

December 2009

Dear Friends,

“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” Never had human beings read God’s word from so far away. Never had so many people listened. On December 24, 1968, I was a teenager captivated by a live TV broadcast all the way from the moon. My family and I joined nearly one-quarter of all human beings on the earth that night as we turned our eyes heavenward and our thoughts toward God.

The crew of Apollo 8, with no better than a 50% chance of success, blasted off from Earth on December 21—their destination the moon. Their mission, in preparation for a moon landing later on, was to orbit the moon 10 times and return to Earth. They arrived there on Christmas Eve. On their fourth orbit they saw, and we saw, what no human eyes had ever seen—an earthrise over the surface of the moon. As they rounded the moon for the ninth time, all regular TV programming ceased and the astronauts took center stage.

They pointed their video camera at the surface of the moon, and we saw those first faint close-up images of another world, with our world in the background. It was astounding! With the image of the surface of the moon passing by, astronaut William Anders announced, “We are now approaching lunar sunrise and, for all the people back on Earth, the crew of Apollo 8 has a message that we would like to send to you.”

At that point the astronauts read the first ten verses of the book of Genesis from the Bible, each reading a portion of the passage. Imagine, astronauts reading from the Bible over TV to the entire world! The trip to the moon was historic. Seeing the earthrise was historic. But hearing those words from the Bible from so far away, left as much of an impression on me as the images of the moon. Astronaut Frank Borman finished the broadcast with this closing, “And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas – and God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth.”

I walked outside into the cold December night and thought about what had just happened. The crescent-shaped moon I had seen on TV was there in the western sky just behind our house. I thought to myself how amazing it was that they were really up there and I was down here on Earth. The lights of a solitary car passing on the gravel road reflected off the trees. As it faded into the distance all I could hear was a dog barking far away. Greens Chapel, Arkansas, a small community, was five miles from the nearest town, and a long way from the moon. Even though I had only watched, I felt that I had just been part of something important.

I was only 17 years old, but I had already seen the assassinations of President Kennedy, his brother, and Dr. King. The war in Vietnam wasn’t going well, there were riots in the cities, protests on campuses, and the Beatles were singing about “revolution”. Next year, I’d be eligible for the draft. Crawling into bed that night, I could see out my window faint images of a tree-line across the field, but my thoughts were miles away thinking about journeys to the moon and the meaning of life.

In spite of the times—or maybe because of the times—I developed a strong belief that one person really could change the world. After all, if we can go to the moon, why can’t we change the world? It had been done before—why not again? What’s more, why not me? It was a few months later that God got my attention and I gave my heart to Him. He took the desires of my heart, shaped them, and set me on His path. Even when God has had to take me the long way around, I wouldn’t trade my path for any other, and I wouldn’t trade the work He has set before me for anything else in the world.

As you and your family turn your thoughts toward God and toward heaven this Christmas season, I hope and pray that you will allow Him to guide you and direct your path. Like those men who were the first to go to the moon, God has more adventure for you than you can imagine as you choose to take the path He has set before you.

Family Council Goals 2010

1. Defend Act One Against the ACLU Lawsuit: The ACLU couldn't defeat the Arkansas Adoption and Foster Care Act at the polls, so they're trying to defeat it in court. As you may recall, Act One passed with 57% of the vote. Last January it became the law of Arkansas that adoptive or foster children will not be placed in homes with cohabiting couples, gay or straight. We are fighting the ACLU in court to try to prevent them from having the law struck down. A trial is scheduled for May of 2010. After that, the case will likely go all the way to the Arkansas Supreme Court.

2. Distribute Hundreds of Thousands of Voter's Guides: The elections next year are critical. Five of the six people who represent Arkansas in Congress will be up for re-election. Offices like governor and attorney general are up, as well as almost every member of the legislature. Unfortunately, most Arkansans still don't know where the candidates stand on issues. They vote along party lines, or for the best speaker, or even for the one with the most yard signs. This is why our voters' guide is so important. We survey candidates and publish their views on issues like abortion, homosexuality, taxes, and health care. With this information available on the Internet and in print, voters can make wiser choices.

3. Lobby the Arkansas Legislature: With the Arkansas Legislature now meeting every year, our work load just grew a lot heavier. Next year's session will focus on the state budget and how your tax dollars are spent. You can bet that the liberals will be at the public trough, trying to fund everything from more early-childhood programs, to contraceptives and abortion counseling in schools. In addition, we must stand against tax increases and the growth of government.

4. Establish the Arkansas Roundtable: Imagine how much more effective we could be if conservative leaders worked together. This is why we're starting the Arkansas Roundtable, a regular meeting where conservative leaders exchange information, and develop ways of working together. The recent debate over national health care has highlighted the fact that many who share the same values aren't working together because they don't even know one another. Working together, we will all be stronger.

5. Use New Technology to Keep Citizens Informed: Twenty years ago, a letter or a phone call were the only ways to spread the word about important issues. Today, we're using web pages, e-mail, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. We recently live-streamed, over the Internet, a town hall meeting on health care reform. We're posting our own videos discussing issues on YouTube. In 2010, we plan to open some legislative committees to the public by live streaming hearings over the Internet. We will still send you our regular update letters and e-mails, and when critical needs arise, you will hear from us by automated phone call. We want to be "eyes and ears" for you at the Capitol in Little Rock.

6. Conduct Media Interviews, News Releases, and News Conferences: TV news, radio, and newspapers shape public opinion. We are pleased to provide a conservative, biblically-based point of view to counter the liberal views expressed in the Arkansas news media. Over the years, we have become a leading voice for traditional values, so when the liberal view is expressed in the news, we are there to bring balance.

7. Advance the Work of our Divisions and Family Council Action Committee: Over the years, we've launched important divisions or branches of our work. Like specialists in the field of medicine, they focus on one primary area. The **Education Alliance** defends and serves over 16,000 Arkansas home school students. The **Arkansas Physicians Resource Council** enables physicians to make their voices heard in the debate over abortion, health care, and medical ethics in general. Our newly-formed **Arkansas Justice Institute** is there to defend good laws like the Adoption and Foster Care Act and blunt the agenda of the ACLU. When we need to "take the gloves off" and conduct a petition drive or other political campaign, we call on our companion organization, the **Family Council Action Committee**.

Family Council Greatest Hits 2009

2009 marked our 20th year of promoting, protecting, and strengthening traditional family values in Arkansas. The first three months of the year were devoted to lobbying the Arkansas Legislature, where we were successful in defeating a number of bad bills and passing a number of good ones. In addition, we spent hundreds of man-hours on the lawsuit to defend Act One. Though not finished, this effort seems to be going well. Throughout the year, we continued speaking the truth about the lottery. We launched several new and innovative ways of communicating the pro-family message, including Arkansas' first ever live-streamed town hall meeting. We continued our opposition to the Obama agenda, with government-run health care topping the list. Looking back, 2009 sets the stage for 2010 to be a pivotal year. Here is more about the successes you helped us achieve in 2009.

1. Secured Passage of a Law Banning Partial-Birth Abortions: Working with Arkansas Right to Life, we secured passage of a second law banning partial-birth abortion. Our first law, passed in 1997, was nullified by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling. The most recently passed law should withstand court challenges.

2. Withheld Funding for Contraceptives in Schools: A portion of the recently-passed tobacco tax was slated for use in funding contraceptives and family planning services in schools. Working with Joint Budget Committee Co-Chairs Baker and Maloch, we were able to amend the state budget to omit this funding.

3. Defeated a Bill to Abolish the Electoral College: Liberals in large cities and on the east and west coasts would like to diminish the influence of smaller states in presidential races. One way to do this is to nullify the Electoral College. Working with the Farm Bureau and the State Chamber of Commerce, we stopped a bill that would have forced Arkansas to give its six electoral votes to the presidential candidate receiving the most popular votes. Under this bill, in the most recent race, Barack Obama would have received all of Arkansas' electoral votes in spite of the fact that John McCain carried Arkansas.

4. Defeated a Bill to Make Arkansas the 36th State to Ratify the Federal Equal Rights Amendment: Even though the Federal Equal Rights Amendment failed to pass before the deadline in the early 1980s, supporters are trying to keep it alive. They believe if three more state legislatures ratify the proposed amendment, they can throw the entire issue into federal court, and possibly secure approval for the amendment. State versions of the amendment have been used to order public funding of abortions and to strike down state laws banning same-sex marriage. Fortunately, we were able to persuade the legislature to leave this issue alone.

5. Defended Act One Against a Lawsuit by the ACLU: It isn't enough to simply pass a law; we must be able to defend it in court as well. The ACLU couldn't defeat Act One at the polls, so they filed a lawsuit. We spent hundreds of man-hours preparing our case to preserve this important law. The fight isn't over and we will keep working throughout 2010 until the trial and all of the appeals are completed. In the meantime, Arkansas' foster and adoptive children are enjoying greater protection through the enforcement of Act One.

6. Defeated a Bad Home School Bill: Rep. David Cook attempted to pass a bill restricting the rights of home schoolers. In the face of strong opposition, he withdrew the bill and placed it in an interim study. This is a big victory for home schoolers.

7. Continued Speaking the Truth About the Lottery: Even though the lottery passed and the legislature enacted one of the worst lottery laws in the nation, we have maintained steadfast opposition to the lottery. We've done what we can do to expose high salaries on the part of lottery employees and lack of legislative oversight.

A Special Request for Your Support

During this wonderful Christmas season when our hearts turn to hearth and home, please remember us and the work we do to preserve those values that help make hearth and home what they ought to be. We don't have to settle for a world that turns its back on those cherished values that define who we are as a people and nation. Working together we can make a difference.

As you consider all the many worthwhile organizations and causes, please remember us and the important work we do. If possible, please give a generous tax-deductible gift to help us close 2009 in the black and begin 2010 with confidence. We look forward to hearing from you. Your tax-deductible gift will be used in our work to save the lives of the unborn, protect parental rights, oppose the Obama agenda, keep the citizens of Arkansas informed, and do all the other work that needs to be done. Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you. May God richly bless you and your family.

Merry Christmas,
Jerry Cox

Merry Christmas

from the

Family Council Staff

Dear Friends,

We are grateful to you and to God that we have been able to serve you and the people of Arkansas in 2009. We look forward to standing for righteousness as God empowers us. Your faithful support means everything to us.

May you be blessed with the peace, joy, and love that only Jesus Christ can bring. From us to you, may you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Josh Mesker, Valarie Feazel, Martha Adcock, Melissa Savary, Tara Bond, Sarah Bean, Jill Wait,
David Cox, and Jerry Cox