

Why This Pastor Disagrees With John MacArthur About Fighting for Religious Freedom

Note: Pastor MacArthur has been an exceptional example of standing for religious liberty. I truly value his ministry. This article is not meant to take anything away from that but to clarify the importance of standing for religious freedom.

We recently had a Christian from the persecuted church in China speak at our church. Her story was very moving as she talked about spending six years in a Chinese prison (you can listen [here](#)).

I kept thinking, “I wonder if persecuted Christians would like more freedom?” No doubt many would say, “Absolutely.” Religious freedom is a gift from God.

Although we disagree on nonessentials like the gifts of the Spirit, I have benefited greatly from the ministry of John MacArthur, and I use the MacArthur Study Bible. However, there are times when we need to lovingly show the other side of the coin.

In a recent article, Pastor MacArthur was quoted as saying, “I told our congregation a few weeks ago that I could never really concern myself with religious freedom. I wouldn’t fight for religious freedom because I won’t fight for idolatry. Why would I fight for the devil to have as many false religions as possible and all of them to be available to everyone?”

I understand where he is coming from, but shouldn’t we defend our freedom to worship Jesus when given the opportunity? And isn’t that what he and other pastors like Jack Hibbs, Rob

McCoy and me are doing by staying open during the pandemic ... exercising and defending religious freedom?

Promoting religious freedom is not idolatry. "The Word of God is like a lion. You don't have to defend a lion. All you have to do is let the lion loose, and the lion will defend itself," Charles Spurgeon said.

Ironically, many of the men and women who died for our freedoms did not die for what America is becoming today. Many gave their lives in order that we would have religious freedom rather than capitulate to a godless society.

I wonder what Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox would say if asked the same question about religious freedom? They all pushed for it during the Reformation. What about Tyndale and Huss who were burned at the stake for simply declaring the truth? What would they say about having the freedom to worship God and read His Word?

Politics Is Not A Bad Word

Politics won't save America any more than a dumbbell will save someone who is drowning; however, we cannot ignore our God-given civic responsibility and the massive impact that politics has on our society. We make a huge mistake in comparing our system of government with the system that the apostle Paul was under. God blessed America with religious freedom, at least initially.

In the realm of government, there are two primary areas of responsibility for us to consider. One is God's eternal kingdom; the other is the world's political system. We have a responsibility to both, and God's eternal principles establish the foundation for both. Our political system, ordained by God, oversees the affairs of men. The primary role of government is to secure our God-given rights. One of the primary purposes of government is to protect the freedom to express our love for God.

This issue of religious freedom has never been more important in America than it is today. Mr. Potato Head is being renamed, but Cardi B can pollute the minds of the innocent. We'll allow a transgender person to be the assistant secretary of health but say nothing about the sexual exploitation of our children. Pastors are being threatened with large fines and jail time for keeping churches open while pot shops, liquor stores and abortion clinics get a free pass. If you ask me, and countless others, religious freedom is worth fighting for.

We don't have to compromise our principles to be involved in politics. What good is salt left in the shaker, or a light that is hidden? "Politics" is not a bad word. In simple terms, politics refers to governing or leading a group of people. I think God's Word has a great deal to say about that. Silence is not an option.

A Powerful Reminder

I'll close with a story I often tell: "Why didn't someone do something?" Those five words still haunt my thoughts today. Some time ago, I sat speechless as I listened to a man recount his trip to a Holocaust museum with his young daughter. As they walked by photos of the death camps and gas chambers, his daughter silently contemplated the horrors that were unfolding before her eyes.

When the tour ended, they drove home without saying a word. The father wondered if she truly understood the significance of the event. Was she too young to view such depravity? Would it make a negative impact on her life? Would it leave her fearful and wounded? Would she begin to doubt God?

His questions were answered nearly two hours later when his daughter finally spoke. She looked at her father and asked, "Daddy, why didn't someone do something?"

Will we hear those same haunting words from our children and grandchildren? Yes! If we fail to contend for what is right

via religious freedom, we may see a time in our future when our children will ask, “Why didn’t someone do something?” Sadly, we may not be able to answer. {eoa}

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