



pastor's PEN

Dear Lakeview Family,

Recently an article was published online in which Alabama pastors were called out for not speaking on politics. A group of pastors were told to "quit trying to keep your jobs." I want to speak to this today, not to critique any group or candidate, but to use the headline as a conversation starter on what I believe should be the role of the pulpit and its relationship to politics.

First, let me speak to the doctrine of separation of church and state. This doctrine is perfectly valid when rightly understood. It means the state is not controlling the churches. In other words, there is to be freedom of religion. Conversely, pastors are not to dictate to the government. The government is to operate on its own principles.

That said, this does not mean that the state is not responsible to God or that government workers never have to answer to divine authority or live according to moral standards. In a democracy, the church has an opportunity to speak out to remind the government that it is ultimately responsible to God, whether this truth is recognized or not.

Let me offer you four broad views of the government to help us make sense of the relationship between church and state. One view says that Caesar has no authority at all; only God does. This is the view of monasticism and sometimes of an evangelical withdrawal from civic responsibility. Thinking that the government, culture, and country are bad, some people decide they cannot have anything to do with public life so they move into the desert and form a monastic community, or they shut themselves up in churches. Either way, they do not have anything to do with the state at all.

The second view, the view of secularism, is exactly the opposite. It denies God. Secularism says the only things that exist are the ones we can see and measure. We cannot see or measure God so there is no God. We do not have to think in religious terms at all. All we have to do is operate in a secular, non-religious manner.

The third view recognizes both the authority of God and Caesar. That said, it sees the authority of Caesar as dominant. Whenever there is a question, the state rules. This is the view of cowards. It is absolutely evident that if you have God in the picture, then God by very definition must have greater authority than Caesar. The only reason we would give greater authority to the latter is because we are afraid of Caesar. Three times Pontius Pilate acknowledged in Jesus' trial that Jesus was innocent (John 18:38; 19:4,6). Pilate knew Jesus was guiltless before the bar of Roman justice. Yet in the end, Pilate agreed to the crucifixion. Why would he do that if he found Jesus innocent? He was afraid of Caesar. The enemies of Jesus came to Pilate and said, "if you release this man you are not Caesar's friend" (John 19:12). Ironically, Caesar was not his friend anyway. Pilate eventually got in trouble with Caesar and according to some accounts, died exiled and disgraced in France.

The fourth view of the relationship between church and state is the biblical and right view. It recognizes the authority of God and Caesar but accepts the authority of God is dominant. Caesar has legitimate authority, but all authority comes from God. Romans 13 states that unequivocally. So in the contemporary environment, the role of Christians and the church is to remind the state of exactly this. We have to remind government officials that they are responsible to God to do the right thing, and we are to articulate this based on Scripture. Furthermore, we are to rebuke the state when it departs from the standard.

This means that every Christian citizen who lives in a democracy is obligated to be well-informed and to vote for candidates and policies that are most consistent with biblical principles. Other things we can do is to write letters or even run for office or financially support specific candidates and issues.

So, in short, we as Christ's church want to avoid two temptations: retreat and withdrawal on the one hand; on the other hand, triumphalism and a politics driven ministry. Politics this side of the Fall is about restraining evil as much as we can. It is the politics of restraint where we seek, as well as we can, the optimal conditions that allow the elements of creation order to function as they ought.

Understanding the limits of politics helps us determine how much hope we ascribe to politics. Politics is important, but not ultimate. So if we had all the right candidates in office and all the right political policies in place, there would still be the reality of human sin in society and mass lostness in the world. I need to say this because many professing Christians get more emotionally charged about politics than they do the health of Christ's church, the lost in their communities, or the eternal destiny of the unreached peoples of the world.

I say all this to serve as a backdrop to the framework I work by when it comes to addressing "political" issues in the pulpit. I borrow this framework from my friend Andrew Walker who is Professor of Christian Ethics and Public Theology at Southern Seminary. So think of three P's: Pillars, Principles of Prudence, and Punditry.

First, pastors have the greatest burden to bring the Word of God to bear on issues related to creational order pillars; that is, pillars pertaining to the necessary foundations that we have to have for society to work as it is meant to work. So when there is an issue that is hitting on a first-tier creation order issue, like life, marriage, religious liberty, the nature of being made male and female, and public welfare (issues like gambling and the legalization of marijuana), pastors have to faithfully and boldly preach on these issues because they touch on creation order pillars. And preeminently, these are not really political issues. They are theological and biblical issues that become disguised to us as politics. We must preach these truths and warn our people about voting for candidates who embrace policies that threaten to compromise these pillars.

The second part of this framework concerns principles of prudence. For example, if the area in which we live is having a referendum on school choice/tax credits, I would not bring this into the pulpit because Christians of good faith can disagree on issues of this nature.

The third and final part of this framework concerns issues of punditry. Pastors should not endorse a candidate. In the United States, since 1954 the Internal Revenue Service has had regulations that prohibit pastors or churches from explicitly saying that they support or oppose any candidates by name (we are still allowed to take positions on moral issues that are part of an election campaign).

I hope this helps. Remember, voting day is November 3rd. It is a way to love our neighbors (Matthew 22:39), seek the good of the community (Jeremiah 29:7), promote justice (Proverbs 31:8-9), exercise responsible stewardship (Luke 12:48), honor governing authority (Romans 13:1-4), and to seek leaders who value righteousness (Proverbs 29:2).

Love and Gratitude,
Pastor Brian





children's CHATTER

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

We are collecting Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes now through Wednesday, November 18th. Anyone desiring to participate may pick up boxes, packing instructions, and labels in the lobby, while supplies last. Clear, plastic shoeboxes are optional and available for purchase in stores. When returning your shoeboxes, please also include $10 (cash or check, placed inside the shoebox) to cover shipping, and attach a boy or girl shoebox label. For details on how to pack a shoebox and/or for online packing options, go to www.samaritanspurse.org/occ.



SENIOR SAINTS
2027 WINTER CONFERENCE

Join Senior Saints for a 2027 Winter Conference on January 28–29 at Shocco Springs! Al Jackson will teach on the topic: "Our Glorious Future: The Doctrine of Heaven Explained and Anticipated," with worship led by the James Brown Trio.

This conference is open to adults ages 50 and older. You do not have to be a member of Senior Saints to attend. Space is limited. The deadline to sign up is November 19.

For more information and to sign up, contact Jenny Swaim (swaimje@gmail.com).

HALLOWEEN

PRAYER MEETING

OCT 31 | 6–9PM

LAKEVIEW FELLOWSHIP HALL
1600 E GLENN AVE

Please join us for a night of prayer (and optional fasting) to intercede for our community's spiritual and physical safety during this evening.

6-7:30 will be structured prayer; 7:30 - 9 pm will be prayer with your table.



congregational CARE UPDATE

THURSDAYS AT OLE TIMES COUNTRY BUFFET

Hope to see men of every age Thursday, November 12, in the Eagle Room at Ole Times Country Buffet from Noon-1 PM. Mike Felton and Tom McClendon team up to tell of the amazing privilege they had in teaching local pastors and sharing the gospel with Muslims in SE Asia. Come and bring a friend. It is also a great way to get to know more men in our church. See you soon!

If you have to miss this one, the following meeting will be December 10, 2026 with Justin Abercrombie, our new Youth Pastor, as our guest.

2026-27 EARLY MORNING THEOLOGY STUDY

Systematic Theology class begins on January 20, 2027! I hope you will join us as we study Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology (2nd edition)*. We meet on Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30 AM. You are welcome to go ahead and sign up, purchase the book and read ahead. It is a big commitment, but one you will not regret. You can ask those who have been through the class.

Please contact Haley Wine (hwine@lakeviewbaptist.org) if you would like to add your name to the list or Tom McClendon (tmcclendon@lakeviewbaptist.org) if you have any questions.



youth NEWS

7TH & 8TH GRADE MISSION TRIP
NOVEMBER 7TH

We are excited to partner with Birmingham Cross-Cultural Connections on November 7th as we take some of our 7th and 8th grade students to serve with their ministry. Please pray for a fruitful day of service in Birmingham with these students and the chaperones who will join us!

Lakeview's
FOOD PANTRY



Items Needed:

- Peanut Butter
- Pasta Sauce
- Tuna, canned
- Green Beans, canned
- Corn, canned
- Soup

fellowship MEAL

SERVING MEALS 4:45 UNTIL 5:35 PM; CLEARING TABLES AT 5:45 PM.

OCTOBER 28

Chicken & Dumplings, Green Peas, Carrots,
Salad, Bisucits, Peach Cobbler

NOVEMBER 4

BBQ Pork, Baked Potato Bar, Broccoli,
Salad, Rolls, Carrot Cake

Fellowship meals are open to everyone and cost $5 per person with a $20 cap per family. Cash, checks and cards accepted.
Menu subject to change.

sympathy

From the pastor, staff, and church family to:

Anita Harris and family in the death of her daughter.
Dennis Veronese and family in the death of his father.

IN *memoriam*

Gwenice Rutoskey
August 18, 1958 – October 25, 2026



REMEMBER IN *prayer*

ARBOR LAKE
Nancy Brownfield
Joe Waller

AZALEA PLACE
Barbara Blankenship
Susan Lazenby
Nita Sims

BILL NICHOLS STATE VETERANS HOME
Ira Hayes

CAMELLIA PLACE
Linda Currie

CANTERBURY HEALTH CARE FACILITY
Dean Baker

CHAPMAN HEALTH CARE
Jerry Knause

EASE HOUSE
Anne Dodge

MONARCH ESTATES
Bill Thornton

THE PHOENIX AT OPELIKA
Jerry Clark
Judy Clark
Charles Knause

AT HOME
Matthew Baker
Daniel Benjamin
Matt Beth
Dennis Clark
Nelda Kennedy
Jane Parker
Jackie Snead
Larry Swango
Ilze West

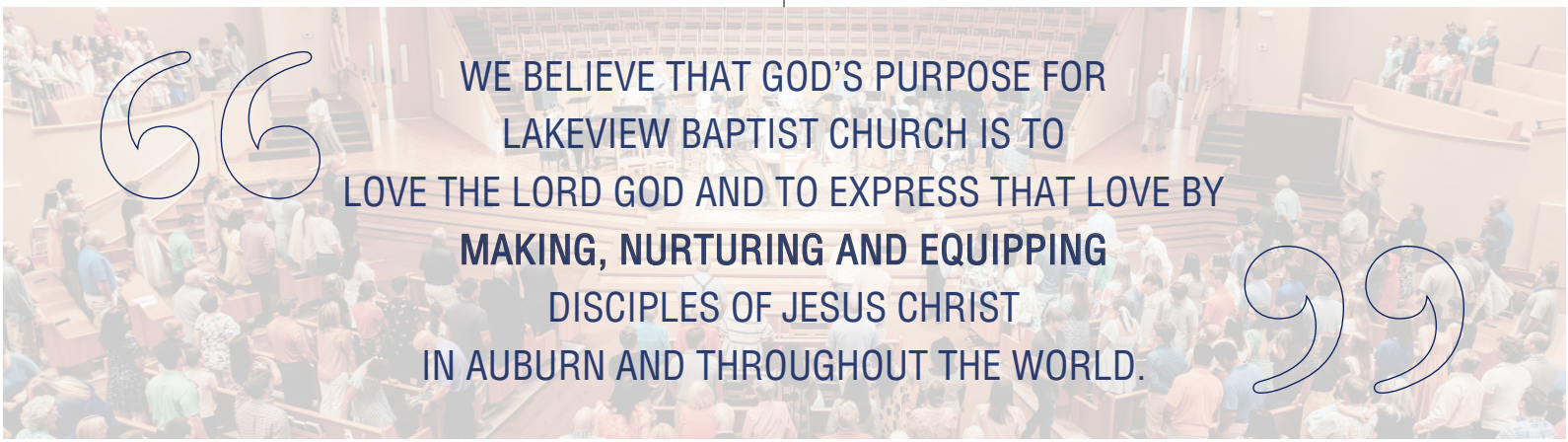
OCTOBER 25 ATTENDANCE

MORNING SERVICE	1,231
EVENING SERVICE	599

OCTOBER 25 GIVING

BUDGET	$ 89,833.57
RESTRICTED	$ 7,819.00

LAKEVIEW LIFE | VOL. 67, NO. 43



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