

Judge: Let Jesus Into Cemetery

✖ A federal judge slapped down the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on Thursday, saying it can't stop a pastor from using the words "Jesus Christ" in his Memorial Day invocation at Houston National Cemetery.

"The government cannot gag citizens when it says it is in the interest of national security, and it cannot do it in some bureaucrat's notion of cultural homogeneity," U.S. District Judge Lynn Hughes wrote in his order, granting Rev. Scott Rainey's motion for the court to intercede. "The right to free expression ranges from the dignity of Abraham Lincoln's speeches to Charlie Sheen's rants."

Rainey, lead pastor at the Living Word Church of the Nazarene in Houston, asked Hughes to prevent the cemetery's caretaker, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, from telling him what he can say in a prayer on Memorial Day after the agency asked him for the first time to submit the prayer for review.

"I was shocked," Rainey said. "I've heard of this happening in other states and other locations."

For the past two years, Rainey has given the Memorial Day invocation at the cemetery to honor U.S. soldiers who have fought and died. And each year, he's mentioned Jesus Christ—without complaint. The invocation is sponsored by a private group, the National Cemetery Council for Greater Houston, but held at the Houston National Cemetery, which is public property.

Read the rest of this story at the [Houston Chronicle](#).