



# Solid Foundations for a Principle-Starved World



INSTITUTE FOR  
PRINCIPLE  
STUDIES

2020 Annual Report



# ABOUT

Beginning in the early 1990's, a church-wide survey and more than a decade of experimental teaching incubated the Institute for Principle Studies (IPS). Officially founded in 2005, IPS' mission is to return each God-ordained government back to its biblically prescribed role by changing hearts and minds.

Through research and study, IPS makes powerful new arguments for older, but time-tested ideas — ideas that produce free, flourishing, and virtuous societies characterized by individual liberty. IPS then customizes the communication and marketing of these new arguments in ways designed to appeal to the modern world — a world that has unfortunately forgotten the devastating consequences of totalitarianism and socialism.

## ***In a snapshot, IPS is...***

- ... authentically Christian
- ... purposely nonpartisan
- ... strategically principle-driven
- ... intentionally long-term focused
- ... and 100% privately funded

Emboldened by the generous donors who make this work possible, a major objective of the Institute is to continue to improve the systematic understanding of the principles of just government and to support this work from Scripture, history, contemporary studies, and high academic scholarship.

By providing solid foundations for our principle-starved world, IPS supplies the fundamental message for reducing poverty, restoring liberty, curbing tyranny, strengthening the church, and empowering families.

Learn more by visiting [www.PrincipleStudies.org](http://www.PrincipleStudies.org).



2020

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# SOLID FOUNDATIONS FOR A PRINCIPLE-STARVED WORLD

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Michael R. Winther**

*Founder & President*

2020 was certainly a year for the history books. It was a year that produced great infringements of our liberties, but it was also a year of greatly expanded influence for IPS.

As the COVID epidemic arrived in early 2020, there was a substantial impact on IPS and our work. The immediate impacts were negative as we cancelled event after event. Classes, conferences, debate tournaments and fundraising events were all cancelled. Some of our regular donors lost jobs or had significant hits to their businesses. By May of 2020, the IPS outlook was bleak. Yet the need for our message had never been more important.

Fortunately the year didn't end in May. We communicated with our donors and asked for extra support from those who were able—and many of you did just that.

While many businesses and ministries were furloughing employees, we were able to keep all of our staff—and we were able to keep everyone paid. This would prove significant because 2020 would be the most significant and powerful year in the 16 year history of our organization and we needed all of our manpower to accomplish an amazing year of education and influence.

In the wake of restrictions and quarantines, we began to receive a steady stream of inquiries from churches, pastors and elders who wanted our perspective on the shutdowns in general and the closure of the churches in particular. We answered emails, had phone calls and wrote articles on these critical subjects.

In the early summer, we began to offer a number of virtual classes on important topics. In the fall, we streamed our Biblical Principles of Government class for the first time. In addition to the small audience who attended in person, about 700 people from around the country viewed the class on line. This was three times the reach of any previous class.

At the end of the year we completed our most significant issue of our journal, Principle Perspective, which contained 7 articles and 25 pages devoted to aspects of the COVID crisis. (If you have not read this issue, I highly recommend that you do—it has powerful analysis relating to the proper role of government in a pandemic as well as the proper response of the church in these times.)

To our friends and donors, thank you for standing with us. We are committed to following the Apostle Paul's admonition, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," and we are encouraged to remain faithful, "knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." Looking forward to the day of harvest!

Serving The King,  
Mike Winther



# VISION, MISSION, PRINCIPLES



## **VISION**

A society where the family, the church, and the state are operating within their biblical spheres of authority as well as fulfilling their God-given duties.



## **MISSION**

To return each God-ordained government back to its biblically prescribed role by changing hearts and minds.



## **PRINCIPLES**

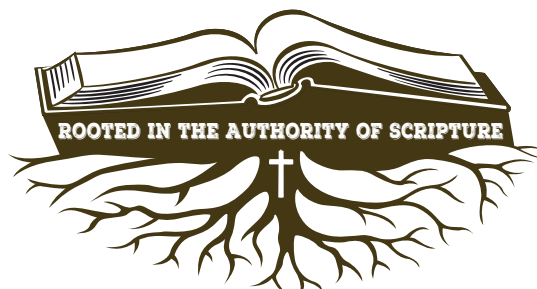
IPS adheres to, promotes, and teaches the following principles of freedom:

- Absolute Truth
- High Moral Character
- Limited Government
- Private Contract
- Rule of Law
- Sphere Sovereignty
- Free Markets
- Individual Liberty
- Personal Responsibility
- Private Property
- Unalienable Rights
- Proper Submission & Resistance

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## WITH ALL PRINCIPLES

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## THE PROBLEM

According to Scripture, God has established three governing institutions for the proper functioning of society: Family Government, Church Government, and Civil Government (or the State). Each government is given specific institutional responsibilities, as well as prohibitions, within their respective spheres of authority.

The well-being of every society in every era of time is a product of how well each of these God-ordained governments is functioning in that time and place. When these three government institutions execute their proper duties and refrain from over-stepping their proper authority, society prospers. Conversely, when these government institutions act improperly, society suffers. Herein lies the essence of the problem.

Oppressive, tyrannical governments do what God's law forbids and don't do what scripture commands. This has been a common story of nations throughout the ages. Sadly, America is following this destructive trajectory. Take note of the resulting shift over time.

## AMERICA'S FOUNDING

### GOD

#### FAMILY

Nurture  
Education  
Community  
Charity

#### CHURCH

Instruction - The Word  
Education  
Sacraments  
Care of the poor

#### STATE

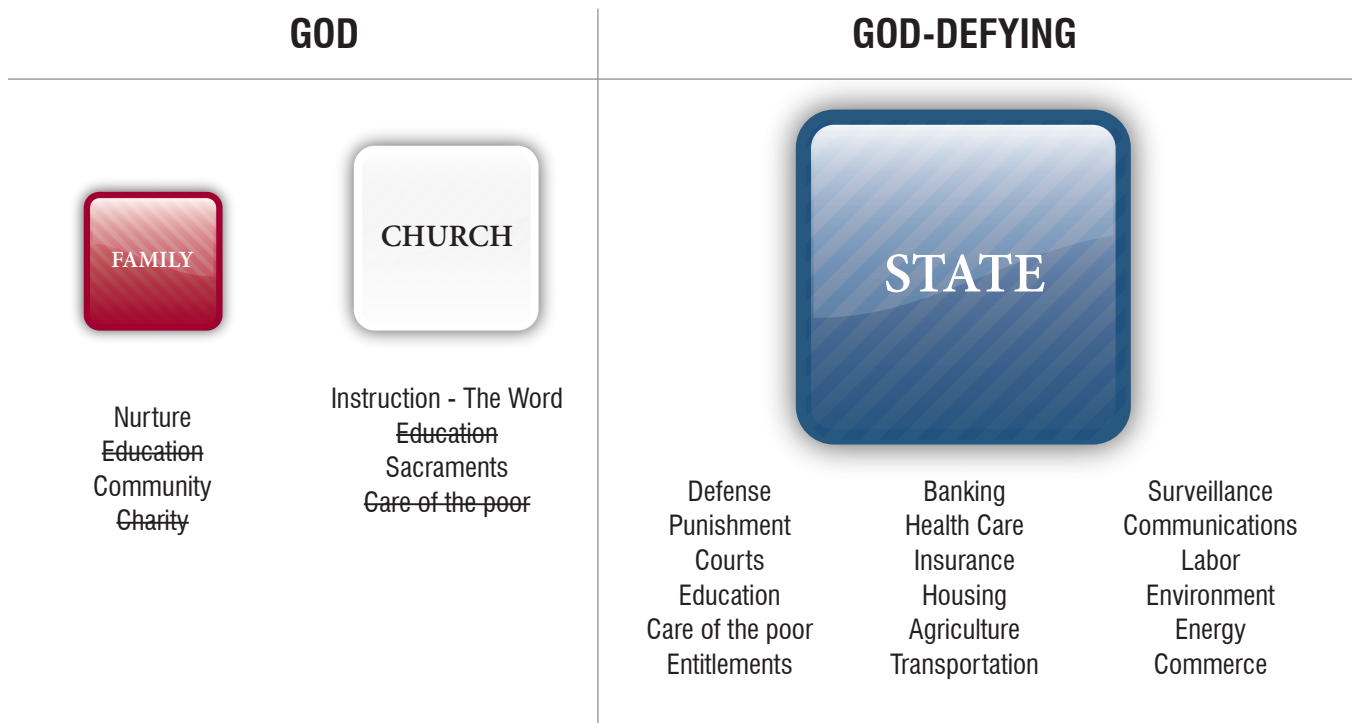
Defense  
Punishment  
Courts



## NEXT 100 - 200 YEARS



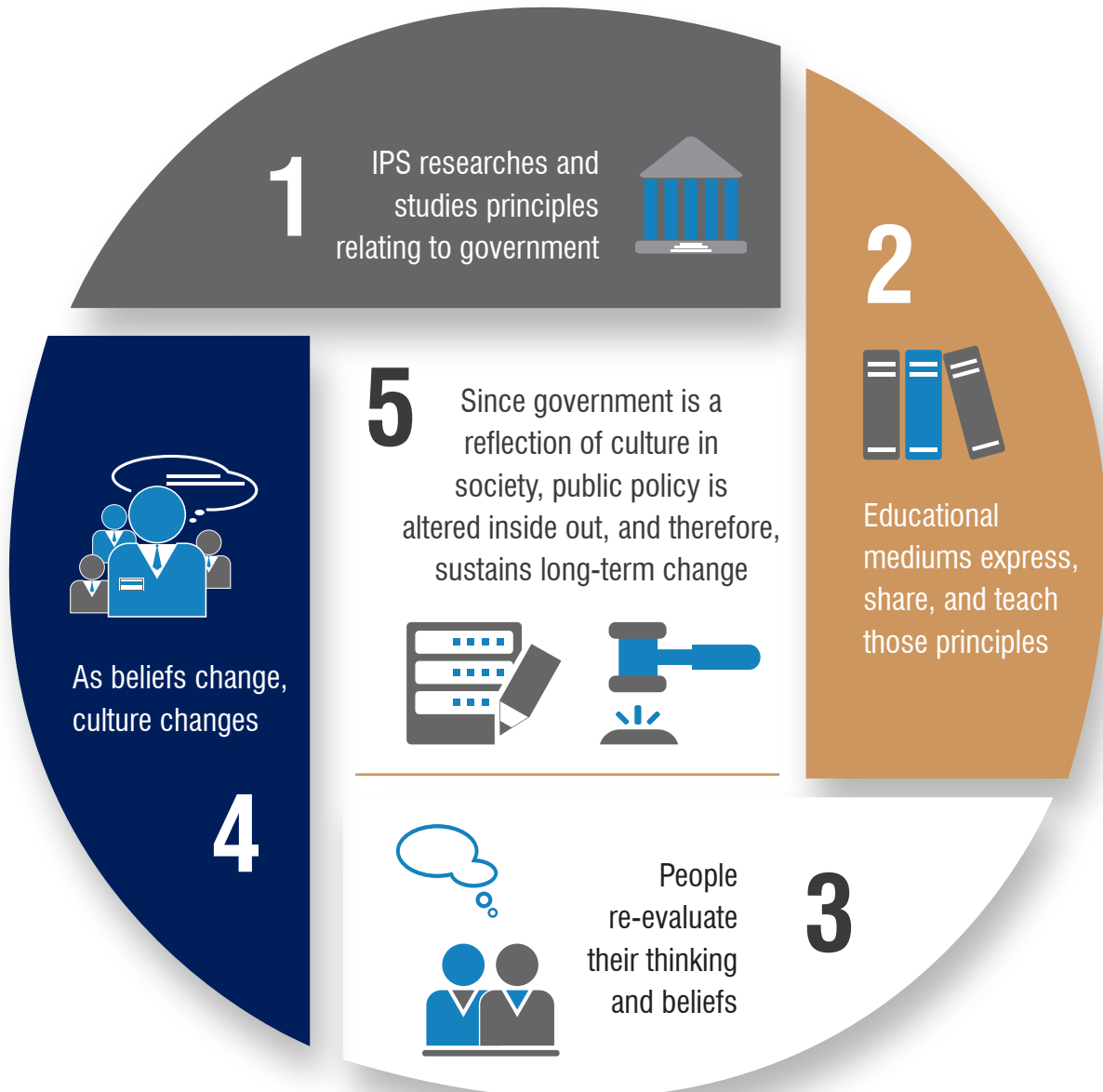
## RECENT DECADES





## THE SOLUTION

To stop the tyrannical spread of civil government in our day, IPS works to restore each God-ordained government back to its proper role through education and discipleship. As depicted in the diagram below, this is a long-term culture and mindset strategy. The goal is to raise up a citizenry that requires each government institution to do their proper jobs... no more, no less. In other words, to train a people who understand the scriptural, historical, and philosophical underpinnings of government. This is the true antidote to tyranny and the primary way to minimize human suffering across the world. Indeed, every incremental improvement in government saves millions of people from unnecessary hardship (and potential persecution) over the ensuing decades.





# THE OUTCOMES

**As we achieve our vision and fulfill our mission, this is what America could and should look like.  
Lord willing, America will look like this in decades instead of centuries.**

## Are your grandkids worth it?

Taxes are only taken and used to fund legitimate government functions, drastically reducing each family's tax burden to less than 10%. You also keep the first fruits of your labor.

Health care is fully decentralized, individualized, and private, significantly reducing cost and improving the quality of care. People pick their own doctors, anyone who has the ability is free to pursue a career as a doctor, and doctors are allowed to treat who they want, how they want, and at what price.

Government sanctioned murder is undone. The unborn, incapacitated, and elderly are protected once again.

Endless war ceases. Only constitutionally declared war by Congress is the standard, resulting in fewer wars and preventable bloodshed.

With civil government returned to its proper and limited role, government employment dramatically decreases, freeing thousands up for productive work in the marketplace.

Businesses self-regulate and government only punishes crime when there is a victim.

The Federal Reserve System is abolished. Truly private banking is restored, eliminating most government created inflation. Saving is once again encouraged.

Private charity and voluntary community action take care of the needs of the poor, eliminating the welfare state.

For legitimate taxation, the tax system is based on consumption, not production or property. Income, property and inheritance taxes cease —along with many others.

Privately funded schools replace government schools. You choose where, what, and how your kids learn. Moreover, you only pay for your own children's schooling.

Fees, permits, licenses, restrictions, and regulations are terminated. You can actually do what you want, when you want, and how you want to do it without needing permission from the government. (So long as you don't violate the rights of your neighbor, of course.)

You are free to own and carry a firearm without hindrance or interference. The way the 2nd Amendment is supposed to be.

By not having to fill out forms, submit documents, disclose your income and assets, comply with paperwork and so on, you regain both time and privacy. Two invaluable commodities.

Trade, commerce, and the economy as a whole, operate freely and independently of government intervention or oversight. Resulting in more goods and services at cheaper prices.

Since civil government exists to punish the evildoer, government only intervenes in your life when you cause your neighbor harm (violate their rights) or break a contract. Other than that, you live, work, and worship freely.

States regain their autonomy from the federal government. The trend of power moving from local governments to national and international bodies is reversed —restoring decentralization of power.



# CORE PROGRAMS

## ADULT & PARENT EDUCATION



Change doesn't begin in the White House, but in each individual's house. To meet that end, IPS implements a range of classes, conferences, and seminars that are designed for adults and homeschool families. These teaching formats and topics expose families to a view of civics, history, and economics that cannot be found in the classroom or the media.



The flagship offering that IPS conducts on a regular basis is the foundational Biblical Principles of Government course. This comprehensive worldview series addresses the central question of political science, which is: *"What is the proper role of government?"* Lying at the heart of every political debate, answering this question produces enormous impact. Most families exit the course with a brand new paradigm for evaluating appropriate government action.



## TEACHER & STUDENT TRAINING



Besides small group discussions, IPS predominantly influences teachers and students through the academic and competitive activity of speech and debate.

Through debate, students gain an interest in government and public policy along with the invaluable skills of research, logic, and speaking. Additionally, within the activity, IPS organizes and hosts workshops for educators to teach them principles of government and economics – reaching beyond the clubs and into the classroom.



IPS manages and runs its own private Christian school speech and debate league, the Logos Forensic Association (LFA), as well as operates within the Stoa USA Christian homeschool speech and debate league. Combined, these leagues represent enormous opportunity to train tomorrow's future leaders today.





## CHURCH & PASTORAL OUTREACH

Since many of the principles that IPS teaches originate in the Bible, IPS acts as a catalyst for both thought and research to assist churches and the broader Christian community. By meeting with pastors, hosting classes, providing insight, and recommending materials, IPS helps pastors and Christian organizations understand the Biblically limited roles of government.



## PUBLISHING & MULTIMEDIA

IPS expands beyond its direct teaching ministry by including high quality, professional audio, video, and printed resources that are used to educate and influence thousands of individuals and leaders across America and around the world.

Through journals, articles, newsletters, curriculum, and the internet, IPS develops deep, well-reasoned materials that last and resonate beyond the “sound-bite” era of our time.



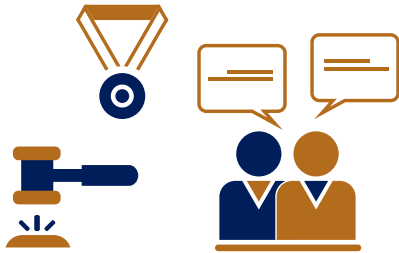
## CURATED BOOK & DIGITAL OFFERINGS

A major influence on one’s thinking is reading good books. It is no surprise, then, that a large part of the IPS ministry includes reviewing and selling quality books that positively influence those who read them. Instead of selling whatever politically-inclined books happen to be on the bestseller list, IPS rigorously evaluates and carefully selects titles that align with solid and true teaching on government, economics, and history.

***For a complete listing of the 70+ curated books and digital offerings available for purchase, visit [www.PrincipleStudies.org/Shop](http://www.PrincipleStudies.org/Shop).***



# QUANTITATIVE REACH



## SPEECH & DEBATE REACH

LOGOS FORENSIC  
ASSOCIATION (LFA)

Schools: **9**  
Coaches: **11**  
Students: **100**  
Tournaments: **13**

MODESTO DEBATE

Families: **28**  
Students: **43**  
Tournaments: **2**

## WEBSITE REACH

Users: **38,185**  
Sessions: **45,353**  
Page views: **61,475**



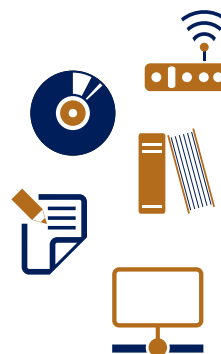
## TEACHING REACH (In-Person & Online)

Engagements: **11**  
Sessions: **64**  
Hours: **147**  
People: **3,103**



## MULTIMEDIA REACH

Articles Read: **21,920**  
Audio Played: **1,660**  
Books Sold: **189**  
Videos Viewed: **2,483**



## SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

Followers: **1,069**  
Impressions: **51,905**



**TOTAL CUMULATIVE REACH = 227,770**



## QUALITATIVE IMPACT

I wish every Christian could view this material. We bought the CD for our Church and I am encouraging all members to view it.

*Thank you all for your faithfulness, perseverance and steadfastness to the Lord in bringing the truth of Jesus Christ to the realm of government and economics.*

I WAS NEVER A PERSON WHO IS INTERESTED IN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS. BUT MR. WINTHER'S TEACHING CHANGED THAT.

*God has a plan for government and Mike does a great job at teaching that.*

Even as a homeschool mom for many years, I was also guilty of not covering much government and economics, mostly because I felt too inadequate in my knowledge to do so...but this course was SO informative and easy to follow.

The principles you teach if caught and adhered to can change nations. Thank you for the seeds you're planting: they have fallen, and will continue to fall, I trust, on much good soil...



In today's media and short attention spans, it is important to know why you are for or against something. [IPS] provides a great foundation to arguments in the world that we live in...

As a Christian [government and economics] is a topic rarely taught except perhaps tangentially but rarely as a topic in and of itself. This is extremely important stuff as our Nation moves more and more from it's Christian moorings. Even my pastor said so and he has a PHD.

As Christians we have to recognize that God has set up the government to run a certain way... It is up to Christians to recognize this fact and use our votes to bring government back into the boundaries that God has set up for it. We can't do that until we are educated. This [IPS] course, and the books that are recommended, will help us to put God's principles into practice in our lives and our votes.

*Through the class, I learned that ministry and politics are not mutually exclusive. Our worldview starts with our beliefs about God and necessarily informs our politics. In addition, we can serve God by seeking to bring about His Kingdom on earth through our participation in government.*



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**MICHAEL R. WINTHER** – *Founder & Board President*

Mike founded IPS in July of 2005 and continues to lead the organization to this day. Mr. Winther holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Political Science from the University of Idaho; sits on the Board of Scholars at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy; and is a Board Member of the Stoa USA Christian homeschool debate league. Before entering the nonprofit industry, Mike worked as a professional campaign consultant in Washington and California.



**TIM OLNEY** – *Board Vice President*

Tim has a long history with the Institute for Principle Studies—being present from its initial inception—and serving as a board member since its founding. Tim is a self-employed private contractor operating his own business, Distinctive Remodel. He began in this field in the early 1970's after becoming an official licensed general contractor in 1977. Tim holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Industrial Technology with an emphasis on Drafting Design from Fresno State University. Tim is a born and raised Californian.



**BRIAN ESCHEN** – *Director of Operations & Board Secretary*

Brian joined the IPS staff in November of 2020 after volunteering for several months. He brings with him a background in business, church leadership, and teaching. Brian's love for education has lead him to volunteer his time teaching local students and being a resource to parents. His deep roots in California and love for his home state gave him an instant connection with the message of liberty promoted by IPS. Brian also co-runs Bernal Investment, Inc., a family-owned real estate investment company with his twin brother, Jeff.



**REV. DR. PHIL OLSSON** – *Board Treasurer*

Phil works for Providence Academy in Green Bay, Wisconsin, at the Logic and Rhetoric school as a Humanities, Bible, and Rhetoric teacher. Dr. Olsson earned his M.A. in History from California State University East Bay and his Ph.D. in Religion from Claremont Graduate University. Phil is also an ordained minister within the Federation of Reformed Churches and serves as a Co-Director for the international on-campus ministry Ratio Christi (Bradley University chapter). Phil is also the primary author of the book *Wait Till It's Free: The Plague of Socialized Health-care and the Only Known Cure*. Presently, Phil is pursuing training as a counselor through the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors.



**GEORGE SECHRIST** – *Board Member*

George is a homeschool father, grandfather, business owner, deacon, and board member of Christian Home Educators of Colorado (CHEC). George works full time in his insurance agency and is a member of Reformation Church in Castle Rock, CO. Passionate about liberty and godly government, George and his wife, Tammy, created the Future Statesman program and serve on the "Homeschool Day at the Capitol Committee" each year. He is excited to see the next generation building God's kingdom by home discipling their children and serving as leaders of Christian ministries. George holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Colorado State University.



## STAFF



### **STEVEN F. BUTNER** – *Marketing and Development*

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Steven joined the IPS staff in May of 2015 after graduating from California State University Stanislaus with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Business Administration concentrating in Operations Management. Steven works to sustain and grow IPS' support base.



### **DIANA L. HIGGINSON** – *LFA Program Coordinator*

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Diana joined the IPS staff in June of 2019. She brings with her a background in Marketing, Public Relations, and Human Resources, as well as 14 years as a Bank Officer. Diana works with private Christian schools in developing the speech and debate activity.



### **KELLY J. MIKKELSON** – *Administrative Assistant*

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Kelly joined the IPS staff in August of 2018. Kelly holds a Master of Arts degree in the Old Testament from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Kelly works as the “glue” to hold everything together as well as manages IPS' social media outreach.



### **CAROLE L. MCFARLANE** – *Special Projects Coordinator*

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Carole was formerly the Director of Operations for several years. Carole joined the IPS staff in June of 2011 after serving with Mike Winther for 12 years at the Society for Disabilities. Carole holds an Associate of Arts degree in Business Administration from Chabot College. Carole helps with unique endeavors.



### **JENNA R. HERMLE** – *Editor of Principle Perspective*

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Jenna was first employed at IPS back in 2007, and although she no longer works in the office, she stays involved by working as the editor of Principle Perspective, the flagship educational publication of IPS, and volunteering at events throughout the year. Jenna is a full-time writer and freelance editor.



## SCHOLARS COUNCIL

*The IPS Scholars Council is an advisory body of people formally constituted to provide educational expertise and insight. Drawing from each member's respective field, scholars assist the educational efforts of IPS by providing research, lecturing, and writing articles. Fields of study include political science, economics, history, and theology.*



### **DR. SHAWN RITENOUR** – *Professor of Economics and Sociology, Grove City College*

Shawn holds a B.A. in Economics from Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa, and a Ph.D. in Economics from Auburn University. Dr. Ritenour is the author of the book *Foundations of Economics: A Christian View* as well as contributing author to *The Fed at One Hundred*, *Great Austrian Economists*, and *A Noble Calling*.



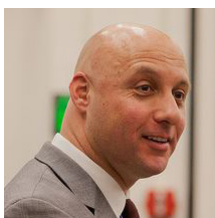
### **DR. MARSHALL FOSTER** – *Founder and President, World History Institute*

Marshall graduated from the University of California Santa Barbara and performed his graduate studies at Talbot Theological Seminary and Christian Associates Seminary with doctoral studies completed at the California Graduate School of Theology and Cathedral Bible College. Dr. Foster has authored three books and has co-produced two films.



### **GREGORY REHMKE** – *Program Director, Economic Thinking*

Greg previously directed educational programs at the Center for the American Idea, the Reason Foundation, and the Foundation for Economic Education. Mr. Rehmke holds a degree in Economics from the University of Washington and sits on the Board of Scholars at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Greg is coauthor of the *Complete Idiot's Guide to Global Economics*.



### **DR. NINOS MALEK** – *Professor of Economics, De Anza College, and Economics Lecturer, San Jose State University*

Ninos earned his B.A. and M.A. in Economics from San Jose State University with his Ph.D. in Economics from George Mason University. Dr. Malek has led several economics teacher workshops and student seminars for the Fraser Institute. He has also been a featured speaker for the Gus A. Stavros Center for Economic Education at Florida State University.



### **DR. MAX LYONS** – *Director of Teaching Services, Foundation for American Christian Education*

Max is a teacher, curriculum writer, blogger, and conference speaker, specializing in the areas of Bible, history, government, law, economics, and Biblical worldview. Dr. Lyons holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from Virginia Wesleyan College, a Masters Degree in Christian School Administration from Regent University, and a Ph.D. in Christian Education from Whitefield Theological Seminary. Max has published several books including *Government Takes All...What's Left for Me?* and *The Seven Pillars of Liberty* (among many others).



## COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

IPS uses and promotes the materials, resources, or offerings of the following organizations for content distribution, educational programs, and lifelong activation in the cause of liberty, making your giving a catalyst for the entire freedom movement.

- 
- Acton Institute
  - American Enterprise Institute
  - American Media
  - American Vision
  - Association of Christian Schools International\*
  - Atlas Network\*
  - Bill of Rights Institute
  - Cato Institute
  - Christian Research Institute
  - Competitive Enterprise Institute
  - Economic Thinking
  - Foundation for American Christian Education
  - Foundation for Economic Education
  - Generations
  - Gunn Productions
  - Heartland Institute
  - Highlands Study Center
  - Independent Institute
  - Liberty Fund
  - Ligonier Ministries
  - Ludwig von Mises Institute
  - Mackinac Center for Public Policy
  - Mercatus Center
  - National Center for Constitutional Studies
  - Pacific Research Institute
  - Poverty Cure Network\*
  - Providence Foundation
  - Reason Foundation
  - Summit Ministries
  - Wall Builders
  - World History Institute
  - Young America's Foundation

*\*Denotes a member-affiliated partnership.*

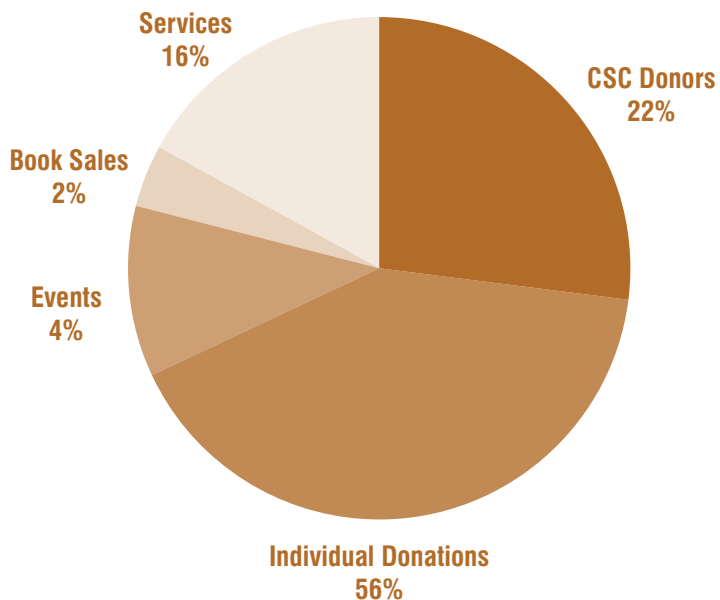


# FINANCIALS

IPS is 100% privately funded, which means we do not seek or accept government funding of any kind. Instead, individual donors are IPS' predominant support base. As such, this report is a tribute to those who have generously given to fuel IPS' mission. Everything in this report is made possible only because of them. If you are among this special group of people, thank you for making a lasting difference in our nation and world. If not, we invite you to become to a member and join our cause.

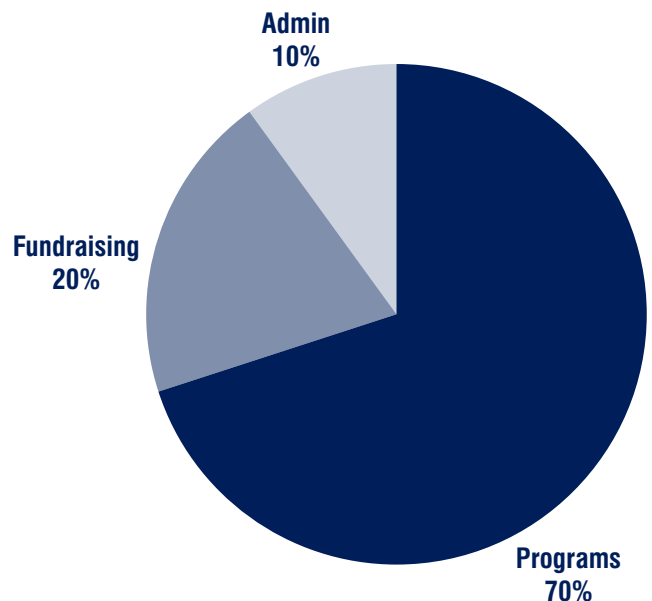
To honor our donor's precious resources, IPS operates a lean, well-managed organization focused on achieving maximum impact. In fact, 70 percent of giving goes directly toward funding unique educational programs. Stewardship is a high calling. One that we take seriously. To display our commitment to financial transparency, below is a summary of our unaudited financials ending December 31, 2020.

## REVENUE SOURCES



**Total Revenue**  
**\$400,000**

## EXPENSE CATEGORIES



**Total Expenses**  
**\$325,000**



# BECOME A MEMBER

Coming to the end of this report, we hope you are inspired to join our cause and make a difference in reforming America. If so, you can band together with a group of like-minded individuals to promote biblically based government year-round by joining the Continuous Support Circle (CSC).

The Continuous Support Circle is a group of IPS supporters who engage in the battle of worldviews by donating on a regular basis—either monthly or quarterly. CSC members minimize fundraising time and maximize teaching time 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

## THERE ARE SEVERAL ADVANTAGES IN JOINING:

### ✓ Highest Efficiency

➔ *thereby getting more “bang for your buck”*

### ✓ Least Overhead

➔ *means more of your giving goes to projects instead of administration*

### ✓ Better Planning & Budgeting

➔ *enables IPS to wisely allocate resources*

### ✓ Convenient Giving Methods

➔ *make donating simple and hassle-free*

### ✓ Member-Only Benefits


➔ *reward you for your outstanding commitment*

To join the Continuous Support Circle and make a difference year-round, visit

**[www.PrincipleStudies.org/CSC](http://www.PrincipleStudies.org/CSC)**







And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to dwell in.

*Isaiah 58:12*



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