

Johnson Amendment, public education, sanctuary campus, racism

February 15, 2017

Pastors, candidates & LBJ

When talking of [the Johnson Amendment](#) we should consider what was LBJ's motive for introducing this amendment. And that was in a prior election cycle, a group that opposed his re-election apparently had support from some churches. So, what was the original intent of this law? To suppress free speech from the pulpit for personal vindictive purposes.

It was also an amendment to the IRS tax code that was not even debated on the floor of the Senate. How does that happen?

As you stated in an [earlier editorial about the moral attributes of President Trump](#), the Christian electorate should bear responsibility for voting for a moral person, but the Johnson amendment prohibits such speech from the pulpit.

In conclusion, as I look back at the spiritual condition of our churches after the 178 years before this amendment and what it is now, your assertion that it would weaken the church I think is without merit.

Owen Whitsitt

Graham

I agree with your opinion and your points related to the

repeal of the Johnson amendment. When President Trump began his campaign, he asked church leaders why they were not telling their congregations to vote for him. They explained the Johnson Amendment prohibited their ability to campaign for a candidate.
<https://baptiststandard.com/opinion/editorial/19965-editorial-johnson-amendment-repeal-would-destroy-church-unity>

My fear is that our churches could be turned into the “German Lutheran Church” model developed by the Nazi party after Adolph Hitler became leader of Germany.

Although my viewpoint may seem like an overly emotional opinion, let’s keep in mind the working of the devil is to confuse and attempt to destroy the church as a whole. Although the gates of hell will not prevail, it doesn't mean that persecution or travail are extinguished.

Prentiss Yeates

Lubbock

Sorry, but I don’t share the [concerns you’ve outlined on the Johnson Amendment](#). The church in the United States did quite fine before the Johnson Amendment and would be fine if it were repealed.

By the way, this kind influence is happening today in corporate America. Political CEOs are pressuring their executive underlings to support their personal political interests, sometimes in the guise of supporting the corporate “business” interests. I don’t see anyone concerned about this issue.

Your concern for church unity does a disservice to trivialize the unity Christians have in Christ. Christians understand we are free to make our own political choices, regardless what a pastor may support.

Marshall Pickett

Cypress

If pastors and other church leaders feel it is their right to endorse candidates in the church and under its auspices, they should be happy to pay their taxes in order to serve God in that way! The problem is, as you know, when they speak as the church, that implies they speak for all the members, which they certainly do not.

Of course, they are free to speak for political parties but only for themselves—maybe at a non-church function.

It almost borders on voter fraud when they speak as the church at political events.

Nelson Forsyth

Plano

Christians & public education

I have to mostly disagree with [Charles Foster Johnson in defending public education](#), which is failing to educate using Christian principles.

Parents are overtaxed for this non-accomplishment. They should have a right to take their children to schools of their choice, or educate them at home, or in a private school using Christian concepts and more educational activities.

Case in point: My grandson in Colorado, where they have school choice, has just been accepted into a Christian high school that offers many more

choices for education than the public school. Even though they have to drive every day a longer distance to take him there, to them it is worth it. My granddaughter of the same family still attends an elementary school where they both attended from the day they entered school. It was on the same property as their church at the time and a private Christian school.

Another thought has to do with the state and federal influences that control a lot of the thinking and curriculum of the public schools. Again, it is a parental right—without taxation’s loss of control—to educate their children as they see fit.

Before public schools in our national history, there was home schooling and private tutoring that produced a better-educated citizen. Universities were founded to prepare preachers and Christian businessmen. True, there were some that did not get an education, thus the desire for public education.

Principle restated: It is the duty and responsibility of the parents to see to education of their children; not the state or federal government.

Ed Stanley

Amarillo

Baylor as sanctuary

A petition at Baylor University urges the administration to [make the biblical commandment for cities of sanctuary relevant in the modern context](#). The Bible would require that we make our cities of refuge places for murderers, not just the innocent refugees, immigrants and international students the petition requests we protect.

There are many who, when a conservative is in charge, shout out that we are to have nothing to do with government and that we must subject

ourselves to whatever tyranny they suggest, since obviously God put them in charge. But this is completely forgetting the entire prophetic story of the Old Testament and the ministry of Christ.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were tossed into the fire because they refused to obey. Joshua survived assassination attempts from the political leaders. Elijah defied the new state religion and mocked their puny gods.

The influence of conservatism on Christianity has left our faith one full of Pharisees rather than prophets, who sell out our subversive faith of love for one of security.

Baylor becoming a sanctuary campus is not a matter of politics, except insofar as politics is taken to be an act of worship to God. For Baylor to become a sanctuary campus is the distinctly Christian option in this age.

Micah Furlong

Waco

Speaking of immigrants who are here illegally, I believe Baylor's Christian faith and standards commit it to obey the laws of the land, not just the ones we like.

Joanna Berry

Corpus Christi

White folks' burden

Ben Jealous, former NAACP president and CEO, hit the nail squarely on the head a few years ago when he said, "Ultimately, only men can end sexism,

and only white people can end racism.” African-Americans have been willing to dialogue with whites on race for some time. America’s white community is the drawback keeping interracial talk from occurring.

The Republican Party is overwhelmingly made up of white people. Like it does with poverty and economic inequality, the GOP rarely, if ever, acknowledges racism still exists in our country.

With the ball in their court now, Republicans have a golden opportunity to take the initiative to promote and begin to engage in long-overdue dialogue on race. The white church also has a big responsibility, morally and spiritually, of contributing to the dialogue process. America needs many white Martin Luther King Jrs. today.

I agree with a statement written over 50 years ago by author James Baldwin: “The Negro is the key figure in his country, and the American future is precisely as bright or as dark as his.” Dialoguing about race in America is white folks’ burden. Now is the time for us to begin the dialogue.

Paul L. Whiteley Sr.

Louisville, Ky.