

Resources are available for churches to battle for freedom

by Randy Bright <http://www.tulsabeacon.com/?p=5782>

It seems that a week does not go by that we do not hear of another case of discrimination or abuse of some form or another against churches or Christians. The Obama Administration's attempt to force hospitals and schools owned and operated by churches to provide insurance or funding to pay for abortions, sterilizations and contraceptives is a first of its kind in America, and it is bound to get worse if the church at large does not forcefully resist what is a clear violation of religious rights.

In this column I have written about other abuses that churches and Christians now routinely endure – vandalism; church burnings; zoning actions that force churches off of their property; zoning actions to prevent churches from building at all; forced removal of the Ten Commandments, crosses and other religious symbols from courthouses, cemeteries and city logos.

Relatively few churches have the financial ability or the legal knowledge to defend themselves when someone or some group is determined to harass or sue a church, and it is difficult to find local attorneys that specialize in the kind of expertise necessary to provide a good defense. It's difficult to even find a lawyer who understands the Constitution, at least from the standpoint from which it was originally written.

In my opinion, unless we get a conservative government in office soon that can “fundamentally change” (reform is a better description) America back to its constitutional roots, it is only a matter of time before attacks against churches intensify. Initially, I believe these attacks will be mostly legal, but given enough time they will become violent, just as we see it happening overseas now. That makes it even more urgent for us to preserve our religious liberties. For the time being, it is important for churches to prepare for the legal attacks to come. As the old adage goes, it is no longer if the attacks are going to come, it is when.

Every church should appoint someone or a group of people to proactively begin preparing by learning as much about the Constitution, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) and cases that involve churches.

A good place to begin learning is at Wallbuilders.com. Their website includes numerous articles and podcasts that will help you understand the problems and solutions that churches and Christians face. It is also an excellent place to learn about the Constitution.

I have encouraged my readers for several years to read the book, *The 5000-Year Leap*, as well as books by other authors such as Mark Levin. Education about the Constitution is vital if the church is going to be able to survive in American society, because without it some attacks against the church will go unrecognized until it is too late.

Beyond that, there is professional not-for-profit help available for churches and Christians who find themselves in legal problems.

The Thomas More Law Center is a legal organization whose mission is “defending the religious freedom of Christians, protecting the sanctity of human life, restoring traditional family values and patriotism, and supporting a strong national defense and an independent and sovereign United States of America.

The American Center for Law and Justice focuses on “U.S. constitutional law, European Union law and human rights law.” Their chief counsel is Jay Sekulow, who is a well-known and respected attorney.

The Beckett Fund for Religious Liberty’s stated aim is to protect the “free expression of all faiths.” It is an excellent law firm that has won many cases and helped many people retain their religious rights.

I recently received some advice from Liberty Counsel on a case that involved abuse of a Christian’s rights. Their website is also an excellent resource for anyone wanting to learn more about religious freedoms.

Though I don’t know much about them yet, I recently heard David Barton of Wallbuilders mention the National Legal Foundation, and how valuable their assistance had been in a case that they were dealing with.

I apologize to these groups that there isn’t enough room in this column to tell my readers more about them, and I apologize to the others that I have failed to mention. Suffice it to say that although I believe that all of these groups provide free legal services, they all need financial support to do so. So part of being proactive in any future defense is to make donations in advance of need.

It is unfortunate that America has fallen to such a low point in regard to religious freedoms and rights, but the good thing is that there are plenty of resources available for anyone or any church who wants to fight the good fight.

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Randy W. Bright, AIA, NCARB, is an architect who specializes in church and church-related projects. You may contact him at 918-582-3972, rwbrightchurcharch@sbcglobal.net or www.churcharchitect.net.

This entry was posted on Thursday, February 23rd, 2012 and is filed under [Columns](#).