



# ILLINOIS Family Institute

Promoting marriage, family, life & liberty in the Land of Lincoln

Newsletter | Spring 2016

*For our struggle is not against*

flesh and blood, but against the rulers,  
against the authorities, against the powers  
of this dark world...

— Ephesians 6:12



**PRO LIFE.  
PRO MARRIAGE.  
PRO FAMILY.**

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

**M**y family and I recently had the opportunity to hear about the great work being done in South Sudan by a man named William Levi. During his presentation, in which he detailed many of the projects underway in a city of 5,000, he stated that the Christians in South Sudan are praying for Christians here in America.

My mind focused quickly on those words. *They* are praying for *us*?!?!

Levi explained that the United States is *the* beacon of hope for the entire world. In the eyes of many around the globe, the world's well-being is, in large part, dependent on the continued well-being of the United States. Surprisingly, Levi wasn't primarily talking about the monetary wealth of this country. He was referring to the long-established liberties of our nation.

His comments reinforced for me the validity and urgency of our mission and shed new light on the importance of what we are doing in the public square. Our efforts to defend Judeo-Christian values at home in Illinois and to preserve religious liberty are not just for our benefit

and our posterity. The work we are committed to is so much greater. It not only affects our immediate neighbors and fellow believers whom we are called to love, but I now understand that our bold stand in the public square directly impacts our global neighbors and brothers and sisters in Christ all around the world.

Romans 12:2 states: "...Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." The advance of Christianity turned the Roman world on its head! From a position of political impotence, early Christians made such a profound impact, not only by spreading the Gospel but by living the Gospel, that they literally upended the corrupt and perverse Roman culture that surrounded them.

Likewise, by the manner in which we live our lives, we also are charged to fulfill Jesus' command to "disciple the nations." (Matthew 28:19) In essence, today's believers are called to be world-changers, just like the first century Christians.

Viewed in light of these scriptures, our dedication to preserving liberty, specifically religious liberty, is paramount and far-reaching. In the 21st century, Christianity is spreading and penetrating farther and deeper than ever before — in Muslim strongholds across the globe, in Africa, and throughout South Sudan — precisely because Americans have been afforded the liberties to live out the Gospel as they pursue religious training, missionary work, and humanitarian efforts at home and abroad.

Christian love and genuine concern for others compel us to exercise our right to religious liberty as we organize food pantries, provide homeless shelters, become foster parents, operate pregnancy resource centers, and reach out to those struggling with immoral sexual behaviors.

Our Constitutionally-mandated right to religious liberty is also why we encourage Christians in Illinois to take an active role in the governance of our



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## Religious Freedom Under Fire

by Micah Clark

According to a new national survey from LifeWay research, a growing number of Americans believe that religious liberty is now in decline in the U.S.

Here are the results of the LifeWay poll:

- Two-thirds of those surveyed (63%) say that Christians in America face an increasing intolerance. That's a 13-point increase from 2013.
- A nearly identical amount (60%) say that religious liberty is on the decline in America.
- Among ministers, 70% of pastors believe that religious freedom is in decline in America.
- The perception that religious liberty is on the decline in America is "growing rapidly."
- People of faith are more sensitive toward what they see as intolerance. Seventy percent of Christians, 82% of self-identified evangelicals and 76% of those who regularly attend religious services once a week see more intolerance against them than they have in the past.
- On the contrary, a sizeable minority (43%) think that Christians complain too much about how they are treated. This finding in and of itself may or may not be connected to a growing religious intolerance. Many people of faith specifically fear efforts to silence them or limit their free speech rights.



... say that religious liberty is on the decline in America.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Vote



IFI recently reported that PayPal, in an act of extraordinary hypocrisy, announced its plans to expand into Cuba while canning its plans to expand into North Carolina because the state is determined to keep its public bathrooms and locker rooms safe for women and children.

Feel helpless? Now conservatives and people of faith can fight back with their wallets.

2<sup>nd</sup> Vote is a group dedicated to helping us know where our money is really going when we buy a product, eat at a restaurant or support an organization. They rate companies based on: Corporate Welfare, Environment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Rights, Marriage, and Pro-Life.

Visit [www.2ndvote.com](http://www.2ndvote.com).

## Target Puts Women and Children at Great Risk

Target is now opening their bathrooms and changing rooms for gender-confused people. This means that you or your daughter could be sharing a bathroom or changing room with a fully grown man who masquerades as a woman.



Target said, "We welcome transgender team members and guests to use the restroom or fitting room facility that corresponds with their gender identity."

*Every person's privacy and safety matters!*

Contact Target and let them know what you think 800-440-0680.

from the **Executive Director** — **David E. Smith** *continued...* *The Gospel is our beacon of hope.*

communities, because **government, like marriage and family, is an institution God created for His glory and for the well-being of mankind.**

While the 2016 Presidential election season has been extremely frustrating and indicates, yet again, that we have reached a new low in our social and political culture, it's time we face facts — the race for the White House is not as important as we tend to make it out to be. Truth be told, **believers and churches throughout America have a far greater impact on our culture than the influence of any Chief Executive who occupies the Oval Office.**

Yet, regardless of the messiness of the process, the depravity of our culture, or

the apathy of some Christians, those of us who are wholeheartedly dedicated to following Christ must be willing to stand firm and do our part to make a difference. Dereliction of duty is reprehensible, even when the duty is tough. And dereliction of duty is especially reprehensible when I recall William Levi's statement — the Christians of South Sudan are praying *for us!* (And we should pray *for them!*)

Though our task may seem hopeless or beyond our ability, we are being lifted up before the throne of grace by the prayers of the body of Christ in South Sudan. Praise God for the fervent prayers of these believers! Praise God for the prayers and support of believers here in Illinois! Praise

God for the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us!

At all times and in all situations, we can faithfully accomplish whatever task the Lord sets before us because we are equipped and empowered by His word, by His Spirit, and by the prayers of His people. When we rest in God's sovereignty, we readily relinquish our fear of failure or need to control, and instead follow where He leads, confidently obeying and entrusting the results to Him. May you be a blessing to those in your home, in your church, and in the public square as you live a life transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

# Christian B&B Case Not Over

by Laurie Higgins, Cultural Analyst

At the end of March, we learned that the “discrimination” case against the Christian owner of the Timber Creek Bed and Breakfast in Paxton, Illinois, **Jim Walder**, was settled, with the Illinois Human Rights Commission (HRC) deciding that Mr. Walder should be fined \$80,000 and be required to offer his facility to a homosexual couple to celebrate their civil union.

We understand that Mr. Walder and his attorney plan to file an “exception” to this ruling, which means the case will go before a panel.

Here is what Judge Michael R. Robinson of the HRC ordered:

- Pay \$15,000 each to Todd and Mark Wathen as compensation for their emotional distress arising out of the issue.
- Cease and desist from violating the Human Rights Act by denying same-sex couples access to its facilities and services for marriages and civil unions.
- Offer the Wathens access to the facility, within one year, for an event celebrating their civil union.
- Pay the Wathens’ attorneys \$50,000 in fees and \$1,218 in costs.

ACLU attorney **John Knight** has erroneously stated that “For the first time, the Human Rights Commission has made clear that owners of businesses serving the public in Illinois cannot pick and choose who [*sic*] to serve based on their personal religious views.”

“Progressives” can’t seem to get it through their dogma-drenched minds that Christians in wedding-related businesses are not deciding *whom* to serve. They are deciding which kinds of events to host, serve, facilitate, and profit from.

Attorney **Betty Tsamis**, who represents the Wathens, made a similar claim but got dangerously close to inadvertently acknowledging the truth: “It would have been shameful to reverse this history simply because some business owners object to the legal protections afforded same-sex relationships.”

Tsamis veered slightly off-message by focusing on “same-sex” (i.e., homoerotic) relationships rather than persons. Her slip suggests the truth that it is a type of volitional *activity* and ceremonies that solemnize and celebrate it that many people of faith, including Orthodox Jews, Muslims, and orthodox Christians, cannot in good conscience serve.

Many Christians are confused by the accusation that Christian business owners are inconsistent or even hypocritical when they refuse to serve homosexuals but do not refuse to serve people who engage in other sins. This confusion arises because Christians have not thought through the issue carefully and because their church leaders have not helped them think through it. Consequently, Christians are viewing it through the darkened lens provided by homosexual activists.

The issue is not about Christians refusing to serve people because they are sinners. *All* people are sinners. The question is whether Christians have the moral right to serve, host, facilitate, participate in and profit from *events that celebrate sin*. Christian business owners serve sinners every day—including those guilty of the sin of homosexuality—and have no opposition to doing so. Baronelle Stutzman, the elderly Washington State florist who is being sued for refusing to provide floral arrangements for a homosexual wedding, had, in fact, sold flowers many times over the course of years to the very same homosexual man who is suing her. She didn’t refuse to serve him. She refused to use her labor and profit from a particular *type of event*: an event that *celebrates sin*.

If a man who holds racist views were to ask a Christian B&B owner if he could rent the B&B for for his two-year old daughter’s birthday party, it would be morally legitimate for the Christian to rent it to him. If, however, the racist man were to ask the B&B owner to rent the B&B for a KKK recruiting event and celebration of the KKK, the Christian should refuse. The father remains a sinner in both cases, but only the KKK event celebrates and



promotes sin.

Similarly, if a polyamorist were to ask to rent the B&B for her parents’ anniversary, the Christian owner would be morally justified in renting it to her. But if the polyamorist were to ask to rent the B&B for a commitment ceremony for her and her four partners of assorted sexes, he should refuse. The B&B owner is not rejecting the person. He is refusing to serve and profit from certain types of events.

Business owners have every right to determine what types of products they will produce and what types of events they will serve. They have the right to choose to make wedding cakes while refusing to make anti-wedding cakes. They have the right to choose to make wedding floral arrangements while refusing to make faux-wedding floral arrangements. They do not have a moral right to refuse to sell a cupcake to a customer merely because he is homosexual.

While the Left continues to add conditions (all sexual in nature and behaviorally constituted) to anti-discrimination policies and laws, they are bit by bit removing religion. It is imperative that we speak out against this unjust erosion of religious liberty. The First Amendment guarantees the right to the “free exercise” of religion, intrinsic to which is the right to act upon beliefs regarding the morality of activities and behaviors. 🌿

(Washington Examiner, March 31, 2015)

**“There is no such thing as medical marijuana.”**

**Says Dr. Stuart Gitlow,**  
president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine. Backing him are the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

# Prayer Requests . . .

“Wake Up America” is the theme for this year’s National Day of Prayer (NDP). The verse that was chosen to highlight this theme comes from Isaiah 58:1a —

*“Shout it aloud, do not hold back.  
Raise your voice like a trumpet.”*



This is something that IFI has been urging our subscribers to do for years now, and it corresponds with our motto: “Boldly bringing Biblical perspectives to public policy.”

The lack of engagement by people of faith has only driven an increase in family and societal breakdown. It is the result of denying the precepts of God and turning our back on Him as a society. Self-centeredness and humanism have replaced love for God and love for our neighbor as the bywords of society.

We must continue to focus on prayer, not just on one day of the year, or throughout the month, but daily. Pray humbly, beseeching God for a return and revival in Illinois and across the union. We see what sin has reaped; now let’s see what earnest prayer will bring forth.

## Please Pray...

### ...for the Protection of Life

- for a key abortion case before the U.S. Supreme Court in which a Texas law requiring that 1.) abortion clinics comply with all of the same health and safety regulations that other ambulatory surgical centers have; and 2.) “doctors” performing abortions have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the abortion clinic. These are reasonable health regulations that pro-abortion groups are fighting, only proving that the issue of abortion is not about the health and safety of women.
- against HB 887 in the Illinois General Assembly. This bill would amend various insurance codes to keep a policyholder with a family plan from knowing that others are getting “sensitive health services” related to “reproductive health, including, but not limited to, family planning, maternity, abortion, fertility, transgender-related care, and services for HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

### ...for the Sanctity of Marriage

- that legislators and judges would awaken to the truth of marriage as only between a man and a woman. Marriage is not an invention of man that can be molded and adapted to human desires, but an institution of God — adopted by societies — to be honored and protected. Government has a role in promoting this institution for the well-being of our culture.

### ...for Government Officials

- that they would govern with wisdom for the “welfare of the city” (Jer. 29:7), not for personal gain or for the advantage of a favored few. Their concern must be for the well-being of all.
- that God would give them wisdom in every decision and help them to think clearly. Pray that God would grant them discernment and common sense so they’ll be strong and effective leaders. Pray that they would govern with integrity.

### ...for Parental Authority

- that parents across Illinois would wake up to the increasingly hostile and incendiary dangers in government schools. Values-neutral means — in many cases — values-absent; as many public schools are promoting homosexual behavior, transgenderism, abortion “rights,” and a humanistic worldview. Parents need to insure that their children — and their children’s peers — are taught biblical truth.
- Pray that Christian parents you know are convicted to impress God’s Word on the lives of their children.

### ...for Illinois Families

- that there would be a return to prayer and godly values in Illinois and across the nation. Pray for a rekindling of faith and a return to priorities based on Judeo-Christian principles.

## Stay up-to-speed on news impacting the family



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