

FALL 2015

FAMILY

north carolina

SCOTUS Marriage Ruling

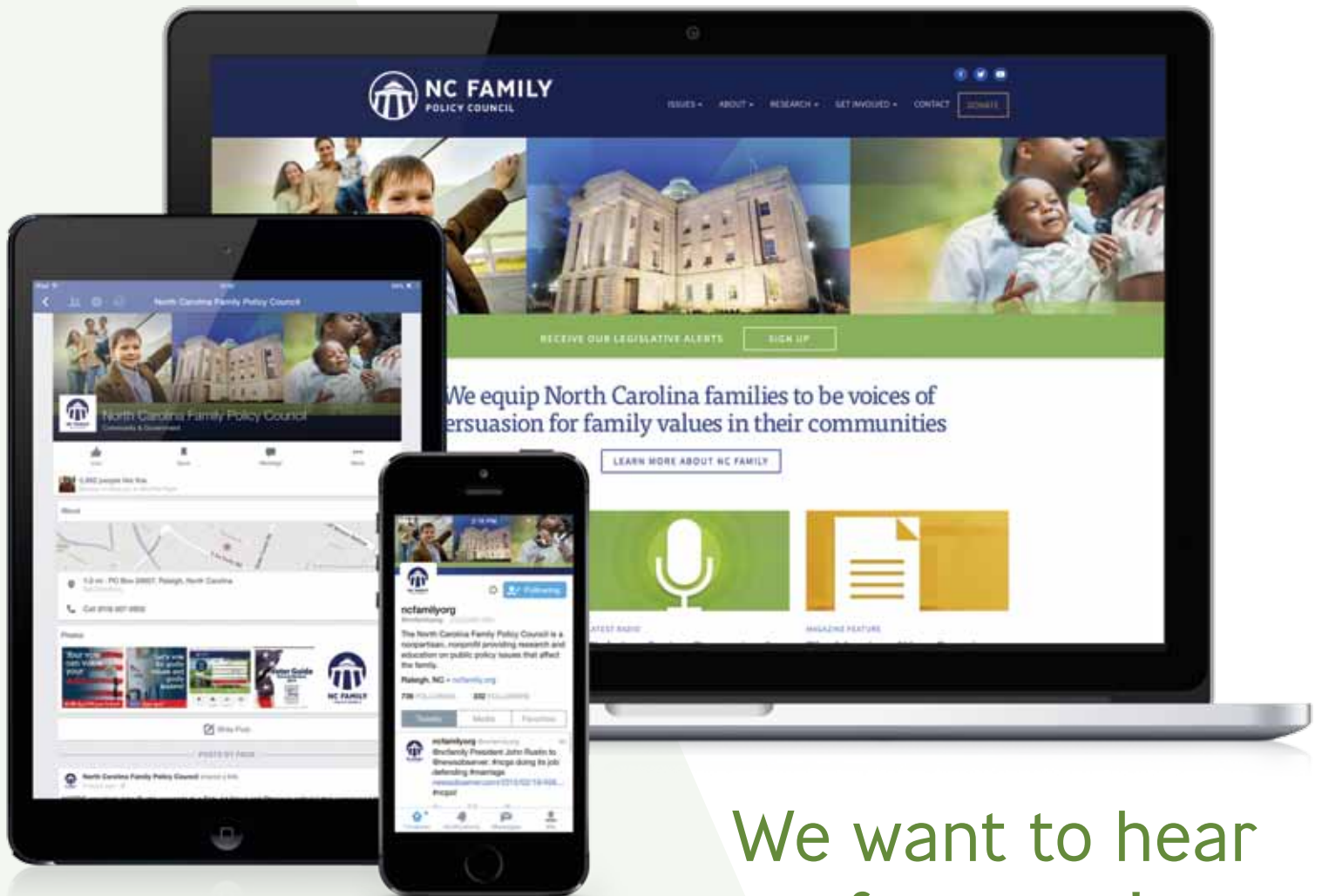
Where Do We
Go From Here?

Millennials and Faith
Protecting Ministries
North Carolina Lawmaking

ISBN 0-9785025-1-5



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Hope for Troubled Times

My husband and I recently attended a marriage renewal weekend known as “Marriage Encounter” that God used to transform our relationship and family life for the better. The most important gift we received from that experience is *hope*. Both of us grew up in broken families, so we lack strong marriage role models to give us guidance and encouragement when times get hard. Without that legacy of forever love, it is so easy to feel alone and to just give up during the hard times. Thankfully, we found hope to keep fighting for our marriage through the support and encouragement we received from the other married couples we met during the weekend, and by learning a practical communication tool that has helped us draw closer to each other. We not only walked away from the experience with a renewed commitment to our marriage, but also with the realization that if we want our marriage to succeed, we need the *support and wisdom* of others to help us along the way.

As we go to press with this magazine, the institution of marriage is facing uncertain and troubling times. Because of this summer’s 5 to 4 U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex unions nationwide, many of us in the pro-family movement are feeling a bit discouraged about the future, and even tempted to give up in the midst of an increasingly hostile culture. What we need most is hope, encouragement, and wisdom from others as we consider where to go from here.

Our greatest wish for the fall issue of *Family North Carolina* is that you, our readers, will find the hope and direction you need to continue fighting for the Truth of marriage. To that end, we have filled the magazine with engaging articles intended to provide both encouragement and practical advice for the way forward.

First up is our must-read feature article written by Erik Stanley of Alliance Defending Freedom, who offers legal tips to help churches, Christians schools, and ministries protect their ability to communicate the Truth about marriage. In a beautifully written piece, Pastor J.D. Greear of The Summit Church provides encouragement and Biblical inspiration for how to respond to the redefinition of marriage in a Christ-like manner. And because engaging the next generation on these issues is so vital, John Stonestreet of The Chuck Colson Center and Eric Smith of Summit Ministries offer their insights into reaching Millennials.

In addition to these in-depth articles, don’t miss Brittany Farrell and NC Family president John Rustin’s review of the long but fruitful 2015 Legislative Session, as well as Rustin’s take on the gruesome practices of Planned Parenthood. Also, be sure to check out the “On the Front Lines” section highlighting some of the recent pro-family battles in our state, and excerpts from our radio interviews with some of today’s leading voices on marriage, religious liberty, and teaching young people to be critical thinkers.

By the time you reach the end of this magazine, we trust that you will feel more supported and encouraged to keep fighting the ‘good fight’ in your communities. Most importantly, we want this issue of *Family North Carolina* to leave you with renewed hope that together we can continue to engage and transform our culture with the Truth about marriage, the sanctity of human life, and the importance of family—no matter what may come our way. 📡

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Fall 2015

Vol. 10, No.2
ISSN 1935-7761
ISBN 0-9785025-1-5

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Family North Carolina is published quarterly by the North Carolina Family Policy Council.

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“Just who do we think we are?”

—U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts in his dissent from the high court’s historic 5-4 decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* on June 26, 2015 that forced the legalization of same-sex “marriage” on all 50 states. Justice Roberts also wrote, “The majority’s decision is an act of will, not legal judgment. The right it announces has no basis in the Constitution or this Court’s precedent.”

“We must see even our most passionate critic not as an argument to be vaporized but as a neighbor to be evangelized.”

—Russell Moore, Ph.D., president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, in his new book, *Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel* (B&H, August 2015).

“The church can and will survive persecution. It will not survive faithlessness.”

—Attorney David French, discussing how Christians should respond to the growing threat to religious liberty from the legalization of same-sex unions in an article published in the *National Review* on June 29, 2015.

“[T]here is no such thing as ‘parenting.’ There is mothering, and ... fathering.”

—Ryan Anderson, Ph.D., the William E. Simon Senior Research Fellow in American Principles and Public Policy at The Heritage Foundation, in an excerpt from his new book, *Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom* (Regnery, August 2015).

“I think a per-item thing works a little better, just because we can see how much we can get out of it.”

—Dr. Savita Ginde, VP and Medical Director of Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains (PPRM), discussing how PPRM prefers payment per organ from aborted babies. Dr. Ginde made the statement in the third undercover video released by the pro-life Center for Medical Progress in July 2015.

**Stay strong. Stay faithful.
Bear witness.
Fear God, not men.**

– Professor Robert George, Princeton University



By: Rick McKee, www.politicalcartoons.com

Millennials and Faith

Reaching Today's
Emerging Adults

written by:
Eric Smith and
John Stonestreet

"I had no idea my friends believed this," Grace said with a bewildered look, as other students sitting around a Summit Ministries table nodded in agreement. Grace and her friends seemed staggered by the number of their peers—many from church or youth group—who supported the Supreme Court's recent decision to redefine marriage. Grace's predicament is telling of what's happening as Millennials try to establish their faith in the midst of the seismic shifts taking place in our culture. To reach Millennials, all members of the Body of Christ must understand how these shifts shape the perspectives of the younger generations.

Defining Millennials

Millennials are the emerging adults of our times. Ranging in age from 18-34, this generation consists of those who are starting college, completing college (with record debt), getting married, starting families, and trying to land jobs that might turn into careers. And, there are a lot of them. Millennials are expected to pass the Baby Boomers in 2015 to become the largest age group in the United States.

Those in their late teens and early 20s are in the crucial years of faith and value formation. Complicating things for Millennials are the turbulent and significant cultural changes taking place, such as economic instability and overspending, mass education, revolutionary communication technologies, and the continuing waves of the sexual revolution. Over the past 15 years, the American public has grown more accepting of cohabitation, divorce, homosexual relations, and polygamy.

In addition, only 56 percent of Millennials self-identify as "Christians," which is significantly lower than the 70.6 percent of the US adult population who do so. In fact, the Millennials' growing "disaffiliation" from organized religion is among their most identifiable traits. The Pew Research Center reports, "More than a third of adults in the Millennial generation (35 percent) now say they have no religion." Pew's studies confirm a large number of Millennials are leaving the faith in which they were raised, including 39 percent of Millennials who have left evangelicalism.



Why Are Millennials Leaving?

What isn't clear from the numbers cited above is exactly what it is that Millennials are leaving. There's ample evidence that many aren't leaving Christianity, but a watered-down version of it. Sociologist Christian Smith, Ph.D., who conducted an in-depth study of Millennials' religious beliefs, concluded that Millennial teens were, in fact, "moralistic therapeutic deists." Far from an orthodox understanding of God and Christianity, these teens believe in God on their terms (as a Supreme Being that desires the best for them, does not demand anything of them, and pretty much leaves them alone).

Dr. Smith further concluded that as they age into their 20s, moralistic therapeutic deists become pluralists, believing that people can pick or choose for themselves what they want from any religion or spiritual approach to life. This deep-seated relativism significantly affects the worldview and thinking of a great number of Millennials. Many doubt whether anyone can know what's true when it comes to religion

and morality. Many are quick to adopt the cultural mindset that religion is a personal belief.

Case in point: 73 percent of Millennials believe that marriage should include same-sex couples. Given that 56 percent of Millennials claim to be Christians, they obviously miss the inconsistency between same-sex "marriage" and what the Bible teaches about human sexuality. With so many Millennials supportive of the homosexual lifestyle and same-sex "marriage," it shouldn't be surprising that many also view the church as anti-homosexual, judgmental, hypocritical, old-fashioned, too political, out of touch with reality, and insensitive to others. The peer-pressure to conform to culture, along with their own insecure theological foundations, means that many Millennials leave the Christian faith for relational and/or ideological reasons.

Complicating this is the lack of meaningful conversation among Millennials on issues of theological and cultural importance. Recently, I (Eric Smith) asked a table of older teenagers how they knew their friends supported the SCOTUS decision. All replied matter-of-

factly, "Facebook." When I asked if they had talked in-person with their youth group friends about this and other issues, they replied, "No."

To make matters worse, many Millennials, generally speaking, do not talk to the adults in their lives either. According to youth ministry expert and author Chap Clark, young people feel hurt and abandoned by older generations, who seem so busy that they communicate a clear message: you're not as important to me as these other things to which I give my time.

Re-engaging Millennials

It's tempting to think that the answer to re-engaging Millennials is more, or better, marketing, or clearer and better answers. But neither of these is correct. While it is true that Millennials are avid consumers, surveys show that they are weary of churches that work harder on branding and marketing than on relationships.

We will be far more effective with Millennials if we focus our energies on personal interactions.

Here are a few things we can do to reach Millennials:

Build Relationships. Research shows that the number one thing parents and mentors can do to pass on their faith and values is to create a close, warm, and affirming relationship with their own kids and those they mentor. It shouldn't surprise us that Millennials are reached the same way anyone is—through building relationships and showing we care by dedicating time.

Listen Intentionally. Compassion for someone is clearly demonstrated by listening to them. Ask good questions. Look them in the eyes as they process life. Take their questions and their reflections seriously. It is tempting to respond quickly with advice, but



Suggested Resources for Reaching Millennials

- *Breakpoint* (www.breakpoint.org)—a daily, three-minute podcast on current issues from a Christian perspective.
- *Summit's annual adult conference* (www.summit.org)—a one-week conference in Colorado each spring to help Christians understand our times from a Christian perspective.
- *Understanding the Times: A Survey of Competing Worldviews* (book)—an updated classic text on why ideas matter and the major competing worldviews.
- *Grow Together*—a 'how to' manual for reaching the next generation.
- *Cultivate: Forming the Emerging Generation through Life-on-Life Mentoring*—a book by Jeff Myers, Paul and Paige Gutacker.
- *Center for Parent/Youth Understanding* (www.cpyu.org)—this site contains a great list of resources to aid intergenerational understanding and discussion.
- *AXIS worldview ministry* (www.axis.org)—especially their "Come Together" conferences.
- *CrossExamined* (www.crossexamined.org)—a nonprofit ministry that conducts "I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist" seminars on college campuses, in churches, and in high schools.

less is often more. For example, recently, Mike, a 30-something friend shared his concerns about how he and his wife should handle making friends with same-sex couples. I (Eric) listened and took his concerns seriously. I was able to speak into his situation because of our history of spending dedicated time together, proximity (we attend the same church), and by listening with care. As a result, Mike seemed relieved, and was able to move ahead with these friends in a caring way that wouldn't compromise his Christian beliefs.

Explain Why. Millennials are looking for someone to take their questions seriously, and to help them think their questions through to answers. This requires us as mentors and family members to know why we believe what we do, and to be willing to explain our reasons clearly and logically. As one Millennial recently told me, "The church does a good job teaching me *how* to live for Jesus, but they haven't told me *why* I should."

This 'why' question is one that many Millennials are asking. Ideas have consequences, and Professor Craig Gay explains the consequence of living in a largely secular culture well: The problem isn't that people don't believe in God; it's that people live as if God is irrelevant. This sends a confusing message to younger generations, and thus the question asked by our Millennial friend: "Why should I live for God?"

We need to study the ideas around us, many of which form a kind of foundation for our everyday lives, which we can absorb without challenge or critique. Through our study, reflection, and discussion of Biblical truth, God helps us see where our living is disconnected from what we believe. Study of Scripture, of theology, apologetics, and comparative worldviews are extremely important to helping

us explain what we believe and how it applies to every area of life, from marriage to abortion. This is not easy work in an entertainment culture like ours, but after 15 years of observing young people at Summit Ministries, we know that they are craving discussions about why to believe what they believe, and why a Christian worldview matters at all.

We Can't Outsource Reaching Millennials

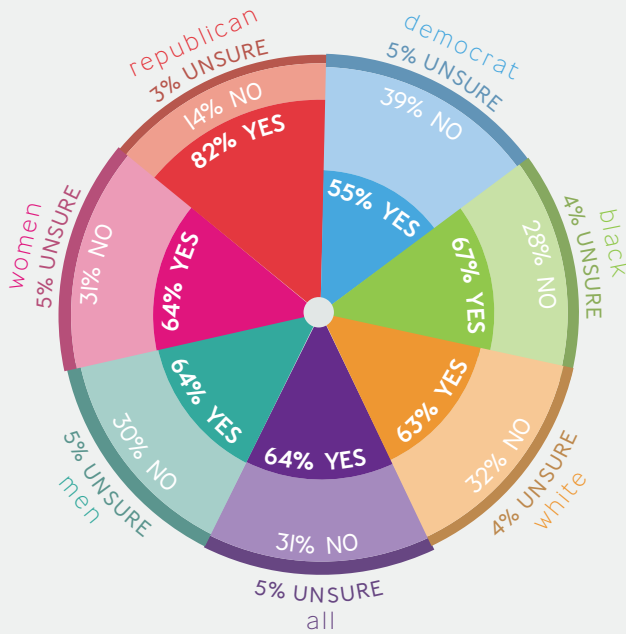
It's tempting to think, "That's right. *Someone* should do those things." But instead, we should ask, "What can *I* do?" Whether you can promote a "grow together" mindset in your congregation, listen to someone who is questioning, teach a class or lead discussions on contemporary issues, the important thing is to get involved.

Christians are members of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-14), and we are all called to contribute. GenXers, Boomers, or members of the so-called "Silent Generation" can personally connect with a Millennial, build a relationship, and encourage them to talk and think through their questions. To reach Millennials, we must first love them, seek to understand them, pray for them, and then be willing to get involved. We can listen. We can guide. We can point them to the Truth. 🏠

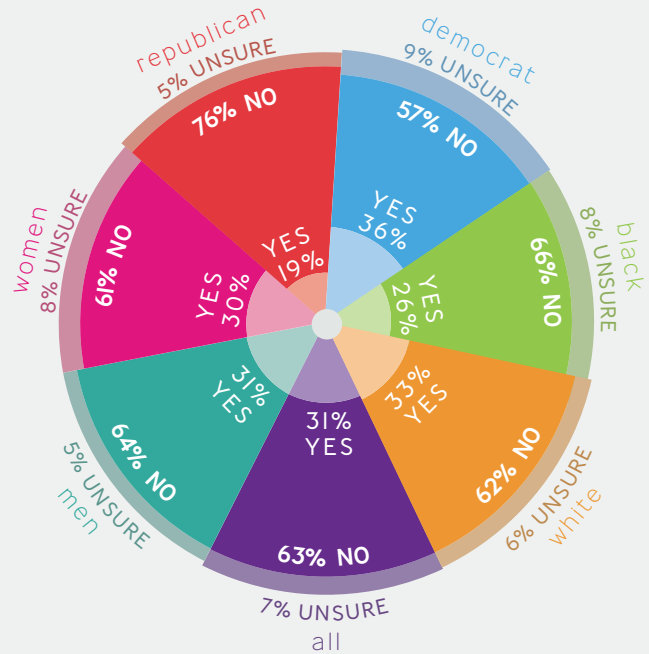
Eric Smith is vice president of Programs at Summit Ministries in Manitou Springs, CO. John Stonestreet is president of The Colson Center and co-host of the BreakPoint radio program. For a footnoted version of this article, please visit www.ncfamily.org.

Marriage and Religious Liberty

The majority of North Carolinians—from all demographics—still support traditional marriage!



North Carolinians overwhelmingly agree on the importance of religious liberty!



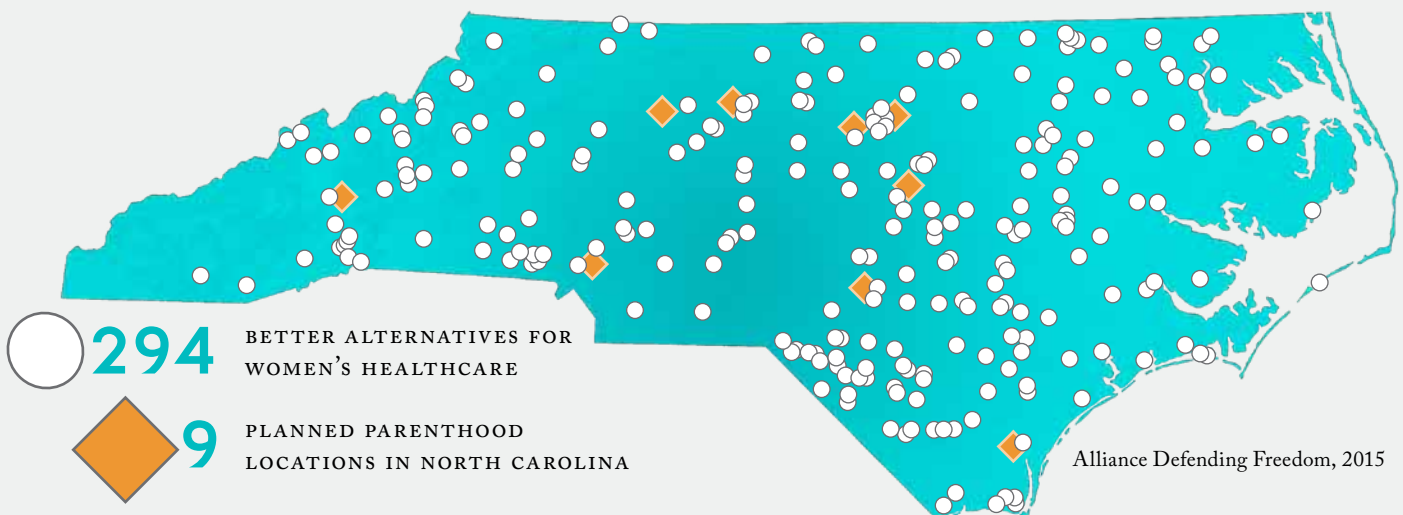
Do you support the State Constitution, which defines marriage as between one man and one woman?

John W. Pope Civitas Institute poll, 2015 June 23-25.
<http://www.nccivitas.org/2015/civitas-poll-nc-voters-back-traditional-marriage/>

Do you think state government court officials, such as registers of deeds, who oppose same sex marriage on religious grounds, should be compelled to perform and certify same sex marriages, even if it clearly violates an individual's religious convictions?

Women Have Real Choices in N.C.

THERE ARE 32 HEALTH CARE CLINICS FOR EVERY PLANNED PARENTHOOD.





On Air With ...

Since 1999, NC Family has been producing the 15-minute weekly radio program “Family Policy Matters” which features interviews with national, state, and local experts on a wide range of family policy issues. “Family Policy Matters” airs each week on 20 radio stations across North Carolina and can also be streamed on the NC Family website. Following are select excerpts from a few recent programs, which can be heard in full online at www.ncfamily.org.

... Mat Staver

John Rustin: In your opinion, how important is Kim Davis’ case to the future of religious liberty in our nation?

Mat Staver: It’s critical, and let me address this one question that people say, “Well, she’s an elected clerk of Rowan County [Kentucky], she should just do her job or resign.” Listen to the implications of that. If you’re a Christian, and you believe in marriage as the union of a man and a woman—not just because they passed it by 75 percent, not just because it’s been the law of Kentucky or America or throughout millennia of human history—but if you believe in that because it’s the natural created order, and it’s coming from the lips of Jesus, then you should just not run for office, and you should resign if you’re in office. And not only if you’re an elected official, but if you’re an employee, you ought to just get out of the government employment altogether. But by the way, don’t stop there because if you’re a baker or if you’re a florist, or if you’re a wedding photographer, and now pretty soon if you’re in a church or a Christian college, you better just shut down or compromise your values—that’s the implications of it. So, Kim Davis would not step down, and I think that’s one message we need to have. Man your post, stand your guard, don’t step down! If you do, Christians will be cleansed from the marketplace.



Mathew Staver, J.D., chairman and founder of Liberty Counsel, who is defending Kentucky Clerk Kim Davis for refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples because of her religious beliefs, explained the religious liberty implications of her case on September 26, 2015.

... Nancy Pearcey

John Rustin: Nancy, in your book, you argue that critical thinking for Christians actually saves faith. Explain what you mean by that, and how important is it for young Christians to develop critical thinking skills?

Nancy Pearcey: Critical thinking is what helps Christians to keep their faith. G.K. Chesterton once said, “Sure, ideas are dangerous, but they’re actually more dangerous to the person who’s never studied them, because then he will have no mental filter.” Chesterton used the image of a teetotaler—he said if you’ve never drunk any wine before, then a new idea will fly through your head like wine to the head of a teetotaler. You’re more likely to become intoxicated! I was talking to a mother not long ago who said that when she raised her kids, she raised them with a rule, “You don’t need to read anything but the Bible. We don’t need to expose ourselves by studying secular worldviews.” Then her son went off to college, joined a new atheist group, and abandoned his Christian background. She thought that by not exposing her son to secular ideas she was protecting him, but instead she had left him senseless. So, we need to understand, as our culture becomes increasingly secularized, young people need to be forewarned and forearmed with [the] kind of ideas they’re going to encounter when they leave home so that they can be prepared to, [as] 1 Peter says, ‘give an answer’ to anyone who asks them.



Nancy Pearcey, Professor and Scholar in Residence at Houston Baptist University, discussed her new book, *Finding Truth: Five Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism and Other God-Substitutes*, on May 7, 2015.

... Ryan Anderson



Ryan Anderson, William E. Simon Fellow at The Heritage Foundation, and editor of the online journal, *Public Discourse*, discussed his new book, *Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom*, on August 20, 2015.

John Rustin: Ryan, one of the important points that you make in the book is that the redefinition of marriage actually weakens marital norms. Give us some examples of how same-sex “marriage” will harm the institution of marriage, as we know it.

Ryan Anderson: Same-sex “marriage” is a symptom of the larger underlying problem. It’s not as if gay “marriage” somehow causes our problems, but gay “marriage” is one of the consequences of a bad ideology about marriage ... [that] many heterosexuals have bought into: it’s the ideology that comes out of the 60s, that comes out of the sexual revolution, and it more or less says that marriage is simply about romance, and consenting adults should do whatever consenting adults want to do. It redefines marriage, and it furthers that redefinition by saying that marriage is simply about the desires of adults, not the needs of children or the rights of children. And this legal redefinition of marriage, which [the Supreme Court] did [this past June] could only take place after a cultural redefinition of marriage. And so if you think about the past 40 or 50 years, the rise of the hook-up culture, the rise of pre-marital sex, non-marital childbearing, the spike in divorce rates—all of those problems that heterosexuals caused led to the further redefinition of marriage, and all of that will further weaken the marital norms.... The question now is ... how do we say that fathers are essential, when [the Supreme Court] has redefined marriage to make fathers optional? Because the message of same-sex “marriage” is that men and women are interchangeable; therefore mothers and fathers are replaceable. But we know that that’s not true, and so the law is going to be teaching a falsehood, which makes bearing witness to the truth and passing on the truth to the next generation that much more challenging, and yet it’s still essential that we do it.



John L. Rustin, NC Family President and host of “Family Policy Matters”

Radio Stations Airing “Family Policy Matters”

Belmont/Gastonia	WCGC 1270 AM	Sunday, 11:30 PM
Charlotte	WHVN 1240 AM WOCR 88.3 FM	Sunday, 11:30 AM Saturday, 3:45 PM
Charlotte/Harrisburg	WGAS 1420 AM	Saturday, 3:45 PM
Fayetteville	WCLN 107.3 FM	Saturday, 7:00 AM
Forest City	WWOL 780 AM	Wednesday, 8:45 AM
Greensboro/ Winston Salem	WKEW 1400 AM WTRU 830 AM	Sunday, 9:30 AM Saturday, 6:00 AM
New Bern	WSTK 104.5 FM	Saturday, 3:15 PM
Newland	WECR 1130 AM	Saturday, 9:06 AM
Raleigh	WTRU 1030 AM	Saturday, 6:30 AM
Rocky Mount	WLQC 103.1 FM	Sunday, 11:00 PM
Salisbury	WOCR 93.3 FM	Saturday, 12:15 PM
Sanford	WLHC 103.1 FM	Sunday, 11:00 PM
Shalotte	WVCB 1410 AM	Wednesday, 10:05 AM Saturday, 4:30 PM
Troy	WJRM 1390 AM	Sunday, 7:30 AM
Wilmington	WZDG 88.5 FM	Sunday, 5:30 AM Sunday, 6:00 PM
Winston-Salem	WBFJ 1550 AM WPOL 1340 AM WPIP 880 AM	Sunday, 4:10 PM Sunday, 9:30 AM Sunday, 5:00 PM

You may also stream “Family Policy Matters” online at www.ncfamily.org



NC "Choose Life" Plates Still Alive

On June 29, the United States Supreme Court ordered the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals to reconsider the case challenging the constitutionality of North Carolina's "Choose Life" specialty license plates. The Fourth Circuit had previously ruled in *Berger v. ACLU* that the plates were unconstitutional.

Pro-Life Lobby Day

On April 23, pro-life North Carolinians gathered at the State Legislature to be a voice for the voiceless. NCFPC was proud to participate in the event, with information and encouragement available for legislators and other citizens.

Photos courtesy of North Carolina Right to Life.



No Ultrasound Requirement for Abortions

On June 15, the United States Supreme Court declined to review a lower court's ruling that the ultrasound provision of North Carolina's Women's Right to Know Act is unconstitutional. The provision requires abortion doctors to do an ultrasound, describe what it shows, and show it to abortion-minded woman. The remainder of the 2011 law remains intact.

NC Opportunity Scholarships

The Perez family is one of more than a thousand North Carolina families who are breathing easier after the State Supreme Court ruled on July 23 that the Opportunity Scholarship program that provides grants to selected, qualified families to help cover the costs of non-public education is constitutional and will continue. The General Assembly has also increased funding for the program for the next two school years.

Photo courtesy of Parents for Educational Freedom in North Carolina.



Rowan County Appeals for Prayer

Rowan County Commissioners unanimously voted on May 4 to appeal a federal judge's order to halt their long-standing tradition of personally offering prayers before board meetings.

Library Affront to First Amendment

The Cameron Village Regional Library and Wake County came under fire this spring for an unconstitutional Library Conference Room Policy that prohibited organizations from using the facilities to present religious viewpoints. On June 23, District Judge Louise W. Flanagan issued a judgment against the policy, resulting in the library agreeing to "remove all offending bans on religion."



Religious Freedom

NC Family spent much of the 2015 legislative session actively encouraging legislators to pass Senate Bill 2—Magistrates Recusal of Civil Ceremonies, which went into effect on June 11, following votes in the State House and Senate overriding Governor Pat McCrory's veto of the bill. SB 2 allows magistrates to recuse from performing all marriage ceremonies, and it allows deputy and assistant registers of deeds to recuse themselves from issuing all marriage licenses, for a period of at least six months as long as the recusal is "based upon any sincerely held religious objection." It also shields these public officials from punishment or disciplinary action for a recusal that is made in "good-faith."

To date, at least 32 North Carolina magistrates have taken advantage of the recusal process allowed under SB2. In those instances, other magistrates are responsible for ensuring that marriage services are available in all 100 counties for at least 10 hours per week.



NC Family president John L. Rustin was interviewed by CitizenLink on September 22 about North Carolina's efforts to protect the religious liberties of registers of deeds employees and magistrates through SB2. Rustin called the legislation "**a good compromise, a reasonable compromise and, ... something that importantly protect[s] those fundamental religious beliefs,**" emphasizing that the law "does not allow magistrates and registers of deeds staff to pick and choose which marriages they participate in; it simply says if they recuse, they recuse from participation in all marriages."



SCOTUS *marriage* RULING

Where Do We Go From Here?

written by: Erik Stanley

On June 26, 2015, the United States Supreme Court issued its long-anticipated decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which imposed a 50-state same-sex “marriage” mandate. The ruling has left many in the Christian community feeling defeated, uncertain, and even fearful about the future and about how the Supreme Court’s ruling will impact our ability to continue to express and act on the Truth about marriage.

Even before the Court issued its decision, pastors, church leaders, and other ministry leaders raised concerns about the potential impact of redefining marriage on their ministries. Now that the decision has been released, we can respond with greater clarity.

Here are the immediate facts that churches, Christian schools, and other ministries need to know.

The Court’s Decision

The Supreme Court, in a 5–4 decision authored by Justice Anthony Kennedy, held that the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution requires a state to license a marriage between two persons of the same sex and to recognize a same-sex “marriage” entered into lawfully in another state. In so holding, the Supreme Court specifically struck down the state constitutional amendments of Michigan, Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee, which defined marriage as between one man and one woman, and were at issue in *Obergefell*. Of course, the decision had implications well beyond these four states, as it redefined marriage for the entire country to include the union of same-sex couples.

The majority opinion stated the following with respect to religious opposition to same-sex “marriage:”

Finally, it must be emphasized that religions, and those who adhere to religious doctrines, may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned. The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths, and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered.

This statement is welcome to be sure. But the greatest threat for churches lies in the application of the Court’s decision to believers who live in jurisdictions covered by so-called “non-discrimination” laws and ordinances. Everywhere that marriage has been redefined in the last several years has seen intense efforts to pass non-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination in employment, housing, or places of public accommodation on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. These laws are peppered throughout the states and local governments and are a linchpin of the sexual revolution’s broader legal and political strategy: to establish non-discrimination laws at all levels throughout the country and to “ensure that religion is not used as an excuse to discriminate.”

Even though North Carolina does not currently have a state-level non-discrimination law that includes “sexual orientation” and “gender identity/expression,”

homosexual activists have been pushing such legislation in the General Assembly for years. Almost immediately after the SCOTUS marriage decision, Equality North Carolina vowed to continue to make this a legislative priority. To date, at least five counties and 12 cities in North Carolina have adopted policies for government employees that recognize “sexual orientation” and/or “gender identity” as protected classifications.

In the coming months, the threat from these non-discrimination policies will materialize in numerous ways as same-sex couples marry. The good news is that there are proactive steps that churches and other ministries, including Christian schools, can take to protect themselves from legal challenges and other attacks.

First, Some Good News

For now, pastors will not be legally compelled to officiate same-sex wedding ceremonies. Pastors remain free to make a theological determination about whom they will and will not marry. For example, pastors will often not marry a believer to an unbeliever, and many will not perform ceremonies for someone they know didn't have Biblical grounds for a previous divorce. Nothing in the Supreme Court's opinion changes the freedom of pastors to continue to make those theologically based decisions about whom they will marry.

Consequently, pastors should refrain from retreating from marriage ceremonies. Some have suggested pastors disengage from “civil marriage” and only perform religious ceremonies. This type of reaction is not only legally unnecessary, but it

sends the message that pastors have “abdicated the field” on the battleground of marriage. Instead, pastors should engage more fervently in advocating and expounding the truth about marriage by maintaining a faithful witness to whom they will marry and whom they will not.

What Should We Do Now?

1. Churches, Christian schools, and ministries should update their Statement of Faith on the issues of marriage, human sexuality, and gender.

Now is the time for Christian ministries to maintain a clear witness to Biblical truth about marriage, human sexuality, and gender. This begins with updating

your ministry's statement of faith to include your religious belief on these issues.

Doing it in the wake of the Supreme Court decision will not be viewed negatively by a court if a legal issue ever arises. Instead, putting clarifying language in the statement of faith merely serves to codify a ministry's long-standing religious belief. Clarifying the statement of faith can help a ministry by possibly discouraging individuals from seeking “easy” lawsuits, and by strengthening the Christian organization's ability to defend itself in the event that a lawsuit is filed. If your ministry has not yet clarified its statement of faith on the issues of marriage, human sexuality, and gender, now is the time.



2. Churches, Christian schools, and ministries should ensure their Facilities Usage policies are revised to allow only uses consistent with their religious beliefs.

In the wake of the Supreme Court ruling, some ministries, including churches or Christian schools, may be approached by individual same-sex couples or even LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender) groups, seeking to use their facilities. For example, a same-sex couple could ask to use a church's facilities for a same-sex wedding ceremony. Churches in particular should not feel as if they have to close their doors to the community just to prevent wedding ceremonies with which they disagree. Churches must continue to be a welcoming presence in the community and can do so through updating or revising their facility usage policy.

The key point is to tie usage of the ministry's facility to the statement of faith and religious beliefs, and then to make clear that uses inconsistent with those religious beliefs will not be allowed.

3. Churches, Christian schools, and ministries should update their Religious Employment Criteria for all employees and volunteers.

Churches, Christian schools, and ministries should establish religious criteria for their employees and volunteers. Although federal law prohibits

employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or age, "religious organizations" may consider an applicant's religious beliefs when making hiring or firing decisions. Additionally, the "ministerial exception" doctrine exempts churches, Christian schools, and ministries from employment nondiscrimination laws for "ministerial" employees—if they are tasked with performing the organization's rituals, or teaching or explaining its beliefs.

At a minimum, churches, Christian schools, and ministries should have written, clear, and consistent employment policies in place, beginning with the requirement that all employees and volunteers sign a statement of faith and a standard of conduct. It is also important for ministries to: have written job descriptions for each position that include an explanation of how each position furthers the organization's *religious* mission; and then to consistently apply all employment standards.

No Matter What, Truth Remains

Despite the Supreme Court's ruling, marriage—and Truth—have not changed. Society may suppress the Truth in unrighteousness, but it cannot any more change the Truth than it can change the color of the sky. The Church has always proclaimed the Gospel to cultures and societies who have rejected Truth, and it must continue to do so.

Now, more than ever, the Church must fulfill its mission. We may not know in every detail how the marriage decision will affect America's churches, Christian schools, and Christian ministries, but groups such as Alliance Defending Freedom will continue to work aggressively to keep the legal door open for the spread of the Gospel. You and your ministry are not alone. 🙏

Erik W. Stanley, J.D., is senior legal counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom. For a footnoted version of this article, please visit www.ncfamily.org.

Despite the Supreme Court's ruling, marriage—and Truth—have not changed.



Responding Like Jesus to the Redefinition of Marriage

written by:
J.D. Greear

Many Christians have asked how to respond to the U.S. Supreme Court's June 2015 decision legalizing same-sex marriage for all 50 states. Let me offer three thoughts about how we should respond.

1. The institutionalizing of same-sex marriage did not redefine marriage; rather, it is the fruit of a redefinition of marriage. Same-sex marriage is one star in a constellation of changes arising from a rejection of God's pattern for family that began decades ago. Many are amazed at the speed of the same-sex marriage revolution, but that is because our society long ago rejected the Creator's basic pattern for sex and relationships. When we enthroned our desires, rather than God's designs, as the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong in relationships, the acceptance of same-sex marriages became inevitable. Improvisations on God's designs have disastrous effects on society as a whole—most notably on the children—and this improvisation will be no different.

2. Now more than ever, Christians should remember that we are citizens of another Country. We have grown accustomed to living in a country quite hospitable to our faith, and we should be exceedingly grateful for that. But we should also realize that this has been a privilege almost unknown in Christian history.

The entire New Testament, for instance, was written not from the seats of cultural and political control, but from the cultural and political margins. The Apostle Peter did not open his letter to the church with "to those in power" but "to those in exile."

The good news is that Christianity thrives in such a context. Many of our country's great spiritual awakenings came in times of great political darkness. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. As the darkness becomes darker, the light becomes more distinct. Christian families, operating by the Creator's design and with the Creator's blessing, will become more enigmatic and attractive than ever.

At its core, the Lordship of Jesus is a political claim: we pledge ultimate allegiance to Jesus, not to any court or people. There may come a day when

our government decides that this counter-cultural claim will not be tolerated. We must be prepared to endure the consequences with courage.

3. We must speak about this in a tone that communicates the spirit of our Savior, who came not to judge but to save. We are not a community of the righteous condemning the sexually wayward, but fellow rebels redeemed by Jesus' blood, calling out for others to experience the grace we've experienced. With the LGBT community we share a common humanity; a common problem—sin; and a common hope—the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ.

We should never speak in a way that *separates* LGBT individuals from us. If we are right with God, it is because we are forgiven. We have absolutely nothing about which to boast, and that transforms our entire disposition. It is not enough to possess the truth of Christ; we must also reflect the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, we cannot "give up" on our culture by withdrawing. Thank God, Jesus did not do that. He entered our world, living and loving among us. We must do the same. The Church must continue to be a place where LGBT individuals feel welcome as they seek repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be the loudest advocates against acts of injustice or abuse of LGBT individuals. *They are us.* And we must prepare ourselves to receive the refugees of this sexual revolution, for they will be many.

More than anything, we must remain confident in the Gospel. The arc of history is long and gradual, but it tilts toward Jesus. This is not a time to panic, but to put forward the distinctive Christian view of marriage and sex. We must show our society—through word and deed—the Creator's better way for these life-defining relationships. 🕊

J.D. Greear is the pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, NC, and author of Jesus Continued: Why the Spirit Inside You Is Better Than Jesus Beside You.

**This is a condensed version of Pastor Greear's article, "Responding Like Jesus to the SCOTUS Pronouncement on Same-Sex Marriage," which was published at www.JDGreear.com on 6/29/2015.*

Protecting Your Ministry

Make sure your ministry has the broadest religious liberty protections under the law. Use the checklist below, specific to your type of ministry, to verify your protection.

Church Checklist

- Statement of Faith
- Religious Employment Criteria
- Facility Use Policy
- Formal Membership Policy
- Marriage Policy

Christian Ministry Checklist

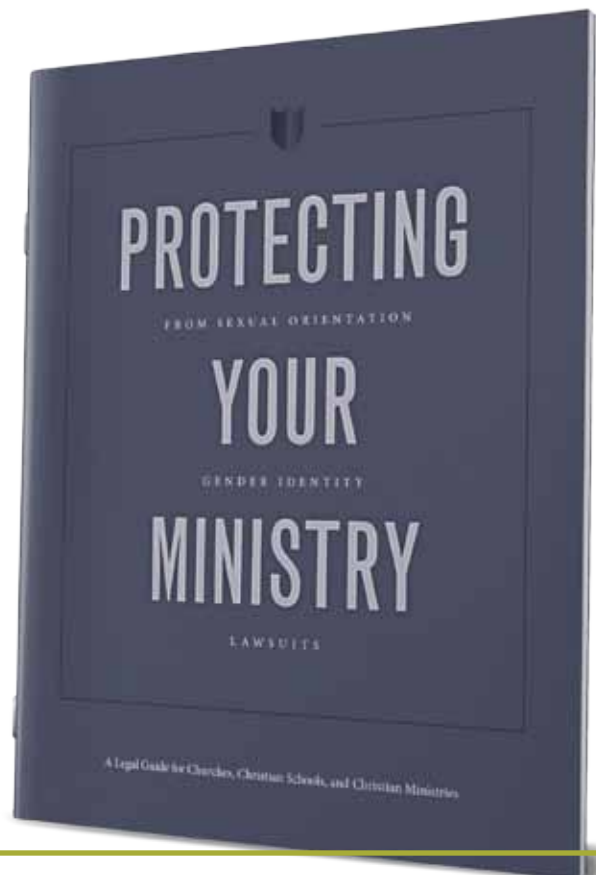
- Statement of Faith
- Religious Employment Criteria
- Facility Use Policy
- Religious Mission Statement
- Code of Christian Conduct
- Emphasize Religious Character

Christian School Checklist

- Statement of Faith
- Religious Employment Criteria
- Facility Use Policy
- Religious Mission Statement
- Code of Christian Conduct
- Emphasize Religious Character
- Admissions Procedures
- Religious Instruction
- Handbooks
- Disciplinary Procedures

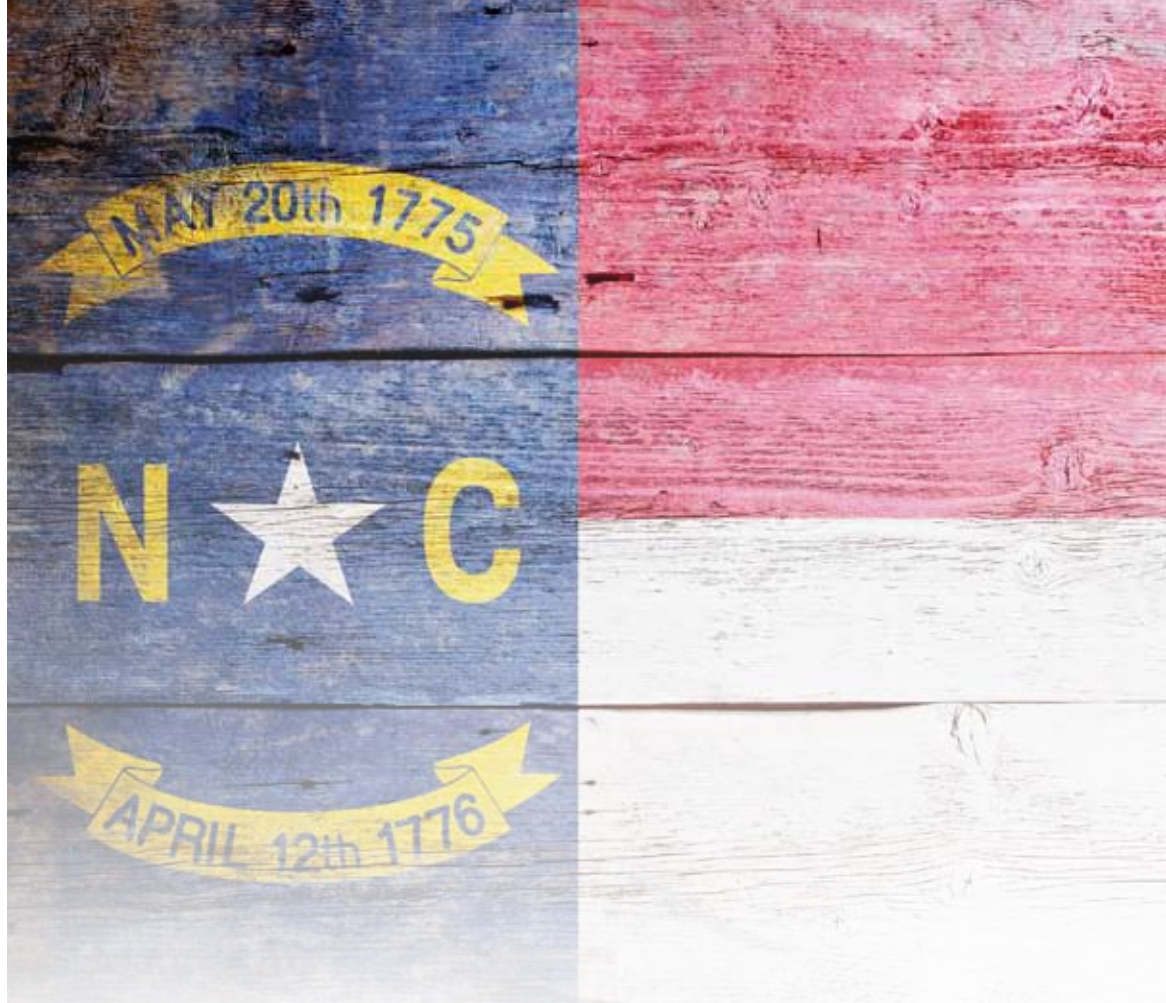
This checklist is meant for all types of churches, including Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant denominations, as well as Catholic and other Christian schools. “Christian Ministries” include a broad spectrum of nonprofit, faith-based organizations such as pregnancy resource centers, religious publishers, campus ministries, relief agencies, missions groups, hospitals, counseling centers, adoption agencies, and food banks.

For more details on each of the items listed, refer to the Alliance Defending Freedom’s guide “Protecting Your Ministry” available at www.adflegal.org.



North Carolina Lawmaking 2015 General Assembly Review

written by:
John L. Rustin &
Brittany Farrell



After meeting for over 8 months, the North Carolina General Assembly adjourned the 2015 “Long Legislative Session” on September 30. State lawmakers reached final agreement on a \$21.74 billion state budget on September 18, over 11 weeks past the start of the state’s 2015-16 fiscal year. Despite the delay in the passage of the state budget, however, the 2015 Session was a great success in terms of legislation that protects the sanctity of human life, affirms the right to religious liberty, provides more choice in education, and seeks the best for the families of North Carolina.

The following is a summary of select legislation of interest to NC Family and our supporters. While it is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all the bills on which we’ve worked—NC Family monitors hundreds of bills each session—this summary is meant to hit the highlights of some of the most important policy actions taken, and not taken, by state lawmakers this session.

SANCTITY OF LIFE:

North Carolina became the fourth state in the nation to require a 72-hour informed consent waiting period for abortion with the passage of HB 465—Women’s and Children’s Protection Act of 2015. In addition to extending the waiting period from 24 to 72-hours, this bill also mandates that the N.C. Department of Health & Human Services conduct annual inspections of abortion clinics, prohibits abortion clinics from employing anyone under the age of 18, and requires more extensive reporting when abortions are conducted after the 16th week of pregnancy.

In the waning days of session, legislators also took decisive action to ban the sale of body parts and other remains of aborted unborn children in North Carolina, following the release of a series of undercover videos by the Center for Medical Progress showing Planned Parenthood executives

North Carolina became the fourth state in the nation to require a 72-hour informed consent waiting period for abortion.

and other staff callously picking through organs and other tissue from aborted babies and haggling over the price. HB 297—End Marketing/Sale Unborn Children Body Parts also creates a Class I felony offense for a violation of this new law and makes permanent a change included in the state budget that helps to ensure that no state taxpayer dollars are being directed to groups that perform abortions, like Planned Parenthood.

State lawmakers also continued funding in the budget bill, HB 97—2015 Appropriations Act, for pregnancy care ministries through the Carolina Pregnancy Care Fellowship and for maternity homes across the state.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY:

State lawmakers protected the religious liberties of certain public servants in the state through the passage of SB 2—Magistrates Recusal for Civil Ceremonies, which allows magistrates and

certain registers of deeds staff to recuse themselves from participation in civil marriages based upon a “sincerely held religious objection.” The bill also shields these public servants from punishment or disciplinary action for recusal. Thus far, at least 32 magistrates have sought protection under the law. Supermajority votes were required in both the State House and Senate to override Gov. Pat McCrory’s veto of SB 2.

Broader religious freedom protections that mirror the 1993 federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) were introduced in both chambers, but did not see formal action.

HB 348 and companion bill SB 550 sought to establish a uniform method for citizens to seek legal protection in court if they believe a state or local law, ordinance, rule, or regulation burdens their free exercise of religion. If such a claim were asserted under RFRA, the court would weigh the individual’s claim against the state’s “compelling governmental interest” and determine which interest prevails. This is an incredibly important measure that is necessary to affirm every citizen’s constitutional right to the free exercise of religion, and we urge lawmakers to enact a state-level RFRA in 2016.

PARENTAL RIGHTS:

Legislation that would have explicitly affirmed the fundamental rights of parents to “the care, custody, and control” of their children was approved overwhelmingly by the House

in April, but failed to receive a hearing in the Senate. HB 847—Parental Rights and Medical Treatment of Minors also would have protected parents from allegations of abuse or neglect when making decisions about the medical treatment of their child after receiving contrary opinions from licensed health care providers. Also in April, the House Judiciary III Committee defeated HB 413—Expand Grandparent Visitation Rights, which was the latest attempt to enable grandparents to sue for visitation with their grandchildren over the objection of the child’s parent(s) living in an intact family. SB 346—Enact Stricter Immunization Requirements would have more than doubled the number of mandatory vaccines required by the state, and would have repealed an existing law that allows parents to exempt their children from the immunization mandate for religious reasons, but this bill was withdrawn from consideration by its Senate sponsors after a significant outcry by parents and other concerned citizens.

EDUCATION:

The 2015-16 state budget boosts parental choice in education by increasing funding for the state’s Opportunity Scholarship program to almost \$18 million in 2015-16 and to almost \$25 million in 2016-17. This program helps enable lower-income families to educate their children at the non-public school of their choice. The budget also expands funding for Special Education Scholarships

for students with disabilities, while increasing the maximum amount of these scholarships from \$3,000 to \$4,000 per semester.

The General Assembly also ratified SB 279—Amend Qualifications/Practice of Counseling, which, in addition to modifying the state’s law related to professional counseling, improves North Carolina’s reproductive health and safety education program by adding a requirement for sex trafficking prevention and awareness, and by expanding the qualified professionals who may provide materials for instruction in reproductive health and safety.

GAMBLING:

Although several measures were introduced this session to expand legalized gambling in the state, fortunately none of them passed. The most notable provisions, included in the Senate version of the budget, would have expanded lottery advertising by 50 percent and would have directed the State Lottery Commission to initiate “E-Instant Games,” which are equivalent to online scratch-off tickets. These provisions were removed before the final budget was approved.

Two bills that would have legalized video sweepstakes gambling in North Carolina by licensing, regulating, and taxing

sweepstakes operations were introduced in the House, but did not see action. HB 922—Video Sweepstakes Regulation and Taxation and the much broader HB 938—Comprehensive Gaming Reform would have legitimized an industry that has been skirting the state’s video gambling prohibition for years. Additionally, HB 894—Game Nights/Nonprofit Fund-Raiser would have allowed nonprofit organizations to conduct “Game Nights” as fundraising events utilizing games of chance, including roulette, blackjack, poker, craps, keno, and merchandise wheel of fortune. Because these proposals have tax implications, they may remain eligible for consideration next year.

DRUGS & CRIME:

In March, the House Judiciary I Committee voted down HB 78—Enact Medical Cannabis Act, which would have legalized marijuana for “medical use” in North Carolina. Another bill, HB 317, which would have legalized marijuana use by individuals diagnosed with a terminal or debilitating illness and who are in hospice care, was never brought up for consideration.

Lawmakers did pass a bill that creates a two-county pilot program for the free disposal of used needles and syringes “to reduce the spread of HIV, AIDS, viral hepatitis, and other bloodborne diseases through needle stick injuries....” That bill, HB 712—Pilot Project/Used Needle Disposal, provides that any person participating in the program “shall not be charged with or prosecuted for possession of drug paraphernalia for any used needle or hypodermic syringe returned and disposed of, or for residual amounts of a controlled substance contained in the used needle or hypodermic syringe returned and

disposed of.” If deemed successful, the program may be expanded to two additional counties.

TAXATION:

The final conference report on the state budget increases the standard deduction for personal income taxes in 2016 by \$500 for married couples filing jointly; by \$400 for heads of households; and by \$250 for single and married individuals filing separately. It also reduces the state’s individual income tax rate from 5.75 percent to 5.499 percent in 2017. A proposal in the Senate budget that would have capped itemized deductions at \$20,000 was not included in the conference report.

2016 SESSION:

State legislators will return to Raleigh for the 2016 “Short” Legislative Session on April 25, 2016, when their primary focus will be making adjustments to the budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year. In the meantime, be sure to stay on top of the latest breaking news on family policy issues by following the NC Family website at www.ncfamily.org, our Facebook page at [NCFamily.org](https://www.facebook.com/NCFamily.org), and our Twitter account at [@ncfamilyorg](https://twitter.com/ncfamilyorg). If you are not currently signed up to receive our email alerts and call-to-action emails, you may sign up on our website or contact our office at (919) 807-0800.

Thank you for your interest and support, and rest assured that NC Family will remain at the cutting edge of the political and policymaking process in the Old North State! 🏠

John L. Rustin is president of the North Carolina Family Policy Council. Brittany Farrell is assistant director of policy for the North Carolina Family Policy Council. For a footnoted version of this article, please visit www.ncfamily.org.



Defending the Indefensible

On September 29, Cecile Richards, the president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, appeared before the United States House Oversight and Government Reform Committee in a feeble attempt to defend the indefensible—Planned Parenthood’s practice of harvesting and selling the butchered remains of unborn children whose lives have been snuffed out at its abortion clinics.

This gruesome reality was thrust into the national spotlight by a series of undercover videos released by the Center for Medical Progress (CMP), which had conducted a two-and-a-half year investigation into Planned Parenthood and its trafficking of organs and tissue from aborted babies. Ever since CMP began releasing video footage this summer, the American public has been so outraged by what it has seen that the U.S. Congress has launched no less than five different committee investigations into the activities of the nation’s largest abortion provider. State legislatures across the country have also responded with efforts to defund Planned Parenthood and to prohibit the sale of body parts from aborted babies.

Federal law already outlaws the sale of “human fetal tissue” for profit, and it prohibits abortionists from altering “the timing, method, or procedures used to terminate the pregnancy ... solely for the purposes of obtaining the tissue.” But these restrictions are nearly impossible to police, especially within an enterprise that makes millions from killing innocent babies.

So what defense did Ms. Richards’ offer to the congressional committee? *Ad Hominem*, or the age-old strategy of attacking your opponent’s character when you are unable to effectively answer the arguments and claims made against you. In her testimony, Richards characterized the CMP videos as “deceptively edited,” “heavily doctored,” “sensationalized,” and part of an ongoing “smear campaign” against Planned Parenthood. These bogus claims came up short when the credibility of the video footage from the CMP’s undercover investigation was legitimized by an extensive forensics analysis contracted by our friends at Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF).

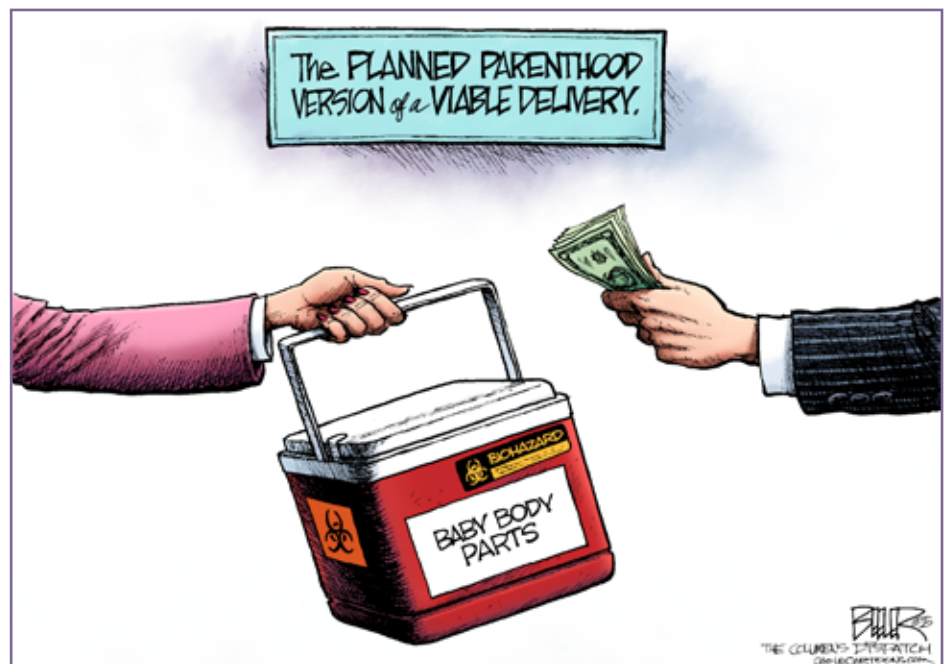
Ad Hominem was also part of the strategy employed by a handful of state legislators who chose to argue against a proposal in the North Carolina General

Assembly to ban the sale of baby body parts in North Carolina and to prohibit the state from contracting with any service provider that conducts abortions.

Just like Ms. Richards’ attempts to discredit CMP, the arguments of these legislators fell flat. And, thankfully, on the same day Richards appeared before Congress, the North Carolina General Assembly ratified a bill that makes it a felony offense in the State of North Carolina to “sell the remains of an unborn child resulting from an abortion or a miscarriage,” and that ensures no state taxpayer dollars will be used to fund entities, like Planned Parenthood, that perform abortions.

At key times in our nation’s history, a confluence of circumstances have brought a heightened focus on an issue, like slavery and human trafficking, and it has stirred the heart of the American people to demand an end to such an abhorrent practice. I earnestly pray that these circumstances will be a turning point that results in an end, not only to the harvesting of baby body parts in our country, but to the killing of innocent unborn children! 🙏

John L. Rustin is president of the North Carolina Family Policy Council.



By: Nate Beeler, www.politicalcartoons.com



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