

August 2004

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The Left is Aware of the ‘Pastor Factor’

“...when you go to the polls this November...you should not vote for or against any political party or politician. Just vote God...His values, His ways, His Word.”
--Rev. Ronnie Floyd

Many pastors are drawing the line at the prospect of court-ordered homosexual unions, fearing that the Church will soon be forced to opt-in or risk losing tax benefits—or worse. They are showing up for “defense of marriage” rallies and other informational gatherings in surprising numbers all across the nation. They are praying for the protection of marriage and are preaching on its divine purpose. And if that’s not enough, they are providing every opportunity for their congregants to register to vote and where convenient, are even introducing candidates who share their values.

But in the next few days, these same pastors will receive a rather threatening letter from a leftist organization that calls itself the *Interfaith Alliance*. It is a “ministerial-PAC” that was formed a few years ago to keep an eye on churches (mostly evangelical) that place an emphasis on voting biblical values as opposed to voting one’s pocketbook. Rarely, if ever, do liberal, mainline, or African-American churches hear from the *Interfaith Alliance*.

The letter will be signed by Puget Sound area “ministers,” and will warn churches that distributing Christian Coalition voter guides and engaging in other election related activities could lead to a law-suit and loss of tax-exempt status.

What few people know is that the *Interfaith Alliance* has very strong ties to the Democratic National Committee (Democrat Party), which helped launch the group with a large financial contribution. The organization appears to move in concert with Barry Lynn who is a board member of the ACLU and chief spokesman for *Citizens United for the Separation of Church and State*.

Barry, or “Reverend” Lynn as he prefers to be called, is someone who; wants the Internal Revenue Service to investigate anti-abortion groups; as late as 1985 opposed a bill to prohibit interstate transmission of child pornography; supports the legalization of same-sex “marriages;” and opposes school choice and school prayer—even silent prayer.

Reverend Lynn was also a key figure in the controversy involving Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore who was forced from office for refusing to remove a display of the Ten Commandments in the lobby of the Alabama Supreme Court Building.

While warning evangelical churches not to engage in political activities, the *Interfaith Alliance* and *Citizens United for the Separation of Church and State* each maintain an office in Washington, DC and each aggressively lobbies Congress on a range of “religious” issues. Both organizations, for instance, oppose government grants for faith-based charities, public display of the Ten Commandments, school choice, “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance, and even the National Day of Prayer. Regarding the Federal Marriage Amendment, a statement by the *Interfaith Alliance* says in part:

“We oppose the Federal Marriage Amendment because it shows an indisputable disregard for religious liberty and a fundamental disrespect for the diversity of approaches to marriage within faith traditions.

As a mainstream religious organization of over 150,000 people of faith and goodwill who come from over 70 faith traditions, we believe that people of faith in a religiously pluralistic society are bound together by shared principles of compassion, civility and mutual respect for human dignity...”

“Respecting the rights of those in our diverse communities of faith who deem same-gender marriage to be consistent with their religious creed ensures that the United States will continue to be the most religiously pluralistic country in the world...”

“...our call to unite the nation under the banner of mutual respect for human dignity requires us to ensure that all Americans are protected equally under the law. Any amendment to our Constitution which denies some Americans the same rights as afforded their neighbors demeans us all.”¹

Although knowing the philosophies and tactics of left-leaning religious organizations that are working to negate the influence of evangelicals in public policy is helpful, it does not diminish the capacity of those groups to threaten or intimidate even the most seasoned among us.

Two weeks ago, Rev. Lynn sent letters to the IRS complaining that Virginia pastor Jerry Falwell and Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd have violated provisions of their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. He pointed out that Rev. Falwell, senior pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, wrote in his July E-Mail newsletter that for “conservative people of faith, voting for principle this year means voting the re-election of George W. Bush.”²

Lynn also suggested that Rev. Floyd, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Springdale, should be investigated because he preached a sermon July 4 in which he compared the stances of President Bush and Sen. John Kerry on key moral issues—such as abortion and same-sex “marriage”—although he did not endorse either candidate.

Falwell dismissed the complaint noting that Democratic candidates routinely speak in African American churches, and routinely receive endorsements from the pulpit. He says that on July 18, Kerry’s running mate, John Edwards, spoke at a predominantly black church, where the pastor followed up by endorsing the Democratic ticket. So far, no complaint heard from Rev. Lynn.

Rev. Ronnie Floyd’s First Baptist Church released a statement that said, “The unfounded accusation made by this organization and others is nothing more than an attack on our First Amendment right of free speech...”

Letters suggesting that distributing Christian Coalition voter guides in churches could result in IRS investigations should be promptly reported to our office in Olympia. There is no case of any church in America that has had its tax-exempt status threatened, let alone revoked because of distributing Christian Coalition voter guides.

We believe that government is ordained of God and that good citizenship is not an option. As Christians, we cannot neglect our duty when it comes to voting and then wonder why God allows immoral people to become our leaders.

Let’s work diligently to get the righteous to vote, and pray fervently that the righteous vote rightly.

Rick Forcier

¹ <http://www.interfaithalliance.org/Issues/Issues.cfm?ID=5376&c=12>

² <http://www.site@religionjournal.com>