

Does the church need the Johnson Amendment?

May 16, 2017

Where do we find protection?

In reference to "[Laity, clergy urged to protect churches from partisan politics](#)":

Concerning the Johnson Amendment, the primary concern expressed by pastors and religious leaders for the past several decades has been the fear of government censure of churches whose preaching or beliefs stand in opposition to the ever shifting sands upon which culture stands (abortion, marriage, homosexuality and gender to name a few). Are we now to understand that the church needs the government to protect the church of God from politics and dissent? How did the gospel ever advance before the Johnson Amendment made us come together and ignore politics?

The original intent of the tax-exempt status of the church is that what a government taxes it necessarily controls, and the state was to have no influence over the church. Now it appears the government can also control with the threat of revoking tax-exempt status.

The fear of congregations becoming politicized is a true fear, but where shall we turn for consolation and discernment in such divisive times? Do we hide behind the shelter of the Johnson Amendment? One would think that the Baptist cry of "priesthood of the believer" would rejoice in knowing that the government will allow pastors to speak on any topic thus prompted by the Holy Spirit.

I believe the best thing a church can do to protect from divisiveness is to gather regularly to pray. This might even prove more effective than

legislative oversight.

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