



CHURCHES AND ELECTIONS- WHAT IS THE LAW?

Many churches and pastors feel called by scripture to “equip the saints” to represent Christ in all areas of our society, including the voting booth. Pastors should thus be supported in their goal of helping their members be good stewards in representing Christ in their civic duties. This is especially important in light of the fact that only one out of every four Christians in America is voting.

Unfortunately, many churches and pastors have been given false information in an attempt to scare them from acting as a pastor and impacting their culture for Christ. The law is actually very supportive of pastors and churches in fulfilling their mission to equip their saints. Even as a non-profit corporation, there is very little a church may not do.

CHURCHES MAY NOT:

1. Endorse or oppose a particular candidate
2. Contribute to or use church resources for one candidate over another (including free use of church list)

CHURCHES MAY (among other activities):

1. Register their members as voters
2. Pass out non-partisan Voter’s Guides
3. Invite all candidates in a race to speak (O.K. if only one shows up)
4. Speak directly about specific issues and legislation (abortion, marriage, etc.)

Individually, a pastor can do whatever he feels led to do – endorse, support a member’s campaign, etc., as long as it’s not done with church resources. There are no limitations on the pastor individually. The few limitations above that exist are only for the Church entity and only if the Church is a non-profit corporation.

Pastors should not be intimidated from acting as pastors, calling their people to vote and giving them information so they can best represent Christ in the voting booth.

Liberty Institute is associated with Focus on the Family and protects churches and religious freedoms free of charge. For questions, please call (972) 941-4444.