

Voices: Making sense of the seemingly senseless

July 30, 2025

Jim Lemons looks at how believers can respond to the tragedy of the Hill County flooding.

Voices: God always has the final word

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Ruth Cook reflects on fear, faith, and the power of trusting God through life's uncertainties—reminding us his grace is always enough.

Voices: Drop the stones: Mercy over judgment

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Ben Karner explores how Jesus calls believers to drop their stones, embrace grace, and walk in truth, forgiveness, and transformation.

Voices: Griefbots' false promise of digital resurrection

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Bobby Bressman explores how individuals use AI as grief support and looks at healthier alternatives in Christian community.

Voices: An immigrant child's view of school

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Ruth Cook reflects on her experience teaching English-as-a-Second-Language, noting the challenges immigrant students face and the role of public schools in supporting them.

Voices: When the ones you love

get it wrong

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Chris Seay offers a view of Baylor's decision to rescind a grant, urging a return to compassion, courage, and Christ-like love.

Voices: God's love is with us in the floods

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Ruth Cook responds to the heartbreak of the Texas Hill Country floods with pastoral care.

Voices: Pastor, please don't endorse a candidate

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The [IRS is reversing its decades-old position](#) prohibiting pastors from endorsing candidates from the pulpit. On one hand, I celebrate the fact the government is removing itself from what clergy may and may not say. That's a good thing, in my mind.

That being said, I think the IRS rule change is going to create a massive mess for clergy and churches. I see just a few issues on the horizon.

1. Political Action Committees

I imagine churches and pastors will become the targets of Political Action Committees and political donors, particularly in tight elections.

Think about this: Elections in battleground states are razor thin. Politicians raise enormous amounts of money in order to flood the airwaves and social media with ads. If pastors now can endorse candidates, I imagine PACs will approach pastors and churches and offer significant “donations” to the church if the pastor will officially endorse a candidate from the pulpit.

Will those donations come with other stipulations? Will churches become dependent upon PAC donations? Will future donations be tied to the support of questionable policies?

Do we really want the influence of secular political PACs on the pulpits of churches across America? This will not open politicians to religious influence. It opens congregations and pastors to political influence. We need pastors—not influencers—in our pulpits, and this will push pastors even further towards being an influencer.

2. Taxing churches

This change likely will be used to lobby for the taxation of churches—and you really don’t want that.

I know many of my atheist and nonreligious friends initially will disagree, but hear me out. If churches can be taxed, then they can be lobbied on the basis of having taxes raised and lowered. That creates a nihilistic political reality that benefits no one and makes absolute terrible bedfellows of politicians and churches.

Beyond that, most churches are very small and likely would be forced to close if they had to pay taxes, and the government has no plan on how to replace the community services most churches provide. I am convinced taxing churches would be a net negative.

3. Dividing the church

Endorsing candidates from the pulpit will serve only to divide local churches.

I can speak intelligently only about the churches I have pastored, but none of those churches were politically homogenous.

The most recent church I pastored was in Houston and certainly contained members across the political spectrum. To have endorsed a candidate officially from the pulpit would have divided the church and many members would have left.

I learned this firsthand many years ago. I invited a local politician to the congregation to share his faith story. He went off script and started spouting talking points. I got all sorts of emails ... and all sorts of families left the church.

Bottom line: Churches are one of the few remaining spaces where people of different ideologies come together in voluntary community, and making the church an explicitly political zone will push out those who have different political perspectives.

4. Regretting later

Endorsing a candidate may seem like a good idea ... until it suddenly doesn't.

How long before the candidate you endorse does something in opposition to the commands of Jesus? Given the state of modern politics, I'd guess less than a week. When that happens, we confuse those who trust clergy to hear from God.

5. Added pressure on pastors

Pastors don't need the added pressure of being asked to endorse a candidate. I know this to be the case, because I faced such pressure prior to this change by the IRS.

It will be problematic enough with PACs potentially bringing outside influence on churches through donations, but if pastors have significant members on opposing sides of the political divide pressuring them to endorse different candidates, there is not a winning scenario for the pastor.

Trust me, pastoring is stressful enough as it is without pressuring clergy to choose which candidate to endorse, much less choosing between church members.

6. Christians in both major parties

Despite what you may have heard, there are faithful Christians in both major political parties.

I know, I know. You've heard this message from me before. But I think it's important to say it again.

I'm seeing folks on the right saying Democrats are "godless secularists" and folks on the left saying Republicans are "religious hypocrites." Good times.

Yes, I'm sure there are enough godless secularists and religious hypocrites

to go around. But I know faithful believers in both parties.

My Democratic friends are Democrats because they care deeply about things like care for the poor, and they believe Jesus commanded his followers to care about those things.

My Republican friends are Republicans because they care deeply about things like reducing abortions and standing for traditional sexual ethics, and they believe Jesus commanded his followers to care about such things.

Oddly enough, I think they both are right, and I think Christians would do well to realize Republicans should care more about the poor and Democrats should care more about ethics surrounding sexuality.

If you think your political party is *always* right on every issue, then you either are woefully misinformed or (sadly) a willful partisan hack.

7. Citizens of a different kingdom

Churches are members of a different kingdom and should behave as such.

Are politics important? Absolutely. Should Christians be involved? Yes. But let's maintain the prophetic voice of the church by talking about specific issues from a Christian perspective, not by selling out to a candidate or party.

Our best tools are preaching the truth of Scripture over against the issues of the time, rather than promoting a candidate.

It's far more effective to promote the way of Jesus. And let's be honest, if endorsements are allowed, if pastors speak prophetically on a topic, then it likely will be construed as an endorsement of whatever party or candidate supports that particular stance—even if it never was meant to do so.

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Voices: Sabbath: Rest in a day or rest in Jesus

July 30, 2025

Cristian Cervantes examines differing views on Sabbath observance.

Voices: The star who outshone Hiawatha

July 30, 2025

Johnny Teague reflects on how his longtime friend's wife made a lasting impact on her community through time as a crossing guard.

Voices: Rural people care when you die

July 30, 2025

Many rural people hold funerals in high regard, going out of their way to show their respect. Stacy Conner has stories to tell.

Voices: Still feeding others in retirement

July 30, 2025

Don Newbury knows how full retirement can be. Here, he celebrates another retiree who, after a career in education, is still feeding others.