

Religious freedom: losing it

My assigned topic for the National Day of Prayer was religious liberty. It caused me to think long and hard about where we started as a nation to where we stand today. This intellectual journey led me to a place where many probably will not want to tread. Regardless, there are things that need to be said. The following is the fruit of that journey, which explores answers to the question:



How did a nation founded upon Christian principles become apostate?

Today we shake our heads as we look at the ravages of a lawless culture and we yell at the television when we hear about the latest assault against our religious freedoms. We fail to realize that power-hungry governments ALWAYS systemically eradicate religious freedom – fully understanding that religious liberty and totalitarianism cannot co-exist.

AND – government propoganda bullies have always known how to intimidate the weak into silence.

To make matters worse, we have forgotten a valuable lesson we learned in the playground –

Bullies can only remain bullies in the midst of cowards.

We also fail to understand why cowards, who are so distasteful to God that He spits them out of His mouth, are the first to be thrown into the lake of burning fire – even before liars, thieves, murders, and the sexually immoral. (See Revelation 3:14-19 and 21:7-8.)

Many Americans today value peace and comfort above all else, shying away from speaking the truth out of fear of offending someone or being thought of as intolerant – even though they know right from wrong, which is written on their hearts.

They are modern day cowards.

How did this happen in the land of the free and the home of the brave?

First attack on religious freedom: the Johnson Amendment

It started in 1954, when then Senator Lyndon B. sought to silence the churches that were speaking out against him by attaching an amendment to an IRS bill that restricted their political voice and prohibited them from endorsing candidates. This is now known as The 1954 Johnson Amendment.

The churches hardly whimpered – almost as if they were happy to have one less thing to worry about. Their silence supported the growing perverse interpretation of the 1st Amendment, which in modern times has come to mean that government has to restrict the political speech of some to protect the civil rights of others.

AND we – the church – remained silent.

To be clear, “the church” is not some building somewhere. It is the body of believers. It is you and I, and all the people who sit in the pews, as all the people who are believers but don’t attend any church, and it includes all of church leadership everywhere.

In 1962, only 8 short years after the 1954 Johnson Amendment was passed, prayer was taken out of schools – all under the interpretation of the 1st Amendment and its perverted meaning of separation of church and state, whereby government now seeks to protect people from the church instead of the church being protected against the over-reach of government.

A few short years later, the women’s lib movement coupled with no-fault divorces led women to think that men were an expendable part of family life. And that coupled with a welfare system that filled in the financial gap, and the free sex age of the 1970s, all contributed to the breakdown of the family.

AND we – the church – *still* remained silent.

Next, abortion was legalized – and women were granted the right to make life and death decisions, and the murdering of the unborn for convenience’s sake now was disguised as a “choice.”

Now with more women being part of the work force, there was less time to pay attention to their children’s education. So the slippery apostate slope continued without objection, and a few short years later sex education was mandated. Soon these teachings became vehicles to both eroticized and corrupt the morals of our children.

Still – we – the church – remained silent.

Now a corrupted educational system coupled with teachers that were indoctrinated with Marxism and secular humanism by anti-American professors began using their platform to evangelize our children into their belief system by re-writing history to villainize our Constitutional Republic, and by using fakes and frauds in science to convince our children that God is either a liar or He doesn’t exist.

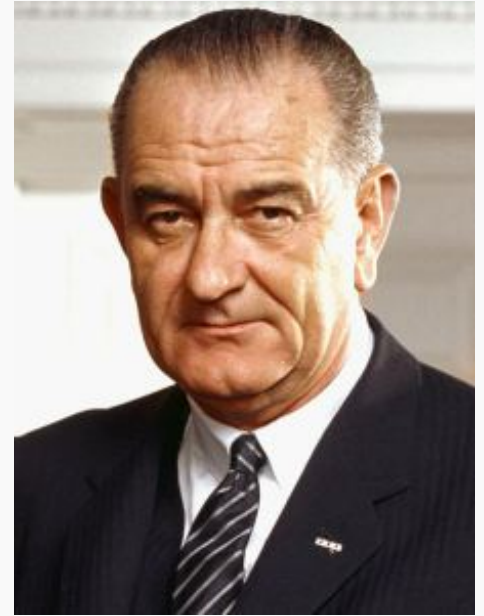
AND still – we – the church – remained silent.

Silence is not golden

As things digressed, another biblical truth proved true: Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. As the church remained silent, government did its best to remove God – the author of liberty – from our political lives, and as a result, our liberties are disappearing with Him.

As a nation, we have failed to understand that liberty – especially religious liberty – is a gift from God. He gave it to Adam in the Garden and it is available to us today – regardless of how government tries to intimidate us. You see, religious liberty is not a right granted to us by government; it is a right granted to us by God. The Apostles understood this and so did the Pilgrim and the Puritans, as well as our Founding Fathers. They understood that no matter what coercion government applied, it could not stop us from worshipping our God.

Regardless of intimidation and persecution, did not Jesus speak out to the religious leaders of his time?



Lyndon Baines Johnson. Photo: Executive Office of the President.

Did not Peter tell the same men that we must obey God rather than men?

Surely they were being intimidated and suppressed by the bullies of their times. However, all understood that *the truths of God trump the suppression of men – AND – the right to worship God is inalienable!*

You see, no one – not even Uncle Sam – can take away what God has given us. It can only be surrendered.

As we gather to pray for this nation and grieve over how far we have fallen, we must repent of many things – including our cowardice.

For the problem in America today isn't the loss of liberty, *it's the expulsion of the Author of liberty.*

A prayer for an apostate nation

Let us pray for our nation but begin with confession and repentance – for it's time to take the planks out of our own eyes before complaining about the specs in the eyes of our leaders. Nehemiah understood this when he confessed the corporate and collective sins of his people, Israel. He understood that before the shattered walls of Jerusalem could be rebuilt that revival preceded by confession and repentance was spiritually necessary – for the physical rebuilding of any nation must be preceded by the spiritual rebuilding of that nation.

1 John 1:8-9, says:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Therefore, let us fall to our knees and pray:

Dear Lord, we confess our national sins to you and repent of our silence when You have required our boldness.

We repent of our complacency that has allowed us to turn our children over to heathens to be educated.

We repent of not being more active in the fight to protect the unborn.

We repent of not loving you with all of our hearts, our souls, our strength, and our minds – as you have required.

We have allowed bullies to intimidate us and have remained silent when ungodly men and women have risen to positions of leadership.

Dear Lord, we acknowledge our complacency and our apathy that has infringed upon our religious freedom, that You have given us from the beginning of time.

And we ask for your forgiveness: forgiveness for our all our sins – spoken and unspoken. For the unrighteousness that thrives today that can only thrive in the midst of cowards.

Lord we pray for our leaders that you have appointed, as Moses prayed for Joshua, that they would be strong and of good courage, and also that you would bless them with a wisdom that can only come from You. And we pray for ourselves, for the same wisdom and discernment as we enter the voting booths.

Father, we pray that we be a people who once again choose You over the praises of men – and over the prosperity we have enjoyed for so long.

May we not value Your blessings above You, and may You once again be glorified in this land of plenty.

And may You, the God of all mercy and grace, forgive us our sins and heal our land.

AMEN!

Delivered at the [observance](#) of the National Day of Prayer at the Trenton War Memorial, Trenton, New Jersey.

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