

# Take a Risk!

A monthly publication from Risk Takers *for Christ*

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Platinum  
Transparency  
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Candid.



## Help Wanted: Bold, Brash, and Brave Pastors

by Rev. Dale Glading, President

Recently, a Twitter troll tried to intimidate me by saying that he had “reported” me to the IRS. My alleged crime? Speaking my mind as an American citizen, something that he believed was illegal for a Baptist minister to do.

My only response to the misinformed troll was this: “Gotta love the constitutional ignorance of anti-Christian bigots.” I stopped there, not wanting to violate Jesus’ admonition in Matthew 7:6 not to “cast your pearls before swine.” However, the misguided troll’s words belied a deeper problem in America which is an attempt by the secular Left to silence the religious Right.

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States reads as follows: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” Unless I am missing something, there is no mention by James Madison & Co. that this precious right to free speech - and free religious expression for that matter - did not extend to pastors, priests, rabbis, and other clergy.

And yet, far too many ministers cower in compliance when someone like the aforementioned Twitter troll questions their right to

weigh in on political matters. Secularists are fond of citing the separation of church and state without knowing anything about that phrase’s origin, meaning, or purpose... so please allow me to educate them.

On January 1, 1802, President Thomas Jefferson penned a letter to the Baptist Association of Danbury, CT. In his letter, Jefferson tried to assuage the concerns of the Baptist pastors who feared that the federal government might try to clip their ministerial wings.

Here, in their own words, are the Association’s concerns...

“Our Sentiments are uniformly on the side of Religious Liberty - That Religion is at all times and places a Matter between God and Individuals - That no man ought to suffer in Name, person or effects on account of his religious Opinions - That the legitimate Power of civil Government extends no further than to punish the man who works ill to his neighbour.”

Did you catch that? The pastors wanted assurances that the federal government would not censor their opinions or punish them for expressing their beliefs. In reply, President Jefferson wrote the following...

“I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’

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# Help Wanted: Bold, Brash, and Brave Pastors

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thus building a wall of separation between Church & State adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.”

Did you catch that, too? President Jefferson was assuring the Baptist pastors that a constitutional wall existed between church and state protecting their opinions and beliefs from government interference. There is absolutely no mention of the government needing to be similarly protected from the religious views of ministers or private citizens.

Ok, so we’ve put that falsehood to rest, but let me add one illustration to further prove my point. At the time of Jefferson’s presidency (1801-1809) the largest church in the United States met in the U.S. Capitol, specifically in the House of Representative chambers... and President Jefferson and his entire family were regular attendees, even in the most inclement weather. As per the Library of Congress, “Within a year of his inauguration, Jefferson began attending church services in the House of Representatives. Madison followed Jefferson’s example, although unlike Jefferson, who rode on horseback to the Capitol, Madison came in a coach and four.”

If Jefferson had a problem with ministers and others expressing their opinions and beliefs publicly, he certainly would not have allowed this church to meet in a government-owned building (with the Marine band leading the music) and he surely would not have attended the services himself.

Now, onto the second malicious and demonstrably false argument that anti-Christian zealots use to silence and intimidate evangelical Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.

Enter the Johnson Amendment, introduced by then-Sen. Lyndon Johnson of Texas in 1954. The bill was considered to be so uncontroversial that it was passed without any discussion or debate.

Why didn’t it have any opposition? Because the only thing that it prohibited was for churches or other non-

profit organizations, religious or otherwise, to “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.”

That’s it, folks! The only thing a church, synagogue, or mosque cannot do is endorse and campaign for - or oppose - a particular candidate. The Johnson Amendment says absolutely nothing about pastors and priests speaking out on social and moral issues nor does it threaten them with the loss of their 501 (C) (3) tax exempt status if they do so. In fact, the courts have upheld the right of churches to distribute voter guides which simply delineate the positions of the various candidates without providing an endorsement.

Pretty plain and simple, right? And yet, ministers across our fruited plain often refrain from speaking out on biblical issues such as abortion, homosexuality, and same-sex marriage for fear that Uncle Sam will raid their sanctuary and cart them off to prison.

I am not saying that such a thing couldn’t happen in the future if America continues its current moral and spiritual decline, precipitated by spineless and easily intimidated clergyman. However, for now at least, there is absolutely nothing to fear by saying that abortion is murder and that homosexuality is a sin... unless, of course, you are worried about stepping on toes and losing members (and their checkbooks).

## The Decay of Conscience

*“Brethren, our preaching will bear its legitimate fruits. If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in a great degree. If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discrimination, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the church is degenerate and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in religion, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it. Let us not ignore this fact, my dear brethren; but let us lay it to heart, and be thoroughly awake to our responsibility in respect to the morals of this nation.”*  
- Charles Finney, The Decay of Conscience, 1873

## The Busiest Man in Vero Beach

*“Just as blood in the water attracts the shark, so our weaknesses attract Satan’s attacks.” - Pastor Joe Moore*

Rev. Joe Moore, Jr. serves as the pastor of Rivers of Living Waters Rhema Word Ministries in Vero Beach FL. Pastor Joe also serves as President and CEO of Indian River County Sports Ministry. In that latter capacity, he speaks at our Living H2O Initiative (a basketball program for at-risk youth) on the second Monday of every month.



Joe is a very busy man, because he also serves as the chaplain for the Vero Beach High School football team. And yes, he is also a retired Master Sergeant in the U.S. Army, where he served as a Combat Support Operations Logistician for more than 20 years.

If you didn’t catch it, the word “serves” or “served” appears four times in the above description of Pastor Joe’s life and ministry. Yes indeed, Pastor Joe is a true servant of Jesus Christ and our community.

Here are some other thoughts from Pastor Joe on the sub-

ject of preparing yourself for - and defending yourself from - Satan’s attacks...

“The key is to identify where you are most vulnerable - where you have the greatest tendency to sin. Then, as you work to strengthen yourself in those areas and with God’s help, you will be stronger to defend yourself against future attacks from Satan. Don’t do today what you will want to undo tomorrow.”

Follow Pastor Joe’s advice - and example - and you’ll be safeguarded while you serve!

*“And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* Matthew 20:19-20 (NKJV)

*“And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”* Luke 2:49 (KJV)

*“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can make your stand against the devil’s schemes.”* Ephesians 6:11 (BSB)

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## Be Ready

by Alistair Begg

*“Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen.”*  
- Zechariah 11:2

When in the forest there is heard the crash of a falling oak, it is a sign that the woodman is around, and every tree in the whole company may tremble lest tomorrow the sharp edge of the axe should find it out. We are all like trees marked for the axe, and the fall of one should remind us that for every one, whether as great as the cedar or as humble as the cypress, the appointed hour is fast approaching.

I trust we do not, by often hearing of death, become callous to it. May we never be like the birds in the steeple, which build their nests when the bells are tolling and sleep quietly when the solemn funeral peals are startling the air. May we regard death as the most serious of all events and be sobered by its approach. It ill behooves us to play while our eternal destiny hangs on a thread. The sword is out of its sheath - let us not trifle; it is ready,

and the edge is sharp - let us not play with it. He who does not prepare for death is more than an ordinary fool - he is a madman. When the voice of God is heard among the trees of the garden, let fig tree and sycamore and elm and cedar all hear the sound.

Be ready, servant of Christ, for your Master comes suddenly, when an ungodly world least expects Him. See to it that you are faithful in His work, for the grave shall soon be prepared for you. Be ready, parents, see to it that your children are brought up in the fear of God, for they will soon be orphans. Be ready, businessmen, make sure that your affairs are in order and that you serve God with all your hearts, for the days of your earthly service will soon be over, and you will be called to give account for the deeds done in the body, whether they are good or bad. May we all prepare for the tribunal of the great King with a care that will be rewarded with the gracious commendation, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

*Devotional material is taken from “Morning and Evening,” written by C.H. Spurgeon, revised and updated by Alistair Begg. Copyright © 2003, Good News Publishers*



## Low self-esteem?

by Bob Williamson

I was fishing offshore with some friends not too long ago and a little canary about two inches high lit on the back of the boat. You might not think that odd, but we were nearly forty miles out. A friend told me they come from the Bahamas and migrate to the Keys for whatever purpose and then go back. I see flocks of these little guys every year darting up and down as they cross the Gulf Stream and fly towards the Keys.

This little guy seemed tame but was more likely just exhausted from the long trip. Aside from some floating debris here and there, few resting places present themselves on this long trip. He looked at us and we looked at him for quite some time and then he took off again apparently determined to make landfall before dark.

I was reminded of a verse in the Bible that states that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without our Lord seeing it. I deduced that obviously if he sees the sparrow he sees me and that is very comforting to me.

Whenever we get down in spirit and feel all alone, maybe we should take note of this little canary and the knowledge that God is watching him all the while as he makes his long journey across the Straits of Florida to the Florida Keys and back again a few months later to

the Bahamas. Further the Bible states that all the zillions of stars in all the galaxies throughout the universe have been named individually by God. His knowledge, power, intelligence, and capabilities are astounding and incomprehensible to mere humans and yet He loves us above all creation.

If perhaps you have low self-esteem and maybe even feel worthless today, or are lonely, or feel unappreciated, forget about it. God thinks you are something special. The Bible tells us that we are far more valuable to almighty God than a sparrow and that even the very hairs on our heads are numbered. God loves you more than you can even comprehend and thinks you are worth dying for. Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a mansion for each of His children and will return for us at a time of His choosing whereby we can be with Him forever and ever.

Feel better?

John 14:1

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you can be also.”

*Devotional material is taken from “Words for the Day Podcast”*

## We Have a QR Code

Everyone can use a spiritual lift in the morning, especially on weekdays when work, school, and other demands vie for our time and attention... and sap our strength. Risk Takers for Christ wants to help by offering a free weekday devotional message that will challenge and encourage you in your daily walk.



*Point your smart-phone camera at this QR code to receive an uplifting devotional message each weekday.*



**Midway Bible Fellowship**

*Proclaiming God's Truth & Demonstrating His Love*

8:30 a.m. - Coffee & donuts

9 a.m. - Worship service

1950 S US Hwy 1, Vero Beach FL

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