

December 2017

Dear Friends and Supporters,

For months we have been saying we would address the changing landscape of religious freedom in America. The year 2017 has been a tough year for religious freedom. We think it is fitting to end the year with a brief commentary on how we see the continuing war for religious freedom developing. Our Educational Update is not conclusive, but is part of an evolving cultural, as well as, legal, condition.

We are fortunate to have the First Amendment freedom of religion and the Alabama Religious Freedom Amendment protection of our religious rights. But the values in America are changing, just as they are throughout Western culture. For example, in the Irish Republic there is growing opposition to schools being religious, which are largely operated by the Catholic Church. When Ireland could not afford education and healthcare, the Catholic Church opened schools and hospitals. This is similar to the many Catholic schools and hospitals that we have historically had in America.

Today, Ireland is in a state of flux, with religion losing its influence. Ireland just approved by majority vote civil same sex unions, elected by a majority vote an openly gay Taoiseach (prime minister) who promises an abortion on demand referendum, and people now want to remove religious teaching from schools. Change comes because values go.

It is no different in America and in Alabama. We see people quietly acquiescing to cultural changes. We watch television programs with alien values, the public debate on important issues is tainted with who cares and we go about our lives as if nothing is changing.

With the investiture in office of President Donald Trump we have seen a barbaric clash of attitudes. We do not submit to the lawful institutions of a civilized government. We have become a nation of tribes during 2017.

The war on religion is real, it is spiritual and it is continuing. It is all a part of what we expect in this world. But for all of us, in one way or another, it is the most important thing in this world. We know you agree and understand what we are saying. With personal regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston