



THE **LEGAL**
ALERT

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IT WASN'T A SMALL THING

drop my check in the mail, I pray for your attorneys and these cases for about fifteen minutes. I just wish I could do so much more.”

When you look at things from God’s point of view, this man’s “small” contribution isn’t small at all! For God, a small-dollar donation with prayer is more valuable than a large-dollar donation without prayer.

May the Lord constantly remind us that prayer is no small thing. It is for good reason the Bible says, “But in every thing by prayer...let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6).

Our nation seems to be deciding whether to follow the Lord or the thinking of man. Here at the Christian Law Association, our attorneys labor tirelessly to legally defend churches and Christians. May the Lord constantly remind us of the extreme importance of prayer!

Not long ago, we met a senior citizen who attends a small church in one of the Western states. Now retired and living on a fixed income, he was obviously shy as he approached us.

“You know,” he said, “I’ve been sending a very small donation to you every month for about six years. I’m kind of embarrassed that I can’t send more. But just before I

A TRIBUTE TO JAMES Z. COATES, JR.



JAMES COATES & STEVE KLUTH



JAMES COATES AT WORK

This month, a longtime member of the CLA family, James Z. Coates, Jr., went to his eternal home in Heaven. Over the last several decades, Jim Coates has been a faithful Christian and a loving husband and has made a tremendous contribution to the ministry of Christian Law Association. As a highly decorated military veteran, this man bravely served our country on several battlefields. As a Christian, his tireless soul-winning efforts resonated with many who then came to know the Lord. We are proud to honor Jim Coates as he graduates to meet his Savior face to face.

A NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Dear CLA,

Thank you for your prayers. The phone call to me was so gracious and kind—from a great lady full of love and a caring heart. Thank you again. May God continue to bless your ministry abundantly. You all are the greatest at defending God’s people and His work. Years ago, you saved our church [when we were] going through issues with our school. We never will forget your ministry.

Kaye
West Virginia





As Americans, we should be grateful that we live in a nation where our biggest decisions are determined in free and open elections. As Election Day draws nigh, we should certainly be in prayer. While all of us have a civic duty to vote for the proper people and the best ballot initiatives, only God controls the destiny of nations.

Elections can be heated. Whether people debate about the best presidential candidate or the best candidate for a school board seat in a very small town, people have strong feelings. There is no law against that. It is important, however, to remember to use wisdom and discretion when talking about elections in church.

As individual citizens, church members are allowed to financially support any candidate they choose, but churches themselves are never allowed to give financial contributions to a campaign. Sometimes, hot-button items cloud our judgment. For example, if a certain candidate takes a strong pro-abortion stance while another is clearly anti-abortion, even the serious nature of that issue does not allow a church to make a financial contribution to one of the candidates.

While churches can encourage all their members to vote, churches are not allowed to endorse specific candidates. There is a big difference between the statement, "We have important local elections coming soon, and I trust all of our members will cast prayerful votes," and the statement, "I know Good Old Joe personally, and I think every good Christian ought to vote for him!"

Pray for America. Vote in the upcoming elections. And keep your church legally safe.



We were recently contacted by a church in the Deep South that operated a thrift store. The store was located on a property that was completely separate from the church. In this particular situation, the store made a lot of money, and there were times when the church might have gone under financially without the support of the store.

The church leaders wondered about the viability of moving the store to the main church property, so one of them called the Christian Law Association. In this particular situation, there is not one single answer that works best for everyone. Many factors must be taken into account, including how the presence of a for-profit business on the church property affects the property tax exemption of the church.

In situations like these, our experienced attorneys can help you avoid legal pitfalls. If you have questions or concerns, please contact us right away.



WHAT IS IRS PUBLICATION 78?

In recent days, our attorneys have fielded several questions about IRS Publication 78. Many churches wonder if there is a legal requirement for their organization to appear on that list. Publication 78 is a formal list of organizations that have formally filed with the IRS and have received a determination letter which states they are, indeed, tax-exempt organizations.

There is no legal requirement for churches to formally register for 501(c)(3) status. If they never do so, they have not broken any law or missed any mandatory requirement. On the other hand, there are sometimes advantages to appearing in Publication 78. Some donors feel more comfortable financially supporting a church that has received a determination letter. And if your church has any interest in seeking foundation grants or participating in some kind of matching fund program offered by some corporations, these organizations almost always limit their scope of activity to churches that appear on Publication 78.



In the United States, there are many options for elementary and high school education. Many people opt for homeschooling or for private schools, but some parents, for a variety of different reasons, place their children in public schools. Though it is not legally true, many people—including some professional educators—believe that public schools are required to be completely secular and that Christian students who attend are required to leave their faith at the door.

The truth is important. While it is true that public school teachers cannot attempt to convert their students to their faith, it is not true that the students themselves must be silent about their religious beliefs.

For example, if a teacher assigns students to write an essay on their favorite activity, Christian students are absolutely allowed to write about how they love attending church or reading the Word of God. The speech of Christian students cannot be muzzled during their lunch breaks. They have as much of a right to speak about their faith as other students have to speak about the topics they choose.

For decades, the Christian Law Association has defended Christian schools and Christians who attend public schools. If you encounter religious bias or if you have specific questions about your children's rights in the public schools, please contact our offices immediately.

Q&A WITH CLA LEGAL MISSIONARIES



Seth Haught and Michael Adams attend a church Q&A about how to preserve our liberties in America.

PRAYING FOR OUR NATION



Attorney Seth Kraus meeting at the CLA office with Ohio Senator JD Vance

WHAT KIND OF AMERICA WILL WE LEAVE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION? CLA WANTS TO STAND WITH YOU.



Dr. Gibbs teaching at a summer camp



Dr. Gibbs, CLA Attorney Susan Ojeda, Judge Rey Ojeda



CAN THE JANITOR GO TO CHURCH ON WEDNESDAY NIGHTS?

Jeremy is a faithful member of his local church, and he is employed as a custodian by the local public school. As it turns out, the school needs certain janitorial duties to be performed on Wednesday nights, something that would make it impossible for Jeremy to keep attending the weekly prayer meeting at his church.

The school flatly told him that he has absolutely no legal rights and no legal options. He will work on Wednesday nights or be fired. Because of some recent Supreme Court decisions granting more religious accommodations to workers, he called our offices.

As is often the case, there are legal details that must be addressed, but the Christian Law Association is committed to protecting the legal rights of Christian employees.



MORTGAGE-FREE PROPERTIES

In Southern Missouri, there is a small church that has been in operation more than 100 years. At this point, the church owns two houses, and it rents them out to people in the area. The church, of course, uses the rental income to provide much-needed funds for the church.

As it turns out, the IRS does not generally require churches to pay tax on this rental income, but only because the house has no outstanding debt. In other words, a house that is owned free and clear is in a different category from a house that has a mortgage note on it.



A MINISTRY OF LEGAL HELPS

Since 1969, CLA has been providing free legal assistance to Bible-believing churches and Christians who are experiencing difficulty in practicing their religious faith because of governmental regulation, intrusion, or prohibition in one form or another. The Christian Law Association serves in the following ways...

- Free legal defense of those facing difficulties for the Biblical faith
- Free legal counsel to churches and Christians for their ministries
- Legal books and other resources to inform Christians of their rights
- Weekday radio program broadcast, *The Legal Alert*, on over 1,586 outlets around the world
- Publication of *The Legal Alert*, a monthly newsletter
- Free legal help to homeschooling families
- Free legal consulting to local, state, and federal officials and legislators to provide maximum religious liberty
- Intercessory prayer ministry for requests sent to the ministry offices
- Prayer initiative for our national leadership and government
- Legal seminars for ministries to help prevent lawsuits
- Preaching in churches across the country



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PLEASE JOIN US IN PRAYER

These requests are just a few of the recent needs from our cases. We covet your prayers for these and hundreds of others that come to us on a regular basis.

NORTH CAROLINA: Pray for a church as they search for a pastor, and pray for CLA attorneys as they advise regarding the employment laws the church needs to follow for their state.

ILLINOIS: Pray for a church seeking our attorneys' guidance as they handle a difficult situation with a former member creating a church website without the church's permission.

CALIFORNIA: Pray for a church asking for help from CLA because they are seeking space to rent for services and being turned down by landlords due to being a religious assembly.

MISSOURI: Pray for a church that our attorneys are advising as they respond after being contacted by multiple people requesting public statements about situations that occurred far back in the church's past.

IOWA: Pray for a church that called our offices after receiving a collection letter for a bill their insurance should have paid a year ago. CLA attorneys are giving guidance as they endeavor to determine if the letter is a scam.

MICHIGAN: Pray for a church evangelizing team that contacted us after being told they are not allowed to walk around an apartment complex. CLA attorneys assisted with information that will help the church continue to witness.

TEXAS: Pray for a church our team is guiding through the eviction of a childcare company that is renting space at the church but also causing problems.

MISSOURI: Pray for a church working with our attorneys to follow their bylaws as they search for a new pastor.

TENNESSEE: Pray for a church seeking guidance from our legal team as they work on setting up a men's home for their community.

MISSOURI: Pray for a pastor who contacted the CLA offices for help as he and the church handle a property line dispute that has been ongoing for the past couple of years.

INDIANA: Pray for a pastor who sought CLA's advice as he handles a situation with a disgruntled neighbor.

MAINE: Pray for a pastor who called our office for guidance as he removes a church member who has caused a disturbance in the church.

MICHIGAN: Pray for a pastor who contacted CLA for direction as he works with a member of his church in starting a hospitality ministry to serve the homeless.

COLORADO: Pray for a Christian couple discussing with our attorneys the best avenues to start a deliverance ministry.

ILLINOIS: Pray for a deacon who called our attorneys for guidance as he handles a disgruntled community member who is upset that the church continues to pass out flyers and tracts.

NORTH CAROLINA: Pray for a Christian who called our attorneys after being reprimanded at her workplace for posting her beliefs on her personal social media.

CALIFORNIA: Pray for a pastor seeking direction from CLA as he attempts to minister to a newly saved young man at the local military base.

NEW YORK: Pray for a firehouse chief who is also a chaplain; he is being sued by his firefighters for praying before firehouse meetings, and he contacted our office for assistance.

NORTH CAROLINA: Pray for a Christian asking for our help as she petitions her town to fly the Christian flag at city hall for a period of time.

OKLAHOMA: Pray for a Christian music teacher who sought the advice of CLA attorneys on some questions she had regarding religious freedoms and preparing a Christmas program.

NORTH CAROLINA: Pray for a Christian member on a local county school board who needed information regarding the ability to pray before sessions.

OKLAHOMA: Pray for a Christian who called CLA after being denied his religious accommodation to have Sundays off.

KENTUCKY: Pray for a Christian who reached out to our attorneys after being fired for bringing a Bible to the workplace.

KENTUCKY: Pray for a pastor who contacted our office for advice as he assists students who are being penalized by coaches for attending church services.

NEW MEXICO: Pray for a Christian who was let go after her homeschool transcripts were not accepted by her workplace. A CLA attorney provided information on how to move forward.

NEW YORK: Pray for an evangelist who requested and received helpful resources from the CLA office to help in his endeavors as he passes out tracts in his local community.

MICHIGAN: Pray for a Christian asking for guidance as he starts a Bible study at his apartment complex.

ILLINOIS: Pray for a Christian who called our office after being kicked out of an event for passing out tracts.

TEXAS: Pray for a Christian mother and son duo who contacted our attorneys after being escorted out of a store for passing out tracts.

MICHIGAN: Pray for a Christian who reached out to us for help after being told by a new gym manager that he can no longer share tracts at his local gym.

NEW YORK: Pray for a church's school as they discuss with our attorneys the difference between counseling and spiritual guidance.

**Have a question or prayer request?
Contact CLA at Christianlaw.org**