

Could This Pastor's Strategy Shut Down Attacks on Christian Businesses?

Last week, Arlene's Flowers in Washington was fined \$1,000 for declining a request to provide floral arrangements for the religious wedding service of gay men that she had served secularly for years. Citing her Christian convictions against participating in pagan rituals, grandma Barronelle Stutzman failed to prevail in her religious freedom case.

Faithful American Christians are increasingly under attack across the country by the gay lobby. Religious freedom is being radically and swiftly eroded. Remember the Houston 5, whose sermons and emails were subpoenaed as a repercussion of their opposition to the radical gay lobby in Houston, Texas?

It is a mark of national shame that the Religious Freedom Bill in Indiana—a Bill that mirrors President Clinton's Federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act—is being exploited by the gay lobby during Holy Week. The country has been forced into a national conversation on deviant sexuality during the holiest time of year for Christians.

"Even radicalized jihadis have put war on hold during Ramadan," said Rev. CJ Conner, Author of *Jesus and the Culture Wars: Reclaiming the Lord's Prayer*.

"I'm encouraging Christian pastors, churches, florists, bakers and boutique merchants to join together in concrete and deliberate steps to take a stand and protect the principle of American Christian Liberty," said Conner.

Here's how:

Florists, Bakers, and Other Wedding-Related Businesses

Christian merchants who serve weddings can protect their religious liberty by only offering their services to Christian Churches in exclusive, binding contracts. Merchants can continue to provide all other services as usual, but protect the free practice of their faith by contracting exclusively and specifically with Bible believing congregations to provide wedding services for their members.

Merchants would not be limited to only one faith community, but would be free from offering wedding services to the general public.

Faithful Christian Congregations

Congregations who rent space out for wedding related events or services as an outreach ministry should modify their organizational by-laws so that their facilities are only available for use to confirmed members of the congregation. This is a good general rule of thumb for every congregation. As the gay lobby expands its agenda to target Christians and houses of worship directly, congregations that rent their space to any couple are at risk for costly legal action if they do not also rent to gay couples.

Congregations should also begin to identify Christian florists, bakers, caterers and wedding boutiques that share their values and enter into exclusive, binding contracts for the service of Christian weddings. This will help ensure the success of Christian-owned businesses while also protecting the religious liberty of Christian wedding merchants and congregations.

“The burgeoning agenda of the gay lobby will soon turn to other targets on the horizon, including the ‘fair use’ of sacred worship spaces. In fact, the Alliance Defending Freedom/Faith has warned that the next battle-front for Christian liberty could well be where churches charter Boy Scout Troops. Congregations that allow the Boy Scouts to use

their facilities either for rent or for free are at risk of legal liability should they refuse to perform a gay marriage on the basis of religious liberty. The Boy Scouts have embraced the gay lobby and their agenda.”

“It is telling that during this penitential season the nation has been embroiled in a discussion over sin. I urge Christians to pray for the leaders of the gay lobby, that the Resurrected Lord may lead them out of their darkness and into His light, that they might repent, and God might forgive them for their persecution of Christians,” said Rev. Conner.

“For faithful Christians, we are called to the same long-suffering as our Lord Jesus who gave His all for us on the cross on Good Friday. To the extent that we can peacefully side-step and not engage the gay lobby at all, we will be free for gospel mission—to be a holy blessing to our communities and the world.”