



**FAMILY
COUNCIL**

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“**Jesus Christ died
on the cross for you.**”

**MARCH 2018
UPDATE LETTER**

DEAR FRIENDS,

It was a warm fall day when my family and I walked into War Memorial Stadium in Little Rock, surrounded by thousands of people. The stands were filled, and all eyes were on the football field. It was 1989, and Coach Ken Hatfield had led the Arkansas Razorbacks to a conference title just the year before. But on this day we were not there to watch the Hogs trounce Texas A&M. The Rev. Billy Graham had come to Little Rock to hold one of his evangelistic crusades, and crowds of people were at War Memorial Stadium to hear his message.

The 70 year old evangelist took the stage after a time of music and worship. Over the course of three days, he preached about the priceless value of the human soul, the danger of drugs, and the pressures families faced as the twentieth century drew to a close. In one short sermon from the week—which you can still hear on his website—he touched on heavy issues like incest, the breakdown of the family, and violence against women. Here is what Billy Graham had to say to the people of Arkansas in 1989:

“Christ did more to liberate women than any other person who ever lived,” he said. “Women in many cultures today are exploited ... It was Jesus Christ who treated women with honor and courtesy in a nation in which they were despised. It is Jesus Christ who said, ‘Let the little children come unto me.’ He welcomes the children! ... One of the great sins of America is the neglect of older people. In most cultures the older people—and the older they get—the more they are honored and looked up to and cared for. ... Today we throw the older people out! ... And yet they have so much to contribute to our children and our grandchildren.... This is something subtle, and it’s a sin.”

What was the answer for this sin? Like no one else, Billy Graham tied it all back to the gospel. “That brings us to the cross,” he said. “Jesus Christ died on the cross for you. Why? Because we’re all sinners. We’ve broken God’s laws.” As the crowd sang “Just As I Am,” people came forward to give their lives to Christ.

Nearly three decades have come and gone since Rev. Graham preached that message. His passing in February marked the end of an era. There simply is no one else like him. Billy Graham touched so many lives. He worked hard to live for Jesus Christ as well as he could. He also was not afraid to address social, moral, and some political issues from time to time. In his early years he spoke out repeatedly against Communism. Later he preached against drugs, alcoholism, and pornography. A few years ago he campaigned strongly in favor of traditional marriage.

Billy Graham pastored presidents. He told earthly queens and princes about the King of Kings. He was a friend of senators. But I think he probably would agree with the late Chuck Colson who said, “The Kingdom of God will not arrive on Air Force One.” Only Jesus Christ can truly change people.

Governors and legislators cannot create Heaven on earth, but as Billy Graham showed us, that doesn’t mean we should abandon them. As citizens and as Christians we have a responsibility to share God’s truth everywhere—including in the often-dark halls of government. That is a mission to which Family Council is committed.

And now let me tell you a little more about that mission—and about the work we have been doing so far this year.

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Family Council
President Jerry Cox

MY THOUGHTS: THE WASHINGTON POST'S COVERAGE OF PRO-ABORTION "CLERGY"

In late January the *Washington Post* ran a story titled, "Clergy gather to bless one of the only U.S. clinics performing late-term abortions." The article highlights three ordained, Christian ministers and one retired rabbi who prayed over an infamous, late-term abortion clinic in Bethesda, Maryland. According to the *Washington Post*, the four faith leaders blessed the clinic and its staff, asking God to remind the employees that "all that they do is for Thy glory."

If that makes you sick to your stomach, you aren't alone. It's disgusting that anyone who calls himself a Christian would say abortion glorifies God. However, here's something to keep in mind: Right now thousands of ministers and pro-life Christians are praying at abortion clinics

every day as part of the spring 40 Days for Life campaign. They aren't praying that God would bless the clinics or preserve abortion like these four people in Maryland did. They are praying God would end abortion in America. They are praying abortion doctors would turn to Christ. They are praying abortion clinics would shut down and pregnant mothers would choose life. 40 Days for Life hosts these prayer vigils outside abortion clinics twice a year. Every time they gather to pray, we hear stories of babies saved from abortion and clinic employees converted to Christ. If you would like to know more about how you can be involved in the movement to pray against abortion, go to www.40DaysForLife.com.

Family Council Honors Arkansas' Longest Married Couple

This year Family Council launched a new, annual event: Arkansas' Longest Married Couple. In February, we honored the husband and wife in Arkansas who have been married the longest, as well as nine other couples who have been married almost as long. This year's winners were I.B. and Ima Jewel Williams of Biscoe, Arkansas.

I.B. and Ima Jewel, respectively 99 and 94 years old, met at church in Bayou Meto, Arkansas. The story goes that I.B. was attending church with a friend and sat behind Ima Jewel and would pull her hair. He told his friends that he was going to date her, but her dad would not let her date anyone. He then started walking her home from church, which was several miles out of his way. One Sunday, Ima Jewel had invited a friend and I.B. Williams and his friend to come over to her home. They were sitting around talking and playing house. He then asked her if she would like to play house for real. She replied yes. They married shortly after on September 4, 1937, and have kept their marriage covenant ever since.

Here are the ten couples in Arkansas who have been married the longest:

- *I.B. and Ima Jewel Williams of Biscoe – 80 years, married September 4, 1937.*
- *Marlin and Elsie Scott of Batesville – 79 years, married June 25, 1938.*
- *Betty and Cletus Hall of Berryville – 78 years, married July 22, 1939.*
- *Cleovis and Arwilda Whiteside of White Hall – 78 years, married July 25, 1939.*
- *Cecil and Lois Robertson of Heber Springs – 78 years, married September 8, 1939.*
- *Gussie and James Stephenson of North Little Rock – 78 years, married December 25, 1939.*
- *Thell and Margie Ellison of Natural Dam – 76 years, married June 24, 1941.*
- *Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Bullock of Mountain Home – 76 years, married November 10, 1941.*
- *Grady and Wilma Adcock of Hot Springs – 75 years, married July 3, 1942.*
- *J.C. and Avanelle Merritt of Greenbrier – 75 years, married July 9, 1942.*

We honored these couples and their families at a special reception at the Governor's Mansion in Little Rock. This was such a wonderful celebration! When we set out to find the couple in Arkansas who had been married the longest, we had no idea we would find so many couples who had been married over 75 years—or that the governor's staff would be so excited about honoring these wonderful men and women with us. You can find photos of the Longest Married Couple reception on our website at www.FamilyCouncil.org.

I.B. and Ima Jewel Williams of Biscoe have been married more than 80 years. Left: Governor Asa Hutchinson, First Lady Susan Hutchinson, and Jerry and Doris Cox present them with a framed letter for being Arkansas' longest married couple.



Physicians Resource Council Honors Dr. Spore of Mountain Home

In February Family Council's Arkansas Physicians Resource Council division presented its annual Fay Boozman Award to Dr. John Spore of Mountain Home. Dr. Fay Boozman was an ophthalmologist who served in the Arkansas Legislature and directed the Arkansas Department of Health from 1999–2005. After his untimely passing, we began giving an award in his honor each year to an Arkansas physician who lives out his or her Christian faith in family life, medical practice, and community. The Physicians Resource Council was pleased to present Dr. Spore with this year's Fay Boozman Award. You can read more about Dr. Spore on our website at www.FamilyCouncil.org.



Above: Dr. John Spore, left, receives the Fay Boozman Award from Jerry Cox.

Groups Still Calling for Recreational Marijuana

So far this year Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge has rejected two proposals that would legalize recreational marijuana. Marijuana supporters want to place a measure on the ballot this November. To do that, they need the A.G.'s approval so they can start circulating petitions and gathering signatures. These measures would amend Arkansas' constitution to let

Arkansans grow, buy, sell, and use marijuana for any reason whatsoever. Thankfully Arkansans have an Attorney General who is willing to reject these flawed proposals.

U.S. Senate Fails to Pass Pro-Life Legislation

According to the Washington Post, only seven countries on earth permit abortion after the twentieth week of pregnancy: North Korea, Vietnam, China, Canada, Netherlands, Singapore, and the United States. Of these seven, Netherlands and Singapore both prohibit abortion after 24 weeks. Our federal abortion laws are the worst of any western nation, and among the most lax of any country on earth. In late January the U.S. Senate tried to pass a pro-life law prohibiting abortion nationwide after the twentieth week of pregnancy. Unfortunately, the bill failed to get enough votes. U.S. Senators John Boozman (R – AR) and Tom Cotton (R – AR) both co-sponsored this good bill.

The federal government may be failing to protect unborn children, but Arkansas isn't. We have passed a long list of pro-life laws in recent years. Abortionists say the pro-life laws the legislature passed in 2017 could put them out of business. Slowly but surely we are winning the fight to protect the unborn.

We Want to Provide Public Funds for Pregnancy Resource Centers

In January I told you about our plan to make federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funding available for pregnancy resource centers. In other states, pregnancy centers have been given this federal funding to help them assist pregnant women and promote alternatives to abortion. We are working with state officials to start a program like this in Arkansas. We want to see the funding made available this year, but the wheels of state bureaucracy often turn slowly. Please pray that we will be successful and that pregnancy resource centers will be able to start receiving public grant money in the next few months.

2018 PASTORS DAY AT THE CAPITOL A SUCCESS

In February we hosted our annual Pastors Day at the Capitol. This is one of the best things we do all year. Some 200 ministers, church leaders, lawmakers, and their families gathered at the Capitol Building to worship God and pray for our nation. Speakers at the event included Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge; Pastor Gary Bell of Pine Bluff First Assembly; and Rep. Fred Allen (D – District 30).

Pastors Day at the Capitol is a free, nonpartisan event. Our goal isn't to turn ministers into lobbyists—although I think it's great when pastors weigh in on legislation. Rather, Pastors Day at the Capitol is one way we try to bring a little bit of God's light and truth into the halls of government. You can see pictures of Pastors Day at the Capitol at www.FamilyCouncil.org.

Take Action: Family Council keeps a list of nearly 1,000 churches and church leaders who are part of the Arkansas Pastors Network. If your minister would like to join our network, call us at (501) 375-7000.



Right: Some 200 ministers, church leaders, and their families gathered at the Capitol on February 15.

Where Do Your Candidates Stand?

It's hard to believe, but another election year is here. In February candidates began filing to run for office. The 2018 primaries will take place in May, and the General Election will occur in November. Do you know where your candidates stand on the issues that matter to you? That's why we publish the Arkansas Voter's Guide every election year. We are in the process of surveying candidates for state and federal office on issues like abortion, education, firearms, marijuana, and more. We will publish their survey responses in print and online.

Take Action: Preorder copies of the Arkansas Voter's Guide for your church using the enclosed order form, or call our office at (501) 375-7000.

**Do you know where your candidates stand on the issues that matter to you?
We will publish their survey responses.**

WE NEED YOUR HELP

You are an absolutely vital part of what we do. We simply would not be here without you. I don't believe any other organization in Arkansas has a more faithful group of friends than Family Council. Thank you for standing with us.

There is no shortage of work to do right now. We have accomplished a lot so far this year, and we have a lot to do in the coming months. That's why if you are able, I hope you will send a generous, tax-deductible donation to Family Council today. Enclosed is a response card and return envelope for your convenience. Your gift will help us stand for human life, promote religious liberty, blunt the radical homosexual and transgender agenda, and so much more.

Thank you for your friendship, your strong support, and your prayers. Please let me know if there is ever anything we can do for you.

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox, President

Thank you!!

P.S. Our annual Pastors Day at the Capitol was a tremendous success. In February we had a wonderful time honoring the ten couples in Arkansas who have been married the longest. We are working with state officials to open up public funding for Arkansas' pro-life pregnancy resource centers. We are also gearing up to survey candidates for our 2018 Arkansas Voter's Guide. Your financial support makes all this work possible. Thank you for standing with us.

