

Should Pastors Retake Control of Their Pulpits?

...Black Robe Regiment of Yesterday...

by Kat Rowoldt



When the general public talks about the church today, I doubt many speak of the church with respect or hold it in a place of influence in their lives, except maybe a few out here in west Texas. Christian values have been trampled on, laughed at, and ridiculed for so long, it is extremely difficult to find a television program for the family to watch together that doesn't have covert propaganda in it for secular agendas. Our grandchildren are building childhood memories viewing programs that would not have been allowed on television when we were children. Gone are the days when values and morals were the backbone of what a program was all about, and children could recount the lesson learned from what they watched.

The lessons children are learning from what they watch today, are without question one of the major reasons we are seeing a generation coming up that are disrespectful of authority, lazy and expecting others to do for them, with an addiction to electronic devices to entertain and distract them from the real world. While we have been busy doing life, enjoying our cell phones, computers, and Instagram pictures, we disconnected from life and lots of things have been allowed to go to hell. Strong word, but it does truly define the direction our society is going now.

As you visit different churches, listen to sermons online, and discuss issues with people who attend church today, so many of them sound just like the secular world and television programs we are bombarded with every day. Where did the church go? You know, the one that believed the Word of God and upheld the principles it taught.

Political correctness has made many topics/issues off limits at church today. What Pastor wants to confront their congregation about living together being a sin, when that is the cultural trend today? They surely don't want to offend anyone and take a chance of losing a potential tithing church member, so let's just talk about happy things.

A prominent TV preacher is an excellent example of just preaching a limited message that does not address the real issues of today. When confronted and asked direct questions on where he stands on various issues, he will not give a straight answer, but redirects it as being between the person and God. Pastors used to refer to the "Good Book" and quote chapter and verse when it came to issues. They stood up for the Word of God and the values it presents without fear of offending anyone.

My husband and I recently made a change in the church we are attending. We've been at the new church a few months now and have quietly been observing the many aspects they have going on. It's been wonderful. A few Sunday ago, in the middle of the sermon, the Pastor asked the congregation how many of them he had married in the last couple of years, and would they please stand up? People popped up all over the sanctuary. The Pastor went on to say the number of weddings he has been performing amongst the congregation has greatly increased since he preached on "living together is a sin and you can't keep doing that."

Wow! That was a first for me to witness. Another unique thing is the fact that there has yet been a Sunday morning service that someone, or lots of people, have not been baptized. I have witnessed more baptisms in three months than I have seen typically in maybe a year or two at other churches. There is something very different happening at this church.

People are being saved, baptized in water, and baptized with the Holy Spirit. Lives are being changed. Physical miracles are happening in bodies. God is moving in the lives of the people, and these people talk about Jesus, His Word, His blessings, His provisions, His healing power, and more. Jesus is actually welcomed there, and He shows up! One more observation: lots of people arrive early because everyone wants to sit upfront, not on the back rows. How different is that!

What is known as the Johnson Amendment in 1954, penned by Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson, at the time, potentially caused some of the major

shifting in America's churches as we know them today. That amendment prohibited any 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization from endorsing or opposing political candidates. While that seems like a very narrow issue, somehow that has grown into the large elephant in the sanctuary that keeps "pastors in check" from being political, discussing issues of the day, and even preaching the full Word of God.

Surprisingly, when President Trump took office, he was determined to repeal this amendment. There was push-back on it. Statistics show 73% of Americans did not want the amendment repealed. They do not want their Pastors endorsing candidates from the pulpit. But that's not the totality of what they didn't want. They really don't want Pastors to have the freedom to preach what God's Word has to say, to bring correction to their congregation, to take a stand for what is righteous, and potentially allow them to feel "guilty" of sinning. It's not just about endorsing candidates. It's about what the candidates stand for, what they are supportive of, and why or why not it's right or wrong.

As I just mentioned, many pastors stop short of preaching the full Word of God. That could really get tested in California if a particular bill happens to pass. Assembly Bill 2943, which is working through the legislature in California, is targeting sexual orientation. Entities such as the Family Research Council and others, are greatly concerned about this bill.

The wording on this bill could lead to the potential banning of Bibles and other Christian materials, sermons, teachings, etc., because of its position on sexuality. The bill would make certain books, types of therapy, and other similar things illegal if it tries to bring correction or change to a sexual behavior that someone might have that doesn't align with its philosophy or beliefs.

The United Kingdom just passed a new law that has an automatic six-year prison sentence attached to it. If anyone speaks against Islam, a Muslim, or someone "feels" like they did, they are immediately arrested. Just yesterday, May 25th, Tommy Robinson who was awaiting the verdict of a trial of a "grooming gang" was arrested in the middle of broadcasting his report to his viewers outside the courthouse.

It is now being reported that he was sentenced to thirteen months in prison the following day, and all mentions of his arrests and live

broadcasting stream from that day are being removed, scrubbed from the Internet after the British government ordered the ban on all reporting of the incident. This is the United Kingdom which is taking such actions! Interestingly, there is not a similar law in-regards to Christianity, Judaism, or any other religion – just Islam.

Challenging days are ahead for us. A lot of things truly rest in the hands of the men/women behind the pulpits today. We need a return to the Black Robe Regiment of our Founding Fathers' days.

Black Robe Regiment: quoted from the introduction to their website www.nationalblackroberegiment.com.

“The Black Robed Regiment was the name that the British placed on the courageous and patriotic American clergy during the Founding Era (a backhanded reference to the black robes they wore). Significantly, the British blamed the Black Robe Regiment for American Independence, and rightfully so, for modern historians have documented that.

“It is strange to today’s generation to think that the rights listed in the Declaration of Independence were nothing more than a listing of sermon topics that had been preached from the pulpit in the two decades leading up to the American Revolution, but such was the case.

“But it was not just the British who saw the American pulpit as largely responsible for American independence and government, our own leaders agreed. For example, John Adams rejoiced that “the pulpits have thundered” and specifically identified several ministers as being among the “characters the most conspicuous, the most ardent, and influential” in the “awakening and a revival of American principles and feelings” that led to American Independence.

“Across subsequent generations, the great and positive influence of the Revolutionary clergy was faithfully reported. The American clergy were faithful exponents of the fullness of God’s Word, applying its principles to every aspect of life, thus shaping American’s institutes and culture. They were also at the forefront of proclaiming liberty, resisting tyranny, and opposing any encroachments on God-given rights and freedoms. In 1898, Methodist bishop and church historian Charles Galloway rightly observed of these ministers, but the ministers during the Revolutionary period were not necessarily unique; they were simply continuing what ministers had

been doing to shape American government and culture in the century and a half preceding the Revolution.”

Where is that spirit that led those men/women of God back-in-the-day? We need those clergymen and lay people today to rise up and once again to begin addressing the issues of the day from the pulpit without the fear of losing their 501 (c) (3) status. The Bible doesn't say to give to your church because you will get a tax deduction, it's says to "bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house." (Mal 3:10a) It's a commandment of God.

We need the clergy to call out sin as sin. Christians need to arise and begin to separate themselves from the world, from the culture of today, and attempt to live a life in alignment with the Word. Yes, we are all sinners and will fall short of perfection, but that is why we have Jesus.

The National Day of Prayer just occurred. Here in San Angelo, the Prayer Movement and the National Day of Prayer joined forces. We had a powerful gathering of saints from a large mix of congregations. We gathered at the Cactus Hotel and began our event in the lobby with Praise and Worship, followed by specific prayer covering a multitude of needs. There was something different in this atmosphere. Something was shifting. Truly the body of Christ had gathered together to lift the Name of Jesus, to celebrate His goodness, His provision, His protection, His love, and the unity of His body.

On June 7th, once again the Body of Christ is being called to gather together to pray for our community, our state, and our nation. The Prayer Movement meets monthly on the first Thursday of each month at various parks around the City to pray. Next month's gathering will conclude our 2nd year of praying monthly. It was birthed out of the tragedy that occurred on July 7th, 2016 in Dallas when Dallas Police Officers were ambushed and slaughtered.

June 7th we will meet at the Martin Luther King Park, 2121 MLK, at 6:30 p.m. for a time of Praise before we move into Prayer. Everyone is invited to join us, be a part of prayer for our city or someone else, or bring your prayer needs for us to pray for you. God is moving. He is shifting things in our community for our good. Come be a part of what God is doing.

These are some very challenging days we are living in. I feel so strongly that each of us needs to assess where we are spiritually, where, or even if, we are being spiritually fed, and are we choosing to live and do what God has called each one of us individually to do? Tough questions - but required answers.

Until next time...

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