, and it is wrong.

Your “affirming” mantra is not only bad theology, but it is terrible ontology and anthropology. When you accept the definition of the person as being “gay, trans, bi, queer,” or even cis, for that matter, you are admitting that you think

those who have a given sexual appetite are defined by that desire. You are essentially saying that you think, “That’s just who they are.” You implicitly place no value on repentance, revival, renewal, confession and self-control.

This is the ultimate insult to God and God’s creation. We are the imago Dei; we are made in the image of God. We are not defined by our bellies or our libidos. We are not animals. We are not the imago dog.

We (the body of Christ) should never cede any ground in Satan’s game to redefine God and redefine His people. The entire nomenclature of LGBTQ and Pride, by definition, consigns people to their own unique “communities,” i.e., gulags. This balkanization is not the way of Christ or the way of the church. We are better than this. We are more than this. We should love people enough not to label them in such a demeaning way.

To our shame, even nonbelievers such as Gore Vidal and Michel Foucault understood this. Foucault once said, “We are creating a hermaphrodism — a false species.”

Vidal later added: “There is no more such a thing as a homosexual person than there is a heterosexual person. These are behavioral adjectives.”

A final word: It never ceases to amaze me how those of you who wave your rainbow banners of “love trumps hate” in your

respective churches become so vitriolic when presented with a cogent argument that challenges the vacuity of your moral paradigm: Head pastors and parachurch leaders posting ad hominem attacks dripping with mockery and sarcasm. Youth pastors call anyone who is 10 years their senior “judgmental and old.” And all under the banner of “acceptance,” “respect” and “inclusion.”

Do you not see the irony? Are you blind to the fact that you are sawing off the very branch upon which you sit? The words of Jesus come to mind here: “Physician, heal thyself.” Or perhaps those of Isaiah: “Woe unto him who calls good evil and evil good.” And dare I add, woe unto him who calls love hate and hate love?

Yours is not the good news of the gospel. It is not the message of Christ. It is sin, and if Jesus were still in his grave, he’d be rolling over. But as it is, he sits upon his throne, preparing to utter some of the most frightening words known to man: “Depart from me; I never knew you.” ▀

This article was originally published by The Washington Times.

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(continued from page 8)

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul exhorts the recipients, and us, “be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.”

Similarly, the Psalmist reminds us, “be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.” Now is the time to toughen up and stop playing it safe; we must speak

and act boldly, knowing that we are on the right side of heaven, if we boldly stand with Almighty God! ▀

Boldly Bringing a Biblical Perspective to Public Policy in the Land of Lincoln.



Gender Malpractice Lawsuits

Soren Aldaco, a 21-year-old Texas woman who is no longer confused about her biology, is suing her doctors in excess of \$1 million over trans-medical interventions she received as a teenager.



The complaint says these "medical" providers, in their pursuit of experimental gender-affirming therapies, administered a series of ruinous procedures and treatments to Soren, who, at the time was a vulnerable teenager struggling with mental health issues. The suit says Soren's experiences with these providers shocked the conscience, and they've led to Soren's permanent disfigurement and profound psychological scarring.

Soren was put on a large dose of cross-sex hormones as part of her treatment, and

she underwent a double mastectomy to remove her healthy breasts at age 19. She went on to suffer severe complications.

The reckless level of disregard and indifference that these medical professionals had for Soren's health, safety, and wellbeing, both physically and psychologically, is horrendous.

Another case involves a young female named **Prisha Moseley**. She filed a suit against her doctors in July – the first of its kind in North Carolina. Mosley says she was just 16 years-old when she was put on a path to medically transition and claims healthcare professionals lied to her both by telling her that she could become a boy and "grow a penis," and by withholding critical information about permanent loss



of function from such treatments.

Another young woman who is no longer deceived has been very vocal about the abuses she experienced. **Chloe Cole** is suing the

Kaiser Permanente healthcare system for her transgender treatment, which included puberty blockers and a double mastectomy.

Chloe has been to Washington D.C. to testify to Congress about her horrible experience, saying, "My childhood was ruined along with thousands of detransitioners that I know through our networks. This needs to stop. You alone can stop it. Enough children have already been victimized by this barbaric pseudoscience. Please let me be your final warning." ▀



Abortion Pill Rescue

According to Planned Parenthood's Guttmacher Institute, chemical abortions accounted for 54% of all facility-based abortions in the U.S. in 2021. This two-drug regimen has ended countless lives, but what happens if the mother changes her mind after taking the first pill?

The



Abortion Pill Rescue Network is there to help! Women can call the around-the-clock hotline at **877-558-0333** or go to **AbortionPillReversal.com**. A physician will start the pregnant woman on a medication called progesterone, which can safely reverse the effects of mifepristone. If intervention can occur within 48 hours of taking the first pill, this will reverse the effects for two-thirds of the cases. Statistics show that thousands of lives have been saved through the abortion pill reversal protocol! ▀

Marriage on the Decline

One in four Americans, 25% are now hitting the 40-year mark without having ever tied the knot. In 2010 it was 20%. In 1980 it was 6%. Extrapolating from that, some project that more than a third of today's adults in their 20's will never marry. In an interview with Morning Wire podcast, **Brad Wilcox**, a sociologist at the University of Virginia and fellow at the Institute for Family Studies offered a dire warning when we asked him about these new numbers from the Pew Research Center.

"We know that Americans who get married and stay married are much more likely to be prospering financially. They have about eight times the assets as they head into retirement in their 50's compared to their peers who are single or divorced. They're also much more likely to be happy with their lives. About twice as likely to be happy with their lives compared to their peers who are not married. So there are just tons of ways in which marriage provides financial, social, and emotional benefits to Americans today."

He pointed to the stark increase in deaths of despair that we've seen related to suicide, alcoholism, and drug abuse. Those have been overwhelmingly concentrated among working class men who are not married.

Drifting away from God, His Word, and church attendance, we are becoming increasingly secular. Faith and devotion to Biblical values correspond to higher marriage rates.

We ignore God at our own peril! ▀



Springfield Update

◀◀ Scan this QR code with your phone camera to view the bills in which IFI has taken a position. Or call the IFI office for a hard copy.





Magic Mushrooms are Next

Written by Kathy Valente

Big Marijuana Inc. has saturated our state with \$1.5 billion in sales last year alone. And State Representative La Shawn Ford (D-Chicago) hopes to further expand the drug culture in Illinois.

Rep. Ford is the chief sponsor of HB 1, which sets the stage for more drugs on the streets and in our communities. While HB 1 hasn't moved yet, we know from many years of experience that it's only a matter of time. See Springfield Update for information on other drug-related bills.

HB 1 creates the Compassionate Use and Research of Entheogens Act for the purpose of legalizing **psilocybin**, among other hallucinogenic drugs, which is **the psychedelic ingredient in magic mushrooms** and a Schedule 1 drug. There we go with that word "compassionate" again.

As a way to justify legalization, in Ford's eyes, HB 1 starts out with everything we've done wrong trying to keep drugs off the streets and out of our communities through criminalization. According to the text, we've spent too much money, circulated too much misinformation, made drug use less safe, and attached unnecessary stigmas – all contributing to the increase of drug use, in his limited opinion. So, Ford's solution is to remove restrictions and legalize everything.

The "harm reduction tools," which Ford wants in facilities that offer "psilocybin services," include drug-checking kits, scales, and capsules and would allow "users to make safe and more accurate, evidence-based decisions about their personal use of these substances." What user wouldn't like to get these free "tools" from the State to make using illegal substances easier? Common sense tells us that these so-called "tools" would inevitably increase drug use, and at taxpayer expense.

HB 1 lays out the groundwork for "psilocybin services" taking place in "administration sessions" for "clients," which is a fancy way of saying they will provide facilities where people over 18 can hallucinate with a paid Dept of Public Health licensed "facilitator" present.

To make the case that psychedelics are

safe for the purpose of legalization, HB 1 relies on sketchy "research" to support the use of psychedelic compounds to treat mental health and other disorders such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, PTSD, and headaches.

And there you have it. This is right out of the "medical marijuana" handbook, which was right out of "Big Tobacco's."

'It's safe because it has medicinal properties because we say it does. Therefore, it should be legal.' That's how they think. They want to license, regulate, and make available these psychedelics to anyone 18 and older. This is very serious.

But they've gotten ahead of themselves, because a few pages into the bill, you'll find that a person does not have to have **any** medical or mental condition in order to engage in "psilocybin services."

And it's not just psilocybin that they want to decriminalize and legalize. The bill also mentions dimethyltryptamine, ibogaine, and mescaline – all entheogens/hallucinogens/psychedelics.

Let's take a look at what an entheogen is and what it's used for:

From Wikipedia: "Entheogens are psychoactive substances that induce alterations in perception, mood, consciousness, cognition, or behavior for the purposes of engendering spiritual development or otherwise in sacred contexts. Anthropological study has established that entheogens are used for religious, magical, shamanic, or spiritual purposes in many parts of the world."

Mark A. Hoffman in *Toxicology in Antiquity* (second Addition) 2019, states in his abstract: "The Mystery Religions of the ancient world frequently, **if not always**, employed the use of psychoactive drugs or entheogens to induce altered states of consciousness." (emphasis added)

Entheogens are psychedelics most often used in spiritual rituals. This raises an important question. Is La Shawn Ford



planning to open state-sponsored New Age religious facilities?

This is wrong on so many fronts. How can allowing mind-altering drugs to be made easily available ever be a good thing? Shame on lawmakers whose job it is to protect its citizenry and do what's best to help families flourish!

Moreover, what message are they sending to the children and families of Illinois? Say "yes" to drugs? Say "yes" to addiction and a life of mediocrity? That's the message we are hearing.

Please contact your state lawmakers. Urge them to reject **all bills** that decriminalize and legalize **any** additional Schedule 1 Drugs. Tell them families are suffering enough already as a result of the foolish legalization of marijuana and the lack of enforcement of other highly addictive drugs. Tell your lawmakers that it's their job to pass laws that strengthen families, not tear them down.

Scripture is clear that when we disobey God's plan for His creation, we open the door to demonic activity. It's much better NOT to open that door. God **always** knows what's best.

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

1 Peter 5:8-10

"...if you refuse to do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires you, but you must master it." Genesis 4:7

"...you are slaves to the one you obey, whether you are slaves to sin leading to death, or to obedience leading to righteousness."

Romans 6:16

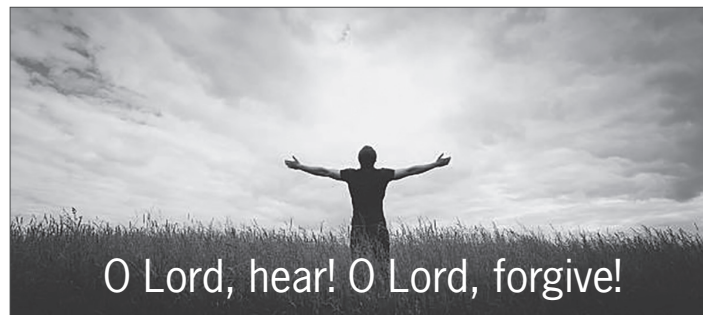
"Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires."

Romans 6:12 ▀

Prayer Requests . . .

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: “**Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned and done wrong.** We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from Your commands and laws.” — Daniel 9:4-5

O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. **O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act!** Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.” — Daniel 9:18-19



“Now, therefore,” says the Lord, “Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” So rend your heart, and not your garments; **Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.** — Joel 2:12-13

Please Pray . . .

Lament for our national sins

- Ask God to forgive us for the shedding of innocent blood, whether it is at the hands of an abortionist or a gang member.
- Ask God to forgive us for culturally accepting sexual chaos and the devolution of the marriage bed.
- Ask God to forgive us for teaching immoral and perverse lessons to innocent children in our schools, libraries, and media.
- Ask God to remind us of His standards of righteousness, which will guide and protect our families from the consequences of sin.
- Ask God to move in our state and nation and renew in us a hunger for the Word of God and to personally stand firm for what is right.
- Ask God to give Christian leaders the courage to speak out boldly in the public square for what is good, true, and holy.

Sanctity of Human Life

- Pray for opportunities to share the truth about the sanctity of human life - from conception to natural death.
- Pray for the sidewalk counselors and prayer warriors who stand peacefully in front of abortion mills to intercede for those stumbling toward death. May God have mercy!
- Pray for Peter Breen and the Thomas More Society as they challenge SB 1909 in court. May God grant them favor in the eyes of the judge.

For our families and communities

- Pray that parents and grandparents would seriously take to heart their God-given responsibility to train children in the way of the Lord.
- Pray that fathers return to their families as strong leaders in the faith.
- Consider “adopting” a government official, Hollywood celebrity, news media personality, talk show host, etc. to pray for this month. Pray for their salvation & spiritual growth.
- Please pray for God’s help and justice in America and Illinois. Pray that our government officials’ consciences are pricked to enable them to see the horrors of every sin they are involved in or perpetuating.
- Pray for an end to public corruption in Illinois and in Washington D.C. Pray that wickedness would be exposed and rooted out.
- Thank God for how He has preserved and blessed our nation over our 245 years of history. ▲

All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the Lord,

And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You. Psalm 22:27

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