

PASTORS & POLITICS



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The Johnson Amendment states that entities who are exempt from federal income tax cannot:

Participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of – or in opposition to – any candidate for public office.

This amendment squashed three centuries of pastoral freedom of speech in America, and effectively removed God’s voice from the political processes. Should the shepherds of the Lord’s flock be muzzled in this way?

KEY BIBLE VERSES

[As you will see from the Bible verses below, during the time of the apostles, the Jewish leaders sought to silence the voice of the new Christian faith in the ‘public square’. Likewise, secular leaders today seek to prevent the voice of Christians going beyond the church walls.]

So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

Acts 4:18-20

“For we [the Jewish leaders] have found this man [Paul] a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.”

.....
[Paul responded], “Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.

Acts 24:5-16

VIDEO - American Heritage- Role of Pastors

By David Barton; Date: Sept 2008

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO8VRGUOwQI>

Extract

During the revolutionary war of the seventeen hundreds, the local church, pastors and clergymen played a pivotal role in the founding of our nation. But how did the church respond to such lingering issues as slavery and civil rights? Is there still a role for churches and pastors to play in today's political arena?

Pastors were a substantial influence in America achieving independence, but they were also just as substantial in helping America get its constitutional form of government. Pastors were involved across the board in all aspects of culture, [and] all aspects of society.

VIDEO – Pastors Today in America

By Dr. Voddie Baucham; date: July 2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUzdO7iLwHo>

Extract

I think another reason that pastors are held in less esteem today is the role that pastors used to play in being sort of a conscience of the culture, and the fact that we stepped away from that.

The fact that we used to be the thermostat in the culture; we used to be the ones who were sort of leading the way and helping the culture think about things from a worldview perspective; from a theological and biblical perspective.

We've now sort of retreated into our own worlds and into our own kingdoms. We're now building things for ourselves looking inwardly and not looking outwardly at the responsibility that we have to engage and impact culture.

ACTION - Pulpit Freedom Sunday

<http://www.speakupmovement.org/church/LearnMore/details/4702>

Description

The future of religious freedom depends on a free pulpit to communicate fundamental, biblical principles to congregations across America. Join a growing movement of bold pastors preaching Biblical Truth about candidates and elections from their pulpits on October 5, 2014.

PRAYER

Dear God,

As we see the many challenges that face believers in America today,
give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed,
courage to change the things which should be changed,
and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

Amen

(adapted from The Serenity Prayer)