



# the *Vision*

July 2002

The Newsletter of Vision America

## **Far too few Christians are being persecuted and falsely maligned today!**

Dear Friends,

**“You are the salt of the earth ...”** Matthew 5:13 [NIV]

Jesus preceded those words recorded in Matthew’s Gospel by stating...

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Matthew 5:11-12 [NIV]

**Far too few Christians are being persecuted and falsely maligned today!**

The few who are, are avoided by other Christians as “troublemakers” and “controversial.”

I believe if Jesus were bodily present in America today, He would be stirring things up a bit.

In 1959, I developed a severe staff infection that resulted in boils on both legs. Every few days my parents would take me to Dr. Lambert’s office where a couple of hundred nurses (or so it seemed) would hold me down while he lanced and drained the boils of their infection.

After about three weeks of this painful procedure, he suggested that my parents try a new approach ... weekly visits to Galveston Island, where I was instructed to play in the surf.

To a nine-year-old boy, that was GREAT advice!

At the start of every visit to the gulf, I would scream in agony as the salt water hit those open wounds. But, soon the **fun** of the waves overcame the **pain** of the saltwater. In a matter of days, the infection began clearing up and I was soon well.

**Salt** has that effect on infection!

When Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth,” He intended us to understand our prophetic role in society.

Salt stings when applied to an open wound, while it **cleanses and purifies**. It even works against decay as a preservative.

The Gospel is like a two-edged sword. It promotes healing and it preserves the culture. It is painful when applied, but the benefits soon make everyone forget the pain.

Jesus said that if our salt ever lost its saltiness, it would be good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled by men.

Today, our values and our faith are being trampled underfoot. **I believe we, the Church of the living God, are to blame!** For an entire generation now, our zeal to avoid controversy and appeal to all men without offending any has resulted in a generation of people who do not fear God and who disdain anyone who holds to absolute truth.

Recent revelations of widespread sexual misconduct among some Catholic clergymen has provided haters of God with ample opportunity to trample underfoot all who openly embrace their faith.

If America is to have a hope of ever again experiencing real Holy spirit induced revival, Christians must again become the salt of the Earth. We must be willing to suffer any loss necessary as we hold up God’s standard, and confront evil wherever we find it. We must not forget the words of our Savior ... “You are the salt of the Earth!”

I Remain ...

Your Friend,

Rick Scarborough

**“You are the salt of the Earth!”**

God Is Looking For  
Champions  
I Samuel 17



Founder Rick Scarborough takes the message of Vision America across Texas. In his presentation to Second Baptist Church Baytown, he illustrated how David became a champion when he stood up to Goliath, spoke up with his slingshot, and refused to give up.



*Isaiah 58:1 [NIV]*  
**“Shout it aloud,  
do not hold back.  
Raise your voice  
like a trumpet.”**

**BARBARA FRAZIER**

When I first read Rick Scarborough’s sentence, “**Far too few Christians are being persecuted and falsely maligned today,**” I thought he had misspoken. Surely he didn’t mean “**too few** are being persecuted.”

But he did!

And, after some serious soul searching, I have to agree with him. “*Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, ...*”

For, clearly, in Matthew 5:11-12, Jesus directed His followers to *stand up, speak up and refuse to give up!* *Stand up* and tell others about Him! *Speak up* and claim that He is your Savior! And, *Refuse to give up* your rights to stand up and speak up to those who would take them away!

Yet, we in America continue today in a downward spiral that takes us farther and

farther from His teachings because we simply will not *stand up, speak up and refuse to give up!*

Forty-eight years ago, we allowed a single politician to corrupt and steal away our rights to *stand up, speak up and refuse to give up*. **WHY?**

Why did we stand by and let Texas Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson attach an amendment to a tax bill that would restrict the rights of all 501C 3 entities to speak out about political matters — without even a debate?

As you read this today, you know there was probably nothing you personally could have done to prevent it. Perhaps you weren’t even born in 1954. Perhaps you were too young to understand or care about it. Or perhaps, as countless others, you simply did not know anything about it in the first place.

Today, however, there **IS** something you personally **CAN DO** to regain the Constitutional rights of **ALL** Americans — not just non-Christian Americans — to *stand up, speak up and refuse to give up!*

Today, you are not too young to understand or care about it. And ... today there is an opportunity for each and every person in America (pastors included) to help regain our rights! Individually, you and your congregations can urge your congressional leaders to support **HR 2357** which upholds the First Amendment of the United States Constitution guaranteeing the freedom of speech to all — including pastors and churches.

On May 14, Congressman Walter B. Jones testified before the Subcommittee on Oversight House Ways and Means Committee. Addressing the committee, Jones thanked them for holding the hearing to discuss **HR 2357 — The Houses of Worship Political Speech Protection Act.**

In his address, Jones asked: “Should the Internal Revenue Service be able to determine what is appropriate speech in our nation’s

houses of worship, and then revoke the tax-exempt status if it feels those religious institutions have ‘crossed the line?’”

While the answer should be a resounding “NO!” the Internal Revenue Service sees it otherwise.

Indeed, when the Internal Revenue Service can threaten loss of tax exemption for a church just because a pastor tells his congregation that a particular candidate for public office is “pro life” or “pro choice,” **the IRS has “crossed the line.”**

In Jones’ own congressional district, a parishioner asked his priest to remind others during mass that George Bush was pro-life and that Al Gore was pro-choice. Fearing that “speaking out on the practical political application of his church’s moral code might jeopardize his church’s tax status,” the priest declined.

In actuality, the priest was telling his parishioner, “Preaching the practical application of your church’s faith risks incurring the wrath of the IRS!”

Prior to Lyndon Johnson’s 1954 amendment — which, ironically, had nothing to do with his position about churches, but everything to do with his efforts to hamstring anti-communist groups that were opposing his election — pastors and church members spoke freely about candidates and political issues when they believed it was their moral right and obligation to do so.

For instance, Congressman Jones gave this example supporting the need for support of HR 2357: “The slavery abolitionist organizations and the civil rights movement are great examples of church-inspired political successes.” One hates to think where this country might be today without the help of the churches in those movements.

It is imperative that we, as Christians, act collectively to regain our rights to *stand up, speak up and refuse to give up* our rights to discuss — from the pulpit — moral and spiritual issues as they relate to the political arena. Today, there are many topics before our legislative bodies which involve these issues. We must have the right to present those issues to church members, then let them make their own decisions about how they wish to vote.



*Dr. D. James Kennedy told members of a House subcommittee that the IRS-enforced rule against church “political activity” intimidates clergy into silence on moral issues. “It’s time to get rid of this inequitable, ambiguous, and unfair law,” he said. Dr. Kennedy testified May 14 on a panel that included, at left, Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a group that opposes any change to the law that muzzles ministers.*

We will never regain those rights unless each and every pastor in this country decides to follow the teachings in Matthew 5:14-16 [NLT] ...

*<sup>14</sup>You are the light of the world — like city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. <sup>15</sup>Don't hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*



**Yes! I want to help Vision America make a difference!**

Enclosed is my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_. I want to make a monthly pledge of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

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Please send me information and/or Action Alerts on legislative initiatives impacting areas in conflict with Biblical principles (primarily via email)

Please add my E-mail address to your list for future notifications. \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make your check payable to Vision America and mail in the postage paid business return envelope provided.**  
**You may also make contributions by credit card online at [www.visionamerica.org](http://www.visionamerica.org).**

# What Pastors Can Do!



## SUPPORT HR 2357

Should the Internal Revenue Service be able to determine what is appropriate speech in churches, and then revoke the tax-exempt status if it determines they have "crossed the line"?

While the answer should be a resounding "NO!" the IRS sees it otherwise. And, until HR 2357 is passed, definite guidelines must be met. To help ensure HR 2357 does get passed, it is important that you FAX, telephone or write your Congressman today! Call your Congressman toll free at the U. S. Capitol at 1-800-648-3516, or locate phone and FAX numbers and addresses for all elected officials at: <http://www.congress.org> or <http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

While active electioneering cannot legally be done by churches, there are clear guidelines on permissible political activities of churches and pastors. As a 501 C 3 organization, a church may not participate in a political campaign by expenditure of its funds. However, not all political activity which would influence a political campaign, falls under this prohibition. Even within the parameters of the non-profit regulations, the church has sufficient rights to ensure that its members are active, informed, involved and voting.

## ACTIVATE CONGREGATION

**Under guidelines outlined by James Bopp, Jr., General Counsel, National Right to Life Committee, Inc., the church can legally do the following:**

DISCUSS POSITIONS OF CANDIDATES ON

PUBLIC ISSUES — Pastors and churches may discuss positions of candidates on issues.

PUBLISH OR DISTRIBUTE CANDIDATE SURVEY RESULTS — Such surveys must be nonpartisan, and should not specify the desired response. Avoid use of "+" and "-" or "pro-life" and "anti-life."

PUBLISH VOTING RECORDS OF INCUMBENT PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDERS — The church, in publishing incumbent's votes on particular issues, may indicate the church's view and the fact that the incumbent supported or opposed the church's view. Thus, "+" and "-" or "pro-life" and "anti-life," may be used. When publishing voting records, all incumbents in the area should be presented. Candidates for reelection should not be identified, no comment should be made on an individual's overall qualifications, and no statements expressly advocating the election or defeat of any incumbent as a candidate should be offered.

A CHURCH MAY PARTICIPATE IN NONPARTISAN VOTER EDUCATION — Voter education involves discussion of the electoral process, such as how to run for public office, how to register, where to vote, helping or assisting people with registration and "get out the vote" drives. All such activity is permissible as long as it is not directed at one party or candidate over another.

CHURCH BULLETIN OR NEWSLETTER — A bulletin published by a church may publish news stories on political candidates and campaigns and endorsements of political candidates by political organizations.

ENCOURAGE CONGREGATIONS TO REGISTER TO VOTE — A pastor's legal role includes

encouraging congregations to register at least one month before an election, and to vote on election day. To motivate congregations, pastors may appoint Citizenship Coordinators and a ministry team to be responsible for voter registration forms and absentee ballot request forms.

CITIZENSHIP SUNDAY — On a designated day, the Coordinator and ministry team could ask ushers to provide forms for all non-registered members. Follow-up calls should be made to remind members to vote on election day.

IMPORTANT DATES — Last day to register to vote in the November 2002 election is Oct. 7. Early voting is Oct. 21-Nov. 1. Election day is Nov. 5.

## JOIN THE VA TEAM

Make the decision today! Join the Vision America Team and combine efforts with fellow pastors across the nation to restore Judeo-Christian values into the culture and civil institutions in our nation. It's simple to join and there is no membership cost! Just complete the form on our website <http://www.visionamerica.org> or send the following information to Vision America at P.O. Box 168, Houston, Texas 77001-0168: name, church name, mailing address, phone and FAX number and email address. Request information and/or Action Alerts on legislative initiatives impacting areas in conflict with Biblical principles (primarily via email), and request that your name be added to the Vision America Team to receive copies of the Vision America newsletter.



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***Stand up! Speak up!  
And refuse to Give up!***

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## ***Vision America Online***

Keep informed about Vision America publications, activities and events by frequently going online to our newly re-designed web site. You'll find calendars, action alerts, updates and more at:

**[www.visionamerica.org](http://www.visionamerica.org)**

## ***Mission Statement***

The mission of Vision America is to inform, encourage and mobilize pastors and congregations to be proactive in restoring Judeo-Christian values into the culture and civil institutions in our nation.

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