

# FAITH & JUSTICE

AUGUST 2020

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Why Elections Matter

PAGE 5

University Says MLK's  
Niece 'Too Religious'  
For Students To Hear

PAGE 15

When Schools Use Kids  
For Political Agendas

PAGE 21

## Live And Let Live

North Carolina Christians Are Reinventing Pro-Life  
Advocacy Despite Aggressive Government Opposition

# CONTENTS



## COVER STORY

### 7 Live And Let Live

North Carolina Christians Are Reinventing Pro-Life Advocacy Despite Aggressive Government Opposition



## COLUMNS

### 2 Minutes With Michael If We Leave God Out

### 3 News & Quick Takes Case Updates From Around The World

### 5 Special Feature Why Elections Matter

### 15 My View My School Discriminated Against MLK's Niece

### 17 Q&A Samaritan's Purse Troubleshooter Says Professionalism Is Key To Ministry In Crisis

### 20 Case Update Harris Supreme Court Decision: What's Next?

### 21 Opinion Parents To School District: Stop Using Our Kids For Your Political Agenda



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## Minutes With Michael

### If We Leave God Out

By Michael Farris, President and CEO

I vacationed this summer in the Allegheny Mountains, where quiet woods and glittering streams provided a welcome respite from everyday routines. Two things that occupy much of my time in this favorite getaway spot are riding my road bike and stream fishing for trout (I use an old-fashioned rod and reel with a nightcrawler). Both are extremely peaceful.

But the world was never far away. News of our nation's mounting troubles beckoned from my smartphone. COVID. Racial struggles. Riots. The battles for religious liberty.

Absorbing all of that during my time away, I had an opportunity to reflect on the real reason for all the dissonance in our country. Some thoughts:

Our nation is not just divided; it is fracturing before our eyes. I submit that this fracturing is accelerated because we have left God out.

The Declaration of Independence placed God in the center of the founding purpose of our nation: "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...."

God created us equally, with inherent worth and dignity. Leave God out of the struggle for equality, and we splinter into factions.

Government does not give us rights. God endowed us with rights that governments are honor-bound to protect. Leave God out of the equation, and government starts believing that it can ration our rights as it sees fit.

There is only one path to peace. Only one path to harmony. God must be at the center of our efforts to achieve our nation's promise of equality and inalienable rights.

This is the right path not merely because that's the way our country was founded. This is the right path because it's true. God did make us equal. God did give us rights. If we don't build on those foundations, chaos will ensue.

A nation that leaves God out loses its way.

This is why ADF fights tirelessly for religious freedom — and why we never depend on ourselves in the effort.

From the beginning, ADF has been committed to the centrality of Christ in everything we do. Our theme verse, John 15:5, echoes this need. Without Christ we can do nothing. As a ministry, we hold to this verse when we celebrate victories, and when we face our most formidable challenges.

When we abide in Christ, we can bear much fruit — even in the midst of a chaotic world. 

# News & Quick Takes

## Case Updates From Around The World

### Salem, Oregon

ADF attorneys representing a pro-life student group at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon, filed a lawsuit to challenge the college's speech policies that restrict outdoor speech to two small areas and require students to secure permission at least two weeks in advance before speaking in those areas.

In February, members of the college's Students for Life group hosted an on-campus debate about the morality of physician-assisted suicide. **The students wanted to promote the event outdoors by handing out flyers between classes, but found they could not do so without violating speech policies.**

In 2011, Chemeketa College changed its so-called "Free Speech Guidelines" after it was warned that its policy violated the First Amendment. Yet, in 2019, the college reverted to this discriminatory and unconstitutional policy, prompting the lawsuit from ADF.

"The only permission slip students need to speak on public college campuses is the First Amendment," says ADF Legal Counsel Michael Ross. "Our clients have the right to peacefully engage and persuade their peers."

### Rockford, Illinois

A pediatric nurse who lost her job because of her religious convictions can move forward with her lawsuit, an Illinois appeals court ruled.

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**WATCH**  
a video about  
Rojas' case at  
[ADFlegal.org/  
fj-Rojas](http://ADFlegal.org/fj-Rojas)

### Georgia

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to take a case filed by ADF attorneys on behalf of two former college students who are seeking to vindicate their constitutionally protected freedoms.

In 2016, Georgia Gwinnett College officials twice stopped student Chike Uzuegbunam from sharing his Christian faith with other students on campus. The first time, college officials said he had not reserved one of two tiny speech zones where free expression was allowed.

The second time, officials stopped him because someone complained. **Officials said speech that makes someone feel "uncomfortable" qualifies as disorderly conduct.** Uzuegbunam stopped sharing his faith on campus, and another student self-censored after seeing how officials mistreated Uzuegbunam.

The college amended its speech zone policy and eliminated its speech code, but it has done nothing to rectify its mistreatment of Uzuegbunam. ADF attorneys have expressed concern that, unless public university officials' constitutional violations are punished, they may violate other students' rights in the future.

### Chile

ADF International is working with allies in Chile to challenge the unlawful closure of Catholic churches during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In early March, a bishop advised priests in Los Angeles, Chile, that they were not barred from celebrating mass as long as government restrictions for public gatherings were followed. But when a photo of a mass appeared on social media, some demanded that authorities take action to forbid religious gatherings during the pandemic.

#### Responding to the demands, health officials taped over the front doors of all Catholic churches

**in the city.** After challenges to the measure were rejected by the courts, ADF International helped a local organization pen an appeal to the press. A joint op-ed was published in Chile's leading newspaper, and the following day health officials revoked the shutdown order for Los Angeles churches.

More recently, ADF International filed a friend-of-the-court brief challenging a lawsuit calling for a ban of all religious gatherings in the region of Bio-Bio – one of the most populous in the country.

### Romania

**ADF International cases were featured in a Romanian television program that aired in April**, highlighting current challenges for Christians in Europe.

The prime-time show, which aired on a national station, focused on issues such as freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, media freedom, and euthanasia. The show was built heavily on ADF International messaging and included interviews with the ministry's team members.

ADF International has received very positive feedback from allies in Romania, who said they felt uplifted and equipped by the show.

### Florida

Wells Fargo pulled millions of dollars in donations from a Florida school voucher program because some participating Christian schools have policies on homosexuality and transgenderism.

Florida's state voucher program allows individuals and companies to donate money for student private school scholarships in exchange for tax credits. **The program makes it possible for children from low-income families – many with special needs – to attend schools that share the family's faith.**

The voucher program helps more than 100,000 students, 70 percent of whom are black, Hispanic, or multiracial. More than half of the students have single mothers. With reduced funding for the program, many of these children may be forced back into failing, inadequate schools.

### Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

ADF attorneys representing five pro-life sidewalk counselors have asked the U.S. Supreme Court to weigh in on a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, censorship-zone law that muzzles free speech on public sidewalks outside abortion facilities.

Pittsburgh enacted **a law that bans speech and advocacy – even prayer – in painted zones outside medical facility entrances.** The city then chose to paint such zones outside only two facilities in the entire metropolitan area, Pittsburgh's two abortion clinics, and enforced the ban against pro-life sidewalk counselors only.

"Banning pro-life speech robs pregnant women of a life-changing choice," says ADF Legal Counsel Elissa Graves. "Sometimes a woman stops in the censorship zone and stretches out her hand to receive [pro-life] literature. Pittsburgh bans sidewalk counselors from reaching out at that critical moment. That robs a woman of a fully informed choice."

**READ MORE**  
about ADF's support of pro-life sidewalk counselors in *Live and Let Live*, p. 7.



## Churches Defended During COVID-19

Responding to government overreach, ADF has advised, or equipped others to advise, more than 3,000 churches and ministries during the COVID-19 crisis. The ministry has also successfully defended the rights of church and ministry clients in 14 cases during the pandemic, with more cases pending.

### Oregon: Pastors face fines and jail time

Many Oregon churches were planning to resume in-person worship services at the end of May, with strict social distancing and health and safety protocols, as the state began to loosen coronavirus restrictions. But a governor's order allowed pastors to be fined \$1,250 and jailed up to 30 days if they gathered with 25 other people on a Sunday morning.

Meanwhile, gatherings exceeding 25 were allowed in numerous secular settings, including malls, gyms, and restaurants. ADF attorneys filed a lawsuit on behalf of two churches, challenging the unequal treatment. In response to the lawsuit, Gov. Katherine Brown moved most Oregon counties to another phase and agreed to treat churches the same as other facilities, allowing the two congregations to meet for worship.

### Nevada: Casinos open, churches closed

In early June, thousands of people poured into Nevada casinos, which reopened after being closed due to the pandemic. But the state's restrictions make it illegal for churches to meet with more than 50 people.

ADF attorneys sued Gov. Steve Sisolak on behalf of Calvary Chapel Dayton Valley, which faces restrictions despite implementing extensive health and safety protocols. ADF's brief includes video footage of a recently opened, crowded casino floor where most patrons pictured are not wearing masks or practicing social distancing.

"If groups of people can meet to play the slots, then the state can't play favorites and treat churches worse than casinos," says ADF Senior Counsel Ryan Tucker, director of the ADF Center for Christian Ministries.



## Special Feature

# Why Elections Matter

By Joseph P. Infranco

A friend recently told me he has stopped watching news altogether. "It's just too loud and tiring to watch, and everything is a fight," he observed — not a bad summary of our current situation.

It's easy to understand why people want to unplug from the political maelstrom. It feels like we're constantly bombarded with partisan rancor. Was there really a time we had civil political discourse? A time when we could disagree agreeably, and even occasionally find common ground?

But at times like this, the temptation to withdraw is the very reason voting is so vital. Disengagement is an invitation for the most strident and least reasonable voices to drive policy. It is an old truism, but one best heeded: *People are policy*.

Examples abound. Recent elections in Virginia and New York brought change to the control of the state legislatures that reduced those supporting sanctity of life and religious freedom to the minority. The result was a blitzkrieg legislative agenda.

Following 2019 elections, Virginia acted quickly to remove abortion restrictions. In passing the Orwellian-named "Reproductive Health Protection Act," legislators waived the 24-hour waiting period, mandatory ultrasound, and counseling on adoption options previously required for women seeking abortions.

Even before the election, there were hints about how far a new majority might go. Virginia's governor, Ralph Northam, revealed (perhaps unintentionally) just how radical his vision was. In a local "Ask the Governor" radio program, Northam essentially advocated for infanticide.

A scenario had been presented: a baby with severe deformities ... a mother seeking a late-term abortion ... labor starting before the abortion could begin. Northam offered his "solution," saying: "The infant would be delivered, the infant would be kept comfortable, the infant would be resuscitated if that's what the mother and the family desired. And then a discussion would ensue between the physicians and the mother."

Many listeners were shocked as they absorbed the meaning: a mother could decide to leave her child to die after birth, and the governor would protect her right to do that.

Additionally, in April 2020, Virginia legislators passed the so-called "Virginia Values Act," which adds both "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to state anti-discrimination laws in areas such as housing, employment, and public accommodation. But corresponding concerns over religious liberty were glossed over.

The law's religious exemption is weak and ambiguous, and likely to lead to intrusion into religious liberty. Religious leaders expressed deep concerns about the possible impact on religious schools and ministries in particular. In addition, the law allows individuals to sue anyone for violating the law and recover damages (including punitive damages) and attorney's fees for so-called "discrimination."

**These new laws are not end points, but rather stopovers on the way to the next goal.**

“

Joseph P. Infranco

Similarly, New York's new regime quickly moved to add "gender identity" to the state's anti-discrimination laws following the 2018 elections. And, just as quickly, the new legislature passed one of the most extreme pro-abortion laws in the nation, essentially legalizing abortion up until birth.

On signing the Reproductive Health Act into law, Gov. Cuomo ordered state landmark buildings to be lit in pink in celebration of the achievement.

Laws like these not only affect the immediate subject, like abortion or LGBTQ demands, but also set courses for new cultural destinations. Religious freedom and the right of conscience are belittled as "an excuse to discriminate," and long-held views on biblical morality and sexual ethics are trampled:

- Someone who espouses a traditional view of marriage, or the idea that we are created by God with an immutable sex, strays ever closer to "hate speech" territory.
- A teacher or professor who is unwilling to use a student's transgender pronouns — or even accidentally uses the "wrong" pronoun — can suffer harsh penalties.
- Medical professionals who oppose abortion on religious grounds draw closer to the time that holding such convictions will not be tolerated.

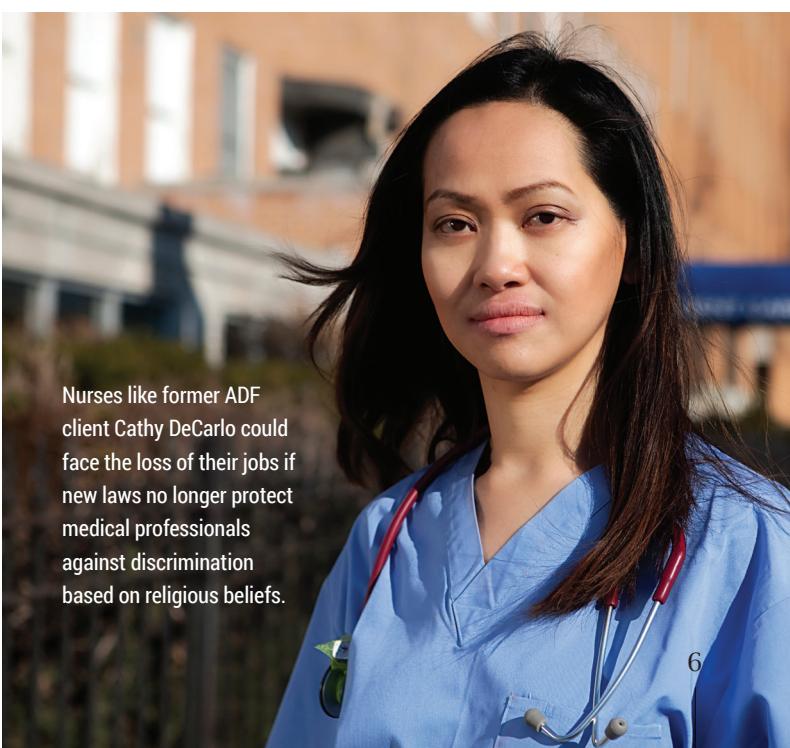
- Female athletes will continue to be denied equal athletic opportunities as "gender identity" is enshrined as a new norm. Forced to compete against males, women and girls will lose honors and opportunities to compete at elite levels.

These are not fanciful fears. Cathy DeCarlo, a nurse at a New York hospital, was threatened with the loss of her job if she would not participate in abortions in violation of her faith. ADF filed suit on her behalf, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched an investigation. The hospital changed its policy as a result — but what would happen in a similar case if the law no longer provided that protection?

ADF is also representing New Hope Family Services, a Christian agency in New York that faces the closure of its adoption program for following its faith guidelines in placing the children it serves into homes with a married mother and father, rather than with unmarried or same-sex couples. This agency has operated in Syracuse for 55 years, placing more than 1,000 children into loving homes and earning praise from state social workers. But hostile state officials decided this peaceful coexistence has to end; no one is permitted to hold "wrong" views any longer.

All this points to the opening observation: *People are policy*. We must bear in mind that these new laws are not end points, but rather stopovers on the way to the next goal. They are markers in the process of "progress" and not merely discrete outcomes.

That's why politics is so important. We should all strive to tone down the rancor, and even pray for those who disagree or abuse and insult us. But we must also be informed and participate in our electoral process — or we will have only ourselves to blame for the outcome. ▲



Nurses like former ADF client Cathy DeCarlo could face the loss of their jobs if new laws no longer protect medical professionals against discrimination based on religious beliefs.

A photograph of two men sitting on a wooden porch railing. The man on the left is wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt with white polka dots and dark blue jeans, with his hands clasped in his lap. The man on the right is wearing a black zip-up hoodie and blue jeans, with one hand resting on his knee. They are both looking towards the camera with slight smiles. In the background, there is a potted plant on the left and a lush green lawn and trees behind them.

Cover Story

# Live And Let Live

North Carolina Christians Are Reinventing Pro-Life Advocacy Despite Aggressive Government Opposition

By Chris Potts

**Suddenly, it was so easy to see what kind of person I wanted to be.**

“

David Benham

**O**n the day David Benham and his brother, Jason, first determined to stand for the sanctity of life, they'd already lived 13 years longer than their dad originally intended.

“Flip” Benham was a hard-drinking, miserable man when his wife told him she was expecting twins. He urged her to abort them; she refused, then told him she was leaving him. He asked what it would take to make her stay.

“Come to church with me this Sunday,” she said.

He did. That decision — and the one for Christ he made at the end of the morning service — has saved many young lives in the decades since. In that crowded hour, Flip became a Christian, committed his life to the ministry, and transformed into an ardent opponent of abortion. His sons would grow up to follow that example — if not the exact path — in all three arenas.

The boys were still young teenagers the day their dad took them to a pro-life prayer walk he was leading at a downtown Dallas abortion center. They knew of their dad's driving passion for these efforts, but had never seen one of the events firsthand. Climbing out of the car that morning, they were instantly overwhelmed: on one side, a crowd in pink was screaming obscenities and waving hangers and phallic symbols; on the other, 200 or so pro-life advocates stood singing and praying.

The noise was deafening, the sight unnerving, as police officers immediately converged on their father, ordering him to leave. Flip refused. The officers instantly spun him around, yanking zip-ties so tight on his wrists that to this day, Flip has no feeling in parts of his fingers. They applied pressure to his back, pulling back on his arms. Even now, David remembers the officers' gritted teeth, his father's groans ... and above it all, the sound of angry screams and “Amazing Grace.”

“I realized, ‘Wow — this is a real thing,’ ” David says. “This is worth fighting for.” Suddenly, “it was so easy to see what kind of person I wanted to be.”

**We're not trying to end abortion.  
We're bringing the kingdom, we're loving  
our neighbors as ourselves, and as a  
result, the end of abortion will come.  
That's our prayer.**

“

David Benham

The seeds of pro-life work, sown so deep that morning, were a long while blooming to full fruition. After college, the Benham brothers played baseball for a St. Louis Cardinals farm team, then became real estate entrepreneurs in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 2014, their notable success prompted producers at HGTV to enlist them for a home improvement reality show. Those plans were cancelled after leftist groups published high-profile reports targeting the brothers' opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage. The loss stunned the Benhams.

"That was a multi-million-dollar reality show that I knew was going to bring significant influence to our family," David says. "We were going to use that to [speak out] for the unborn and for our rights as Americans and for the Gospel." He and Jason had hoped their newfound fame would give them the kind of platform other celebrities use to push "the agenda of death and sexual revolution," while well-known Christians too often keep silent. The cancellation, he says, was "like a gut punch ... all that influence, out the window. I had to work through that."

The loss of that opportunity strengthened the brothers' focus, he says, on the commitment they'd each made 25 years earlier. "We realized, 'Man, here we are at the height of our business, we're wealthy Christian entrepreneurs ... what are we doing like what our father was doing? How can we step in and actually be the peaceful, 'Amazing Grace'-singing, people-loving pro-lifers?'

"That," he says, "is what birthed 'Cities4Life.'"

The weak link, the Benhams decided, was the sidewalks. After more than 30 years of firsthand observation of the pro-life movement in action, David and Jason had a pretty clear bead on the strengths and weaknesses of conventional programs. They knew all the resources now available to pregnant women, and from the time of that first experience with their dad's arrest, they knew how protests worked out in front of abortion centers.

But in between were the sidewalks, where frightened young women often ran a gauntlet between pro-life advocates and abortion activists, without knowing anything of the support groups available to those who might opt to carry a child to full term. What these women needed was a streamlined, holistic frontline option: gentle counselors who could intercept them, pray for them, and make them aware of the extraordinary resources they could so easily draw on.

The Benhams set out to establish that new beachhead of compassion. Number one, they would recruit caring sidewalk counselors who could act as "missionaries to these mothers." No yelling, no picketing, no accusations. Wherever possible, the Benhams wanted women who themselves had been impacted by abortion to be the ones standing on that sidewalk.

Two, they would synchronize a "life network" combining mobile ultrasound units, adoption centers, outreaches to unwed mothers, post-abortive counseling, and other resources into one coordinated effort. And three, they would identify ways of plugging these struggling, searching women into a local church.

"Cities4Life is a spark plug to get the local church into action," David says. The non-threatening, prayer-centered approach was designed not only to avoid intimidating pregnant women, but to engage the church in something more proactive and involved than just a once-a-year sermon on Sanctity of Life Sunday.

"It's a Gospel-centered ministry," David says. "We're not trying to end abortion. We're bringing the kingdom, we're loving our neighbors as ourselves, and as a result, the end of abortion will come. That's our prayer." It's a prayer that's being answered abundantly.



Jason Benham presents biblical business principles during the Benham brothers' weekly Bible study, livestreamed on social media.

A 2015 *Washington Times* study showed a 26% drop in abortions (the largest in the country) in North Carolina, across the first five years Cities4Life was in business. During that same period, Benham says, Cities4Life helped nearly 3,000 women choose life over abortion.

Five years later, that success continues to grow. Cities4Life has now ministered to more than 5,000 women and enlisted some 200 sidewalk counselors and volunteers, with more looking to join all the time. "It's hard to keep a schedule," David says, "so many people want to come."

**T**he situation was a little awkward. Not just because the young woman looking at her baby's sonogram no longer seemed so sure about getting an abortion, but because this was ... well, an abortion center. And the young woman's aunt worked there.

The aunt — watching her niece, listening to her talk — realized that the young woman really was at a loss for what to do. And was feeling a little self-conscious, trying to decide such a momentous question here, in front of her aunt.



*The aunt cleared her throat.*

*"You know what?" she said. "I'll be honest with you. I know those people out there." She pointed toward the street out in front of the abortion center, where most of a dozen Cities4Life volunteers were praying, and offering counsel to women like her niece. "They have all kinds of resources for you. Why don't you go out there and talk to them?"*

*The niece must have been taken aback at the suggestion, but was confused enough to accept it. A few minutes later, she stepped out the front door and made her way over to one of the people waiting, smiling, across the street.*

*"My aunt told me I should come out here and talk to you guys," she said.*



Justin Reeder with his 5-year-old daughter, Josie.

Most of them come from the more than 1,000 local churches in Charlotte, which has one of the highest number of churches per capita in America. It's also in a state where abortion is the leading cause of death.

"Not heart disease, not cancer," says Justin Reeder, another Charlotte entrepreneur and close friend of the Benhams. "We have between 150 and 200 abortions happening every week in our city." Charlotte's four abortion centers are among the busiest in the southeastern U.S. — busier than Miami's or Atlanta's, and drawing women from throughout the South.

Reeder knew most of the pastors in Charlotte had no better grasp of that reality than he did, and no clearer understanding of what actually happens at abortion centers. So, he founded Love Life, a sister ministry to Cities4Life, and began inviting pastors, one by one, to take an hour and come find out.

"I want you to see these clinics for yourselves," he told them. "I want you to see these as real lives, as human beings. And I want to share a vision with you on how we can shift the culture." To date, more than 300 pastors have taken him up on the offer. And the culture's begun to shift.

Love Life launched in 2016 with a prayer walk of 22 people. Over the last four years, though, more than 80,000 people have chosen to walk and pray, rather than take abortion in stride. One result: "We've seen over 2,000 families that have made the choice for life."

Saving lives is the main goal, but not the only one, Reeder says. "We're here to activate the church," he says. "Not only to educate them, make them aware, call them to prayer ... but also to activate them beyond our prayer walks." That includes cultivating church members as mentors to unwed mothers, as disciplers of moms and dads who hadn't planned to be moms and dads, as foster and adoptive parents, as people who care for orphans "in and outside the womb."

**This wasn't about health concerns.  
This was about silencing our voice  
because they don't like what we have  
to say or what we stand for.**

“

Justin Reeder

Love Life works closely with Cities4Life, providing consistent prayer support and cultivating the relationships with pastors and churches who supply many of the latter group's sidewalk counselors and volunteers. The Benham brothers, meanwhile, cultivate fellow entrepreneurs in the community, enlisting them to underwrite much of the financial cost of these ministries.

As a result of that two-pronged approach, “we just have seen the church come alive,” Reeder says. They've seen opposition come alive, too.

**D**avid's aunt, a Cities4Life volunteer, was on the phone. She wanted him to raise a little money for a woman from Atlanta. The woman had been living in Charlotte for a while, but things weren't working out, and she wanted to go back home. She didn't really have the money to get there. David wondered how his aunt had come to know of the woman's situation.

“That woman who's been standing out by the clinic, screaming and yelling obscenities at us — the really filthy stuff?” his aunt said. “That's her.”

Someone had called and offered the woman (and quite a few others) \$15 an hour to disrupt Cities4Life's sidewalk counselors and volunteers. But, after a few weeks, “this just isn't what I thought it was going to be,” the woman said. “I'm getting paid, but I've got no connection, no community, no nothing.” Plus ... the Cities4Life people kept trying to make friends with her.

Within an hour, David helped his aunt raise about \$1,500 from donors. She passed the gift along to the woman, explaining where it had come from. The woman began to sob.

“You guys have treated me with such respect,” she said. “I can't believe I even came here.”



Debbie Hobson, a Cities4Life sidewalk counselor, calls out to women preparing to enter a Charlotte abortion facility, urging them to “choose life.”

**C**ity officials and pro-abortionists in Charlotte and nearby Greensboro have tried many things to block the efforts of Cities4Life and Love Life volunteers. Screaming obscenities and playing loud rap music. Passing ordinances to shut off the ministries' microphones. Rezoning parking to make them walk longer distances to get to the abortion centers. Mocking them during city council meetings.

All of it has had some effect; none of it has stopped the volunteers from being on hand, day after day. But, earlier this year, during the pandemic shutdowns, the opposition grew more aggressive.

With the coming of COVID-19, Reeder paused the *en masse* weekly prayer walks that were Love Life's trademark, telling individuals they were free to continue, but urging them to adhere to CDC regulations by using hand sanitizer and maintaining proper distancing. One Saturday in March, Reeder himself was walking on private property, with the permission of the owner, across the street from a Greensboro clinic, praying. Four others, including his attorney, were with him, a few feet apart.

#### **DONATE:** Your gifts help ADF defend courageous ministries against government opposition

Within seconds, police began pulling up to the curb. Officers ordered Reeder and other Love Life staff to leave. Reeder and his attorney pointed out that they were on private property, with permission, obeying all health directives — and that as a 501(c)(3) organization, they were within their rights. They also pointed out that a lot of people had entered the small abortion center across the way — too many, it appeared, to allow for much social distancing.

By the time Reeder and the attorney finished explaining all of that, they were in the back of a squad car. The charge was “illegal gathering” — having more than 10 people together during quarantine. Reeder pointed out that there were only five in his group. The arresting officer took back the citation, crossed out the charge, and wrote in: “unlawful travel for nonessential purposes.”

“The city had been looking for a chance to silence our speech,” Reeder says. “This wasn't about health concerns. This was about silencing our voice because they don't like what we have to say or what we stand for.” Reeder and the others wound up in the same holding cell, praying and worshiping in ways Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25) would have understood.

“You read the Scriptures a little differently, after you walk through these things,” Reeder says. He called David in Charlotte, to warn him to be ready.

**L**ike many people in the early-April pandemic days, the young couple were wearing masks. They'd been on their way into the Charlotte abortion center when a woman, a few feet away on the sidewalk, offered to pray for them. She asked if she could help.

The young woman began to cry, as the two blurted out some of the problems they were facing — problems that seemed insurmountable by any solution other than ending the life of a child. The woman listened, then offered something these two hadn't seen much of for a while ... hope.

She walked with them to a nearby RV, where they could talk things over with Vicky Kaseorg, a Cities4Life counselor and the ministry's volunteer coordinator. Kaseorg talks almost daily with young couples like this, and she began to ask some thoughtful questions that would get to the heart of their situation, and maybe offer them a way out of the circumstances pressing in upon them.

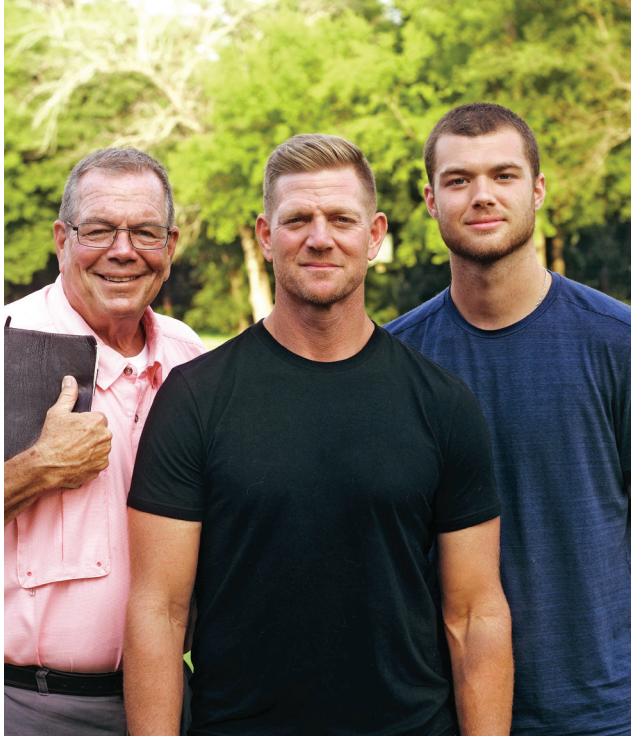


Vicky Kaseorg

Meanwhile, inside the RV — a mobile ultrasound unit — another woman was changing her mind. Talking with a Cities4Life counselor, she decided to carry her child to term after all. As she came off the RV, the still-teary young woman with Vicky finished filling out some forms, and Vicky guided her and the young man onto the RV to see a sonogram of their baby.

As she did, Vicky's phone wiggled with a text. It said police were arresting some of her friends in front of the abortion center. One of them was David Benham. Vicky frowned, breathed a prayer, and followed the couple onto the RV.

**D**avid was sipping a good cup of coffee when the phone rang. About 15 police officers were confronting the two or three Cities4Life counselors on the sidewalk that morning at the abortion center. David sped to the scene, but was barely out of his truck when officers converged on him, ordering him to go.



David Benham (center) with his father, Flip, and oldest son, Bailey, near the scene of their March arrests.

Like Reeder, he explained his group's 501(c)(3) exemptions ... pointed out their adherence to health directives ... noted that considerably less than 10 of his people were on the scene. As with Reeder, none of it mattered. Officers surrounded him, placed his hands behind his back, and locked handcuffs on them so tight that David could barely feel his fingers —

— and just like that, he was 13 years old again, watching tall men arrest his dad.

"I went all the way back," David says. "The emotions were crazy. I felt ... honored."

One of the officers later smiled and gave David a nod. "I know why you're here, Mr. Benham," he said. "Is there any way I can make you more comfortable?"

David laughed. "Well, you could loosen the one on my left hand." The officer did so.

An hour later, David was sitting in a holding cell, sharing his faith with the teen boy sitting next to him. He heard the creak of the cell door opening, and looked up to see ... his father, hands cuffed behind him, being pushed inside. Police had arrested him outside the same abortion center. He, too, sat down and began to share his faith.

A few minutes later, the door creaked again. This time, it was David's oldest son in handcuffs — arrested shortly after witnessing the arrests of his father and grandfather.

**WATCH:**  
David's arrest at  
[ADFlegal.org/fj-Benham](http://ADFlegal.org/fj-Benham)

"And I tell you," David laughs. "I played in some major league baseball stadiums. But I don't think my dad's ever been so proud as that one moment, when his son and his grandson were both in the slammer with him."

*Vicky glanced at another text — eight more of her fellow volunteers had just been arrested — as the couple in the mobile ultrasound unit gazed at pictures of the baby in the young woman's womb, at what Vicky calls "the unmistakable miracle of the tiny beating heart." The couple, she saw, were holding hands. Above their masks, their eyes shone with joy.*

*"I never really wanted to abort the baby," the young woman said, as they got up to leave.*

*"Are you choosing life?" Vicky asked. The two nodded in unison.*

*Vicky asked if she could talk with them about God. They said that she could, and listened with rapt attention and not a few questions as she shared the Gospel with them. When she finished, they prayed to give their lives to Christ.*

*Vicky gave them information and resources for how to follow through on both of their decisions from that life-changing morning. She watched them walk away — one young life, and two young souls, saved. Then she hurried to see what was happening out on the sidewalk.*

*That night, she was stewing over the arrests of her friends when her phone chirped again. This text was from her new young sister in Christ: "Thank you so much. Thank you for everything."*

*And that, Vicky thought, is why caring people stand, day by day, in front of abortion centers.*

"Abortion activists have said all along that abortion is 'a choice,' he says. "Now, many state and local officials say it's 'essential.' But those who provide women with real choice and real help are considered by some to be nonessential. When government officials and abortion activists allow these clinics to be open, but shut down the folks who are allowing women real choice ... that just shows their true colors." ADF has filed lawsuits against the cities of Charlotte and Greensboro, challenging the government's enforcement of that double standard.

Meanwhile, Cities4Life and Love Life "have seen an acceleration of growth," Reeder says. "We've expanded into more areas. Now, we're not only at four abortion clinics, we're at about 20, ministering on a consistent basis."

**W**e're winning," David says. "Not us — the Holy Spirit working through us. We're entrepreneurs. We have standards of measure, a system and a process, and we deliver it by the power of the Holy Spirit, and we win. We know we'll win."

"We're called to a spiritual battle," David tells his children. "We're not called to just a safe, fun, easy, comfortable life — to just make money and be cool. We're

**We're called to a spiritual battle ... to be leaders and champions for the kingdom of the Lord and also for the weakest among us ... the unborn.**

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David Benham

called to be leaders and champions for the kingdom of the Lord and also for the weakest among us ... the unborn. And if you're not taking arrows from the devil," he adds, "you're probably not over the target."

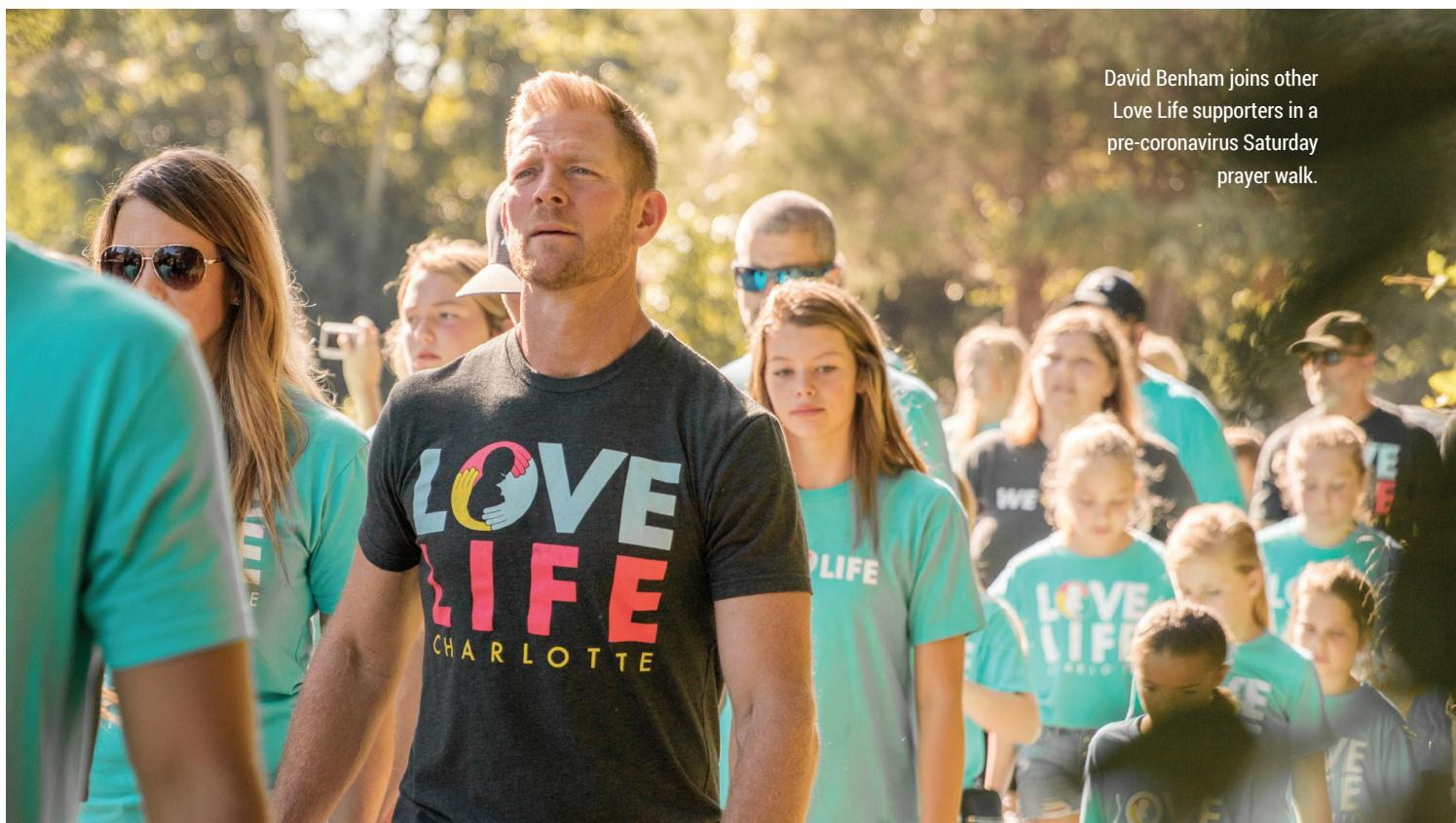
Like David, all those years ago, Justin Reeder's three young children — 6, 5, and 1 1/2 — saw their father being arrested (he was on Facebook Live when the police confronted him). And they understood why.

"Our kids have really grown up being at the prayer walks with me," Reeder says. "It's a family call for us. We're disciplining our children how to live out what we believe." In prayer times since the arrest, his children have often brought up the incident: "Daddy, when are you going to give me a chance to stand strong?" "I'm ready to go to jail!" "Will they let me bring snacks?"

But that's not all.

"My kids pray for the abortionists," Reeder says. "They know them by name, and they pray for them by name almost every night. It's precious to see. They've seen me cussed at and yelled at — and even have been themselves — and they respond with love. They pray for those people."

Maybe they've just seen enough to know what kind of people they want to be. ▲



David Benham joins other Love Life supporters in a pre-coronavirus Saturday prayer walk.



Brian Cochran and Alveda King

## My View My School Discriminated Against MLK's Niece

By Brian Cochran

**B**uried in my computer science classes, I wasn't paying much attention to the abortion issue in my early years at Georgia Tech. I was pro-life — and had been for as long as I could remember — but I never thought about being involved in the cause.

That changed three summers ago.

I landed an internship after my freshman year at Google X in Mountain View, California, not far from where my brother lived. He was active in the pro-life movement and asked me to fill in for him at an upcoming event. All I had to do was hand out flyers to let residents know about plans for a new Planned Parenthood facility. I agreed.

I was inspired by people I met that afternoon — men and women who were actively supporting the sanctity of life, in a state that is known for being pro-abortion. I thought, "If people in California are willing to be out here sharing their views, I can do this on my Georgia campus." I wanted to promote a culture of life at Georgia Tech.

**I** learned about Students for Life of America (SFLA), and that fall semester, started a chapter on my campus. It was hard to recruit students at first. There wasn't much political talk on campus, and nobody wanted to talk about anything controversial because they were afraid of what others would think. Our first meeting drew just three people, plus myself.

But our fledgling group was determined. We hosted table events on the main campus walkway several times a week, providing a place where people could pick up information about abortion and learn about pregnancy resources. But more than anything, we wanted to get people talking. As students passed our table, we asked, "Hey, are you pro-life?" or "How do you feel about abortion?"

Some kept walking, a few yelled profanities, but a lot of students stopped to talk to us. And having these genuine conversations started bringing people in. People who held extreme views, supporting abortion all the way through the ninth month of pregnancy, would talk to us and say, "Okay, I actually see what you're saying." And maybe they didn't suddenly turn around completely. But they would tell us, "I see that this is a person at least in the second and third trimester." And that was a start.

**O**ur group began to grow, and by the end of the semester we had about 20 people. We kept expanding our activities, and that summer we brainstormed new ways to share our message. We decided to bring Alveda King, Martin Luther King Jr.'s niece, to the campus that fall, to speak about her experience in the civil rights movement and how students can continue to protect civil rights — including those of the unborn — today.

Ms. King has spent her life working for civil rights, making sure all people are treated equally. She has her own abortion testimony, so we knew she would be able to talk about the life issue personally, and that her message would inspire students and spark conversation.

We submitted a funding request to the Student Government Association (SGA) to host Ms. King. It is standard procedure for requests like ours to be fast-tracked and approved right away. But not this time.

"**W**e see you're going to talk about abortion and the pro-life movement," a student leader told me when I presented my group's funding request. "We can't fast-track this."

I spent hours in SGA meetings, while student leaders interrogated me about what Ms. King would be speaking about. They even asked me to guarantee that she wouldn't speak about certain parts of her life — especially her pro-life views and Christian beliefs.



Brian Cochran shares pro-life information at a Students for Life table event on the Georgia Tech campus.

**It did not matter how much I tried to work with them. They showed no sign of wanting her on campus at all.**

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Brian Cochran

"I'll advise her that these can be touchy subjects," I offered, trying to meet them halfway. But that wasn't good enough. Whenever I tried to appease them, saying, "Okay, we won't do this or we won't do that," they always wanted more. It did not matter how much I tried to work with them. They showed no sign of wanting her on campus at all.

In the end, they denied funding because Ms. King was "inherently religious." I knew this was discriminatory.

All students at Georgia Tech pay student activity fees, which make funds available to campus clubs for events. The SGA had not subjected other clubs to the kind of scrutiny that my group experienced. They had no problem providing \$5,000 to fund a speech by pro-abortion politician Andrew Gillum. And they didn't object to supporting travel for the Young Democratic Socialists club.

I contacted my SFLA regional coordinator, who connected me with Caleb Dalton of Alliance Defending Freedom's Center for Academic Freedom. ADF agreed to represent us in a federal lawsuit against Georgia Tech. Universities should be encouraging different viewpoints, not playing favorites by funding some groups' activities while refusing others' — just because they don't like their views.

**W**e decided to host Ms. King's speaking event despite the SGA's funding denial. A portion of the cost was covered by fundraising, and another Students for Life member and I kicked in the rest. That was an expensive decision for me — \$2,000 — but I knew how important it was to have this kind of viewpoint on campus. A lot of students had told us they wanted to hear what Ms. King had to say, including many who didn't agree with our pro-life stance. We couldn't let Georgia Tech deny that opportunity.

Naturally, I'm hoping to recover the money I paid to help bring Ms. King to our campus. But more than that, I want to see the university change its policies so that the First Amendment rights of all students will be respected — and no viewpoints will be silenced. ▲

*As of press time, ADF attorneys are in discussions with Georgia Tech officials regarding whether they will agree to pay damages in this case and change university policies to address Mr. Cochran's concerns.*

Q & A

## Ken Isaacs

Samaritan's Purse Troubleshooter  
Says Professionalism Is Key  
To Ministry In Crisis

By Chris Potts

For the last 34 years, Ken Isaacs has been a kind of "humanitarian Indiana Jones," traveling on behalf of Samaritan's Purse, directing the ministry's major relief operations in the wake of wars, genocide, natural disasters, famines, and epidemics. In 2004, he also served in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), acting as director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).

He has served in 120 countries, testified on multiple occasions before House and Senate committees and subcommittees, and most recently directed Samaritan's Purse medical teams responding to COVID-19 on the Navajo Nation in the southwestern United States and in New York's Central Park.

**F&J:** You haven't exactly led a dull life.

**KI:** I was the first person to go overseas with Samaritan's Purse. I've been exposed to things people can't even imagine — that I can't even imagine. The calendar of my memories is pegged around disaster after disaster, war, tsunamis, hurricanes, big events.

When Zaire fell in 1996, I was detained and interrogated for 11 ½ hours. I have memories of being hunkered down in Sarajevo for three days with shelling ... the ground shaking, the sand moving across the floor. You can't get out, so you just go to sleep. I've got memories of Haiti and Ebola. All of those memories work together to strengthen my faith in a way that I accept the sovereignty of God.

I believe that He's the God of a well-organized universe, and He is on mission. My prayer has always been, "God, if You open a door, I'll go through it." And then my follow-up prayer is, "Lord, if I am choosing the wrong door, please close it quick." That is how I have always tried to pursue God's guidance in my life.



Photos courtesy of Samaritan's Purse

**Left:** Ken Isaacs

**Top Right:** The Samaritan's Purse Emergency Field Hospital in New York's Central Park.

**Bottom Right:** Samaritan's Purse medical team members meet with New York City Emergency Management Services to discuss medical protocol for COVID-19 patients.

If you're going to go somewhere, you need to do something of substance, and it shouldn't be an excuse — it should be what it is. Be transparent. Don't hide who you are. Do your work so well that they invite you to come in knowing who you are, and what you are about.

**F&J:** How did that attitude translate into an invitation to help treat pandemic victims in New York?

**KI:** A man called from Mount Sinai Hospital. He said, "I was in Puerto Rico, working with FEMA, and saw your organization there. I know you are serious, professional, and come ready to go to work. You don't need anyone to hold your hand."

Can you come?" I said, "Sure."

In four hours, we had a team in the air. They landed in New York at 7 that night. At 7 the next morning, our team met with him and looked at sites to set up a hospital. Also at 7, five tractors and trailers full of equipment left our warehouses, headed for New York.

We went there to save lives. Some said, "You aren't going ... to treat LGBTQ people." Well, that's absurd. The only thing we make a consideration for is helping people in need. That's it. Nothing else. We didn't ask questions. One hundred-ninety-one people, we treated.

We had a wonderful relationship with the hospital. A hospital official told me, "I don't agree with your views, but I deeply appreciate that you came here to put yourselves in harm's way to help save human lives. And I will stand up with you." He became a friend.

To me, the Gospel in word and deed are inseparable.

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Ken Isaacs

You don't want them attacking you. The ultimate thing is the humanitarian issue, and through God's blessings, that pursuit of being professional and [then] delivering high-quality services is what gives us respect.

**F&J:** The "high-quality services" aspect is important to you.

**KI:** If I drill a bad well, it doesn't matter what I talk about eternity. I need to drill a good well.

The quality of our work is the platform of our witness. Being followers of Christ, we can expect that the majority of people are not going to accept our faith and position. We should not expect a break just because our motivations are to do something in the name of Jesus. In fact, we should expect to be attacked. And that's OK — that's their decision — but we always want to do an excellent job.



**Left:** The Samaritan's Purse Disaster Assistance Response Team sets up a 14-tent, 68-bed respiratory care unit in the East Meadow of Central Park.

**Right:** Samaritan's Purse doctors and nurses pray over a bed before admitting the first COVID-19 patients to the field hospital.



**F&J:** Did your team feel welcome in the city?

**KI:** I was there for more than two weeks, and I've never seen a more gracious community. They brought us food. We started calling it "the COVID-20," because we knew everyone working for us was going to gain 20 pounds. They brought us food and cards, and every evening they came to Central Park and applauded us. It brought us to tears.

**F&J:** What, for you, is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

**KI:** To me, the Gospel in word and deed are inseparable. I'm not a preacher, and if I had to go around just preaching, I'd be a miserable failure. But I get to go help people where they are ... in the ditches of life. The opportunity to present the Gospel might present itself two days or months or years later. I don't know. God's got a plan for that. We are conscientious about living it, intentional about sharing it, but we never coerce people.

**F&J:** How does the work of Alliance Defending Freedom relate to what you do?

**KI:** Both of our organizations believe in freedom of religion. (Samaritan's Purse President) Franklin Graham has an enormous pulpit, especially with social media, and he's uniquely gifted to see the horizon on strategically important things. Religious freedom is clearly one of

**I've never seen a more gracious community.... Every evening they came to Central Park and applauded us. It brought us to tears.**

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Ken Isaacs

them. That drives his views on many subjects: "What will strengthen our freedom to worship God in this country?" And that's where our two organizations dovetail. ADF's mission is to keep the door open for the Gospel, so groups like Samaritan's Purse can continue going through that door to share the Gospel in word and deed.

**F&J:** What gives you hope?

**KI:** I feel that Samaritan's Purse is an organization that the Lord has raised up, and it's a great honor for me to serve the Lord in this way. As a Christian organization, we have a message of eternal truth and eternal life. I have hope because I feel like I am obedient to God's will for my life. I love my work so much that I can't believe I get paid to do it. I am just fortunate to be in the role. ▲

## Case Update

# Harris Supreme Court Decision: What's Next?

*In June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that under federal employment law — which prohibits discrimination based on "sex" — an employer cannot discharge an employee based solely on the employee's sexual orientation or gender identity.*

*Alliance Defending Freedom's Harris Funeral Homes case was one of three addressed in the Bostock v. Clayton County ruling.*

**A**DF has represented Harris Funeral Homes since 2013. That year, a male funeral director announced the intention to dress and present as a woman while interacting with grieving families. The employee had worked at Harris Funeral Homes for nearly six years and had agreed to and followed the funeral home's sex-specific dress code since being hired.

After considering the needs of the employee, other employees, and grieving families, the funeral home's owner, Tom Rost, decided he could not agree to the employee's request. The employee then filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which sued Rost and Harris Funeral Homes for alleged "sex" discrimination. A lower court ruled against the funeral home, and ADF argued the case before the Supreme Court in October.

Many questions remain following the *Bostock* decision. The court limited its ruling to wrongful employment termination, leaving other matters

**"It is sadly predictable that some will take advantage of this ruling and try and extend it to other areas."**

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John Bursch, ADF Vice President of Appellate Advocacy



involving biological differences to be resolved through further legal action.

The ruling does not address women's athletics or matters related to men seeking access to women's showers, locker rooms, or shelters. It also leaves open questions regarding religious protections, including the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which the court applied in *Hobby Lobby*. For Harris Funeral Homes, the decision leaves open whether an employer can require employees to abide by a sex-specific dress code.

Activists have repeatedly weaponized laws that ignore biological differences between men and women to punish people who hold traditional beliefs about marriage and sex.

In Alaska, the city of Anchorage used a "gender identity" law to try to force Downtown Hope Center to let a man identifying as a woman sleep just feet away from women who have been raped, trafficked, and abused.

In Connecticut, two boys who identify as female have won 15 girls' state track-and-field titles since 2017. ADF client Chelsea Mitchell has lost four state championships to a male competing in the girls' division.

*Bostock* may be weaponized in the same way. "It is sadly predictable that some will take advantage of this ruling and try and extend it to other areas," says John Bursch, ADF vice president of appellate advocacy, who represents the funeral home.

ADF will continue to oppose those efforts, Bursch says, "fighting tooth and nail to defend businesses and individuals who are targeted for believing that biology is not bigotry and marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman." ▲

**VISIT:** [ADFmedia.org](http://ADFmedia.org)  
for more Supreme Court  
case updates

## Opinion

# Parents To School District: Stop Using Our Kids For Your Political Agenda

By Sarah Kramer

**A**s a new mother, I have done a lot of research. When I found out I was pregnant, I learned as much as I could about how my baby was growing and developing inside me. I researched the best foods to eat and the foods to avoid. I read books and took classes to prepare myself for when I would finally be holding that tiny little human in my arms.

Once my son was born, my research didn't stop. I want to know everything about him and how I can best take care of him. This is not unique to me. Parents are invested in the well-being of their children.

Several families in Madison, Wisconsin, have done their research, too. And they don't like what they're seeing from the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) — which quietly implemented policies on transgender ideology in 2018 with very little transparency or parental involvement.

That's why these parents — represented by Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty and Alliance Defending Freedom — have filed a lawsuit against MMSD.

## A policy to "disrupt the gender binary"

**A**ccording to the school district's policies, children can choose their own gender — male, female, a blend of both, or neither. The policies aim to "disrupt the gender binary," steering children away from the view that people are innately male or female. To that end, the district provides approved lesson plans and children's books such as *I am Jazz* — which praises the "transition" of a boy to living as a girl under the name Jazz Jennings.

Parents saw the impact of these policy changes shortly after they were put in place. In May 2018, a Madison elementary school showed a video about a teacher's gender transition to the entire school (kindergarten through fifth-grade students) without parental permission.

But that's not even the worst of it.

One of the policies requires all school employees to support and participate in the social transition of children to living as the opposite sex at school. This includes the use of a name, pronouns, and restrooms of the opposite sex without parental notice or consent. And the employees are prohibited from informing parents.

In fact, the policy even calls on employees to actively deceive parents, requiring them to call the student by his or her given name and pronouns in front of the parent. All information of the child's new gender identity is to be kept in an "off the books" file that is hidden from parents, and out of the official school records — which parents have a legal right to see.

## Putting children on a dangerous path

**F**or a child to live radically different identities at home and at school, and to conceal what he or she perceives to be his or her true identity from parents, is psychologically unhealthy," says Dr. Stephen B. Levine, a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. "Extended secrecy and a 'double life' concealed from the parents is rarely the path to psychological health."

Levine points to research that shows a large majority of children who are diagnosed with gender dysphoria



**All information of the child's new gender identity is to be kept in an "off the books" file that is hidden from parents.**

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Sarah Kramer

"desist" — that is, they become comfortable with their biological sex — by puberty or adulthood. But children who socially transition, which this school district policy encourages, are less likely to achieve comfort living with their biological sex.

And this puts children on a dangerous path, all without the knowledge of their parents.

That's why these parents are taking a stand and challenging the school district's policy that requires school district employees to deceive parents.

They know what is best for their own children. And they will not allow the children to be used as pawns to further a political agenda. 



TODAY'S  
PLAN  
is  
TOMORROW'S  
PROMISE

"A legacy gift to ADF is solace to me, knowing when I am gone a Christian organization will be working to protect the First Amendment rights of my beloved family members."

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