

A full-page background image showing a bronze statue of Thomas Jefferson in profile, standing in a classical building with large columns and a pediment. The word "Tyranny" is partially visible on the pediment above the statue.

# IRS

## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

*“When the people fear the government, there is tyranny.  
When the government fears the people, there is liberty.”*

Thomas Jefferson



## President's Letter 2016

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Another presidential election has come and gone...

...and the cycle continues. Republicans and Democrats battle for control of the Capital and the White House, but regardless of which political party is in power, America continues its decline. At its best, even the "Reagan revolution" provided only a temporary slowing of our nation's decent toward socialism. With each passing decade our candidates and political parties continue to move in the wrong direction.

Why is it that atheism, relativism, and socialism continue to gain favor with growing numbers of our citizens regardless of who is in the White House? Even those of us who labor against these evils are often unknowingly drawn toward these vain philosophies.

Friends of IPS are well aware of our belief that the root cause of our nation's precipitous decline can be found in three places: the media, the education system, and the church. We must effect change in these areas if we want to restore true ethics, limited government, free markets, and real liberty to our nation.

Without a significant change in our citizen's hearts and minds, there is no election and no Constitutional tampering that can save us. Elections are a report card on the philosophical state of a nation. Despite the expenditure of astronomical amounts of time and money to change electoral outcomes, liberty-minded activists do little more than adjust the speed at which our national train is advancing toward the not-too-distant cliff.

We need to change our strategy from adjusting the speed of the train toward a strategy of changing its direction. Liberty-loving Americans need to direct more of our resources toward changing hearts and minds—towards reaching and teaching educators, students, and churches. This is the only way to set our train on a new set of tracks with a different destination.

As many of my readers know, and as this report will partially demonstrate, IPS is working feverishly to deal with the root causes of America's decline.

I ask you to be encouraged, not by any set of election outcomes, but by the truth, the mission, and the strategy of IPS. I believe that we have the right philosophy and the best strategy—all we really need are the resources to continue and expand this work.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Winther".

Mike Winther  
President



*“A criticism of evangelicals has been that we are a mile wide but only an inch deep, but Mike offers the antidote of this rich application of Scripture to all realms of life and the fostering of a Christian worldview. He begins us on that journey by applying it specifically to the realm of government.”*

*– Dr. Ray Stamps, Pastor of Lone Hill Church*

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## DEPTH VS. BREADTH

Modern Christianity has sometimes been described as miles wide but only inches deep. Mainstream Christianity, especially since the dawn of the mega-church movement, is undeniably widespread. It is certainly exciting to be “in the thick” of such a widespread outreach or ministry; watching a message that you strongly support moving throughout a region or state or country is a powerful thing. One of our goals at the Institute for Principle Studies is to have, ultimately, such a widespread ministry. We believe that, in order to turn our nation back to the principles on which it was founded, we must reach as many people as possible with our message. It is certainly true that any ministry seeking to make a real difference needs breadth.

However, it is also true that any such ministry needs depth in addition to breadth. Yes, it is certainly important for the church to evangelize and minister on a large scale, to as many people as possible, but we must also be taking the time in our local fellowships to implement a greater depth of training and teaching in God’s Word. Solid, Bible-based discipleship is every bit as important as large-scale evangelism.

The same general principle applies to the work of any organization like IPS. Yes, of course we want to spread our message as far as we can and to as many people as we can. Yes, we are aiming toward nationwide outreach with many of our endeavors, through classes, seminars, conferences, and other means. But at the same time, we also want to maintain some activities that focus more on depth rather than breadth; teaching that reaches a smaller number of people, but with far greater impact.

One of the main ways we seek to accomplish this more focused and intensive training is through high school debate. As Christians work to train the next generation to be strong and faithful servants in God’s kingdom, academic debate is perhaps one of the greatest tools we can use, not only to round out a young person’s education, but also to prepare him or her to engage an enemy that is often smooth and wily. The type of debate that IPS sponsors is more than mere academic study; it is training in worldview, economics, government, and overall Christian citizenship.

Another tool for providing deep education is the IPS Honor Society. The IPS Honor Society is a discussion-oriented program for high school students and young adults. Using “Principle Oriented Discussions” (or POD’s for short), this program is designed to lay sound foundations reinforcing them with logic, evidence, and discussion. In the classical education model, dialogue, discussion and debate are identified as the best tools for advancing students through the logic and rhetoric stages of learning. Focusing on a particular area of the Christian worldview, each POD starts with either lecture or reading and adds high-level discussion designed to challenge and stretch students. After instruction and dialogue, students use the power of the written word by producing a paper in which they synthesize their instruction, their discussion, and their conclusions.

In-depth training is a main strategy of IPS. We seek to go broad with small samples of the IPS message, and deep with the full message firmly rooted in our future leaders.



*“I admire and respect the work Mr. Winther and the Institute for Principle Studies do for the community. The seminars are informative, enlightening, and expands my appreciation and understanding of the principles I hold dear.” – N.S., Fresno CA*

## IPS-SPONSORED CLASSES

### ***Biblical Principles of Government***

Almost 25 years ago, this class began out of a local church in Modesto trying to meet the discipleship needs of its congregation in applying biblical principles to the institution of government. (Hence, the name.) After educating the congregation for roughly 12 years, the demand beyond the church grew and grew. Thus, the Biblical Principles of Government class became the incubator for what the Institute for Principle Studies is today.

Over the years, this class has impacted the lives of thousands of individuals, receiving astounding feedback like, “This class by IPS was relevant, powerful, and very good. Every American should be exposed to this teaching.” And “Biblical Principles of Government is one of the most important classes Christians can take to influence the nations for Christ!”

This class is still the core of IPS efforts and the uniqueness of this class can’t be overstated. What other class focuses so heavily on the foundations, underlying concepts, principles, origins, philosophy, logic, and ethics of government? This class truly stands out for integrating theology, government, history, economics, science, and philosophy into a consistent whole.

In the following quotation, Larry and Karen Anderson capture well a unique aspect of the class: “If you are undecided on whether the Bible has anything to say about our current society, this presentation will help you come to a positive conclusion. An enjoyable, easy to understand and very needed series—I can enthusiastically promote this for students of all ages! Come to learn—you won’t be disappointed!”

This year, the class was held at Monte Vista Chapel in Turlock and the Home Church in Campbell. This was the first time the class made its way to Turlock, and 185 people registered to attend. In Campbell, 130 individuals elected to take the class. In total, since 2005, there have been 3,354 people throughout California that have taken this course. That’s an average of 140 people per class!



*(The Home Church in Campbell)*



*(Monte Vista Chapel in Turlock)*

The core educational outreach of this program will expand exponentially next year with the highly anticipated release of the class on DVD. Projecting a release date in early 2017, copies of the DVD series will be available for purchase through the IPS website. If you want to make sure you are notified about the finalized DVDs, simply call or email the IPS office and let us know you’re interested. You can also help promote the DVD series by contacting the office to acquire graphics and posters to be used in promotion.

Without many of our faithful supporters, none of this would have been possible. Thank you so much!



*“This is a great class for anyone who feels they are disenfranchised by the two political parties. This material is for anyone that is eager to wake up politically and begin an honest pursuit of the Truth.” – Justin Crumley*

## IPS-SPONSORED CLASSES

### **Constitution Under Siege**

Originating in 2010 as “Understanding the Constitution,” the seminar was later renamed in 2013 to “Constitution Under Siege.” The content is identical but the title was changed to properly reflect attitudes toward the U.S. Constitution in modern America. A clear example of this is the following warning statement written inside a mass-distributed pocket Constitution:

*“This book is a product of its time and does not reflect the same values as it would if it were written today. Parents might wish to discuss with their children how views on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and interpersonal relationships have changed since this book was written before allowing them to read this classic work.”*

This year IPS was able to host two Constitution Under Siege seminars (thanks to two IPS Foundation Builders Committees). The first seminar was held on Saturday, September 17th (Constitution Day) in Fresno at the California Baptist Foundation. The second seminar took place on Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup> in Danville inside Vista Grande Elementary School's gymnasium.



(Vista Granda Elementary School in Danville)



(Vista Granda Elementary School in Danville)



(California Baptist Foundation in Fresno)



(California Baptist Foundation in Fresno)

Sixty-five people in Fresno and seventy people in Danville learned about the Constitution's foundations and how specific clauses apply to government issues. Many were surprised to learn that clauses like the “general welfare clause,” the “interstate commerce clause,” and the “necessary and proper clause” (which are often used to expand government control and power) actually limit federal government power and jurisdiction! Students from nearby schools even earned extra credit for attending. These were two Saturdays well spent learning how our founders framed the Constitution and their purpose in designing it. A seminar participant in Fresno truly captured the importance of this information in their following comment:

*“Most everything you'll learn about the Constitution is cursory and often incorrect. Everyone needs to actually understand what our country is founded on. The uninformed cannot help our struggling nation. Only those with a correct and in depth understanding can make beneficial reforms.”*

– E.H., Modesto CA



*“IPS is doing the work out there where it’s telling people the truth on important subjects.”*

*– Colin Gunn, Documentary Filmmaker*



## **ON THE ROAD, ON THE AIR,**

As a growing organization, one of IPS’ major goals is to continue to expand our outreach throughout the United States—and perhaps eventually, God willing, throughout the world. One of the primary ways we accomplish this is through outside speaking events and engagements. Although our IPS-sponsored classes and events are a crucial element of our ministry, there is a huge potential for education through outside speaking invitations as well. God has been very gracious this year in that we have literally had more speaking requests than we can possibly take. Audiences across America are eager for the message of IPS, and it encourages us to see this excitement spreading. Here is a sampling of just some of these educational opportunities.

Starting in January, Mike began a short series of radio interviews on Power Talk 1360 in Modesto to discuss presidential debates, elections, executive orders, the fourth amendment, minimum wage and the Electoral College. As usual, Mike was able to present a principled approach to each issue.



*(Mike inside the Power Talk Station)*

In April, Mike was invited to speak at the Values Advocacy Council’s monthly luncheon presenting an introduction to the Biblical Principles of Government content. This was a fantastic opportunity to show those who hold similar values how they apply to society and civil government.

In July, Stand to Reason, a youth group from Grace Fellowship Church in Costa Mesa, began a statewide adventure to learn from top Christian speakers and thinkers in their respective fields; and they approached Mike to learn the Christian perspective of government and politics. This was a two hour session where almost 20 students were able to pick Mike’s brain and ask questions in an open dialogue format—helping them provide answers to tough questions.



*(Mike speaking at the Value Advocacy Council)*



*“The Institute for Principle Studies as I have always felt is doing valuable work trying to explain [principles] not just to high fluent academics in their ivory towers, but to people of all educational experiences...”*

*– Dr. Shawn Ritenour, Professor of Economics at Grove City College*

## & ON THE BIG SCREEN

In August, IPS was contacted to release audio on elections to be aired on Gospel Applied, a radio ministry of the Slavic Community Association which broadcasts on Sacramento’s AM 710. Gospel Applied re-aired one of Mike’s previous lectures titled, “Transforming a Nation: Does Transformation begin in the White House?” Then in October, Gospel Applied invited Mike on the air for a live broadcast discussing the upcoming presidential election.



*(Youth group from Grace Fellowship Church at the IPS office)*

In September, the movie *Targeted: Exposing The Gun Control Agenda*, was released nationwide which featured a segment with IPS President, Mike Winther, providing material on both Constitutional and Biblical issues relating to gun control. *Targeted* was released in 35 theaters on September 29th spanning 23 states.

While it’s impossible to precisely calculate the number of people impacted by all these efforts, and while there is not enough space here to list all of IPS’ efforts and activities in 2016, it’s reasonable to estimate that these efforts reached many thousands of citizens across California and the nation.

Thank you IPS supporters for making all of these efforts possible! We look forward to many other opportunities in 2017.



*(Mike on screen in Targeted: Exposing the Gun Control Agenda)*



*“As an adult watching these kids at competitions, I find that my faith and confidence in the youth (the adults of tomorrow) is renewed.” – Debate Mom*

## REACHING PRIVATE SCHOOLS THROUGH DEBATE

This has to be the most exciting year for the IPS-sponsored debate league, Logos Forensic Association (LFA). Seven new schools have joined this year doubling the size of the league!

The resolution for the LFA for the 2016-17 year is “Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform one or more of its means tested poverty programs.” In essence, students in the LFA will be debating about poverty: its history, causes, and possible solutions. Our objective with this resolution is to get students and coaches to think critically about poverty and its true cure (i.e. free markets, productivity, and God’s model for charity; not socialism or paternalistic government).

Past topics have included: election law, military policy, tax policy, education, environmental policy, immigration, health care, and energy policy. With all of these topics, our goal has remained the same: educate tomorrows’ leaders with a Biblical, free market, constitutional view of public policy.

The LFA continues to provide IPS tangible opportunities to influence the hearts and minds of private high school teachers and students. As the league grows, so will the number of opportunities. We look forward to more worldview training in 2017!



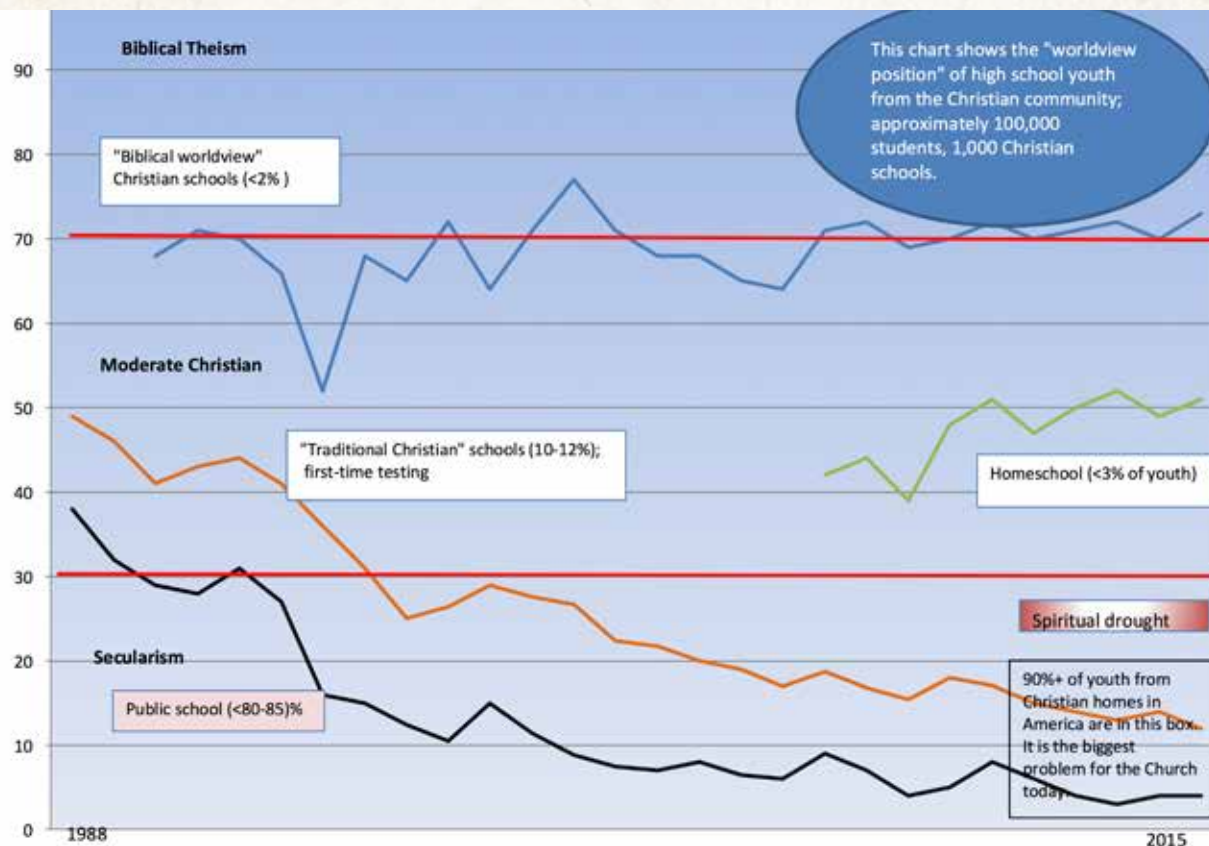
### WHY DEBATE IS IMPORTANT

In 1727, Benjamin Franklin started his Junto debating societies—and organized academic debate has been instrumental in shaping American ideas, philosophy, and policy ever since. Dozens of modern studies have documented that it is high school and college debate that produces society’s future leaders. No other activity comes close to producing as many educators, politicians, and CEOs as debate.

One can look at the nature of the debate training that happens in America and, from this, predict the direction of the nation. When this debate training instills the foundations of absolute truth, individual responsibility, and free markets, the nation later reflects these values and prospers. Unfortunately, the debate training in America for most of the last century has promoted a relativistic and atheistic perspective.

However, with the Logos Forensic Association, IPS is bringing a biblical, principled perspective back to the world of academic debate—and the LFA is bringing this training to Christian schools and students.

### IPS through the LFA is working to reverse the trend of the chart.



Graph generated by the Nehemiah Institute



*“Debate was an excellent addition to our homeschooling experience. Our children learned to think critically, gained an awareness of national and global issues, developed outstanding research skills, devised solutions to current problems, and cultivated effective communication skills. More importantly...our children learned to filter ideas through biblical principles.” – Sue Matt*

## REACHING THE HOMESCHOOL COMMUNITY

### Modesto Debate

IPS President, Mike Winther, and his wife Mary, have had significant involvement with homeschool debate over the years. Mike and Mary have been coaching a local homeschool club in Modesto for over a decade.

Through their work with Modesto Debate, Mike and Mary have helped influence and guide the debate “culture” of the club—a culture which has developed into a group of educated, eloquent, and impressive young people. Young people who are often extremely energetic and eager to take their Christian faith out into the world and make use of the skills they have honed through debate.



*(IPS Debate Workshop in Santa Clara)*

With this long relationship, IPS has been woven into homeschool debate activities sponsoring a number of tournaments and events. This year, IPS in partnership with Economic Thinking, sponsored a two-day workshop on the 2016-17 Stoa Debate Resolution at Santa Clara University on August 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Stoa’s team policy debate resolution this year is “Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its agriculture and/or food safety policy in the United States.”

This was a sold out event with an incredible lineup of speakers. Students received principled and reasoned discussion on numerous aspects of agriculture policy, including: pesticides and runoff, GMOs and terminator genes, crop insurance, and more. With two hearty days of instruction from seasoned experts, students learned how government and economic principles properly apply to agriculture.

### Colorado Home Educators Convention

In June, Mike traveled to Denver to speak at the Colorado Home Educators Convention. Mike delivered nine messages, covering: Educating and Training World Changers, Deep Learning vs. Shallow Learning, How to Avoid Being Deceived, Threats to Homeschooling, Sound-Decision Making Principles for the Next Generation, Biblical Principles of Education, Biblical Principles of Government introduction, Basic Economics, and Revisionist History Exposed. These were three busy days reaching hundreds of homeschool educators!



*(IPS booth in Denver)*

### Valley Home Educators

In July, Mike spoke at the Valley Home Educators convention in Modesto at the Double Tree Hotel. Mike delivered three messages, covering: Biblical Principles of Education, Elections and the Future of America, and Can Homeschooling Change the World. IPS has been a staple at this convention for many years preparing homeschool families to know the Christian worldview of government and economics. It is our hope as we grow, that we will be able to speak and sell resources at more homeschool conventions across the nation.



*“No greater mission exists than “taking back society for Christ and His principles” by training Christians to understand, defend, and advocate a biblical worldview. I am happy to be a supporter of IPS.” – Anonymous*

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## IPS FOUNDATION BUILDERS – NEW CONCEPT, HUGE POTENTIAL

“Foundation Builders” are valued groups of volunteers who use their time and talents to further the mission of IPS in their local community. These committees serve at least three purposes: first, to promote IPS and expand people’s awareness of the organization; second, to raise funds for the work of IPS; and third, to extend the education of IPS through their circles of influence.

The title, “Foundation Builders,” was chosen because of the dual meaning the name carries. First, Foundation Builders lay the groundwork for the operations and expansion of IPS by raising funds. And second, Foundation Builders lay the foundation for new opportunities to reach people.

Through these committees, IPS will be able to reach more pastors and churches, aid more homeschoolers, teach more high schoolers, disciple more Christians, and change more hearts and minds. Much thanks to all of our Foundation Builders who joined the team in 2016. We appreciate all their efforts, and thank them for the difference they have made.

It is our goal to create Foundation Builders groups in communities across the nation. Please contact the IPS office if you would like to join one of the existing committees or start a new one in your area. This is the greatest area of service available for interested volunteers.

### INFLUENCING THE INFLUENTIAL

*The indirect influence of the IPS message is hard at work almost every day. Teachers who have attended IPS seminars or classes are teaching their students about the real principles of government and economics in their classrooms. Pastors periodically include IPS perspectives or research into sermons. Friends of IPS are leading small group studies through IPS recommended books and videos.*

*We receive a regular flow of calls and emails from these important influencers telling us about their excitement for the IPS message and often seeking advice or information on a challenging topic. This is just one of the many ways in which IPS is changing the world—and is helping others to do the same.*



*“I am more proud to be a donor for this great organization than any other that I support!” – IPS Donor*

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## **FIVE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD GIVE TO IPS**

### **1. IPS WORKS STRATEGICALLY**

IPS understands that political campaigns, lobbying, and legal action cannot save America. These strategies can only buy us a little time, but they ultimately fall short in several ways. First, they are all short-term efforts that have little or no effect on the long-term direction of our world. Second, these short-term/immediate efforts will all eventually fail if the majority of our judges, candidates, and population have worldviews that support statism, socialism, atheism, and relativism. IPS is working to “move the hump” of American thinking.

Furthermore, IPS is teaching people to fish—not just giving people fish. We don’t give people candidate recommendations; instead, we teach people principles, important aspects of citizenship, and discerning voting skills. By giving people sound principles and good thinking skills, they become informed decision-makers in the political process. And with some periodic refreshers, these skills can last a lifetime.

### **2. IPS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CHANGE SOCIETY**

If Christians in America knew what God’s Word says about government, do you suppose this would have an effect on government policies and action? And do you suppose that the resulting effect would change society? Unfortunately, Christians don’t know how God’s Word applies to government or economics.

### **3. IPS SAFEGUARDS THE CHURCH**

Out-of-control governments are persecuting and silencing the church all over the world—even in modern, industrial, western nations. If these churches and pastors had the chance to roll back the clock and prevent these oppressive government policies, do you suppose they would? What advice do you suppose they would give to American Christians?

### **4. IPS UNDERGIRDS OTHER NONPROFIT WORK**

There are a variety of organizations and ministries that are working to improve America. Some of these groups lobby legislators, some take judicial action, and some do research and write articles. Each of these serves an important purpose, but most of them are just trying to hold the fort until reinforcements arrive. Many of the dedicated individuals in these activist organizations recognize that while they can win battles here and there, they are losing the war. The biblical worldview and the worldview of most of our founding fathers is being lost—and it is being lost in our churches, our schools, our universities, and in our media. IPS works to prepare the church to win the culture wars.

### **5. IPS IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF MONEY**

With all the reasoning above, can money be spent in a better way? Resources are scarce and they should be aimed highest potential effort. IPS is laboring to combat the destructive ideologies and “ism’s” embraced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that are affecting millions in our society. Reversing these effects will bring peace, prosperity, and justice to all throughout the land.





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