

SPEAK UP.

PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF OUR CHURCHES

OVERVIEW

WHAT'S HAPPENING

From the day the Pilgrims first set foot at Plymouth Rock, the cornerstone of American government has been religious freedom.

Millions all over the world look to our nation as a candle in the spiritual darkness that has engulfed culture after culture. This is the land where every individual is free to pray and believe and live out the deepest convictions of his soul. This is the country where faith is regarded as such a precious, profoundly personal thing that it is the first right protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution.

This is the land where pastors have been free to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and explore the positive impact of biblical truth on every aspect of the culture. This is the nation where Christians, in the name and for the glory of God, have been free to minister His love and administrate their churches without government interference or regulation.

But all of that is changing – and changing fast – in America today.

Today, government intrusion into the affairs of the Church – spurred on, in many cases, by anti-Christian organizations like American Atheists and the Freedom from Religion Foundation – poses a growing threat to church autonomy and to even the most basic religious liberties – including freedom of speech, freedom to exercise religious beliefs, and freedom of access.

Intimidated by threats (including the possible loss of their church's 501(c)(3) tax exemption), many pastors have stopped exploring the message of the Scriptures as it relates to issues that might be considered "politically sensitive," and stopped exhorting their congregations to obey biblical teaching where it conflicts with the dictates of an increasingly "tolerant" secular culture.

Meanwhile, across America, churches are being denied access to public facilities that are available to other private groups ... denied access to public funds that other private organizations can draw on to help the hurting and underprivileged ... denied the uses of suitable property through arbitrary land ordinances and zoning restrictions. These government roadblocks are increasingly impeding church efforts to evangelize and minister to their communities.

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In the face of such interference, churches and their leaders are becoming less able and less willing to speak the full truth of God's Word and express the full measure of His grace to their culture. And the religious liberty that is our quintessential heritage as Americans is steadily being stripped away to make room for a more anti-Christian society.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

The Alliance Defense Fund has long been committed to protecting and preserving *Our First Liberty* – religious freedom. As a legal alliance, we seek to protect the sanctity of life, preserve marriage and the family, and promote religious liberty, while working to keep the door open for the spread of the Gospel.

By God's grace, we've logged an extraordinary record of successfully defending pastors and churches against lawsuits and government intrusion. But we also realize that the people best equipped to communicate the dangers now posed to religious liberty in America are those on the receiving end of this growing legal persecution: *church leaders*.

That's why we've initiated the **Speak Up Movement** (SpeakUpMovement.org) as a resource for pastors, ministry leaders, and lay leaders who want nothing more than the freedom to speak, act, and minister in accordance with biblical principles. Speak Up offers information, encouragement, and a forum for discussion among those most concerned about, and working to preserve, our religious liberties.

Through Speak Up, pastors and Christian leaders can communicate to one another not only the nature and specifics of this growing interference, but the best ways to unite and stand in defense of our religious heritage and our constitutionally protected freedoms. And we can spread the word that the Alliance Defense Fund is ready and able to defend the right of every Christian to hear and speak the truth.

WHAT IT CAN MEAN

When we all speak up, and the voice of the Church is unleashed, we create the opportunity for



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more precedent-setting legal victories in defense of religious freedom, and we promote a culture that honors and respects religious faith.

What's more, we contribute to a better tomorrow for our nation and our society, where constitutional rights are protected and exercised – not taken away – and where every person has an opportunity to hear the truth of Jesus Christ presented in a kind and loving way.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can Speak Up. Join concerned pastors, lay leaders, and Christian ministry leaders from across America in the movement to protect and preserve religious liberty. You can donate your time, your voice, and your financial support. Visit us online:

www.SpeakUpMovement.org

[Twitter.com/SpeakUpChurch](https://twitter.com/SpeakUpChurch) • [Facebook.com/SpeakUpChurch](https://facebook.com/SpeakUpChurch)

Or contact the Alliance Defense Fund directly by calling 1-800-TELL-ADF.

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