



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Role of Christianity and The Church in American Public Life

Guest(s): Gary Bauer

Air Date: March 29, 2023

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and today we have a special program for you. Our guest on the broadcast is Gary Bauer. Now Gary's name may be familiar to you as he has been on our program many times before over the years. He's also a dear friend of Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley. In fact, Dr. Dobson and Gary Bauer worked together in Washington, DC. while President Ronald Reagan was in office. They even wrote a book together called *Children at Risk*. A little bit more about Gary Bauer. He is the president of American Values, chairman of Campaign for Working Families and emeritus Washington director of the Christians United for Israel Action Fund. He's also senior vice president of Public Policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Gary Bauer has served on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and also worked on President Reagan's administration for eight years as undersecretary of education and chief domestic policy advisor. He went on to become the president of the Family Research Council and later senior vice president at Focus on the Family. Gary Bauer is also the voice of a new podcast here at the JDFI called the Defending Faith, Family and Freedom podcast. Gary and his wife, Carol, live in Virginia and together they have three grown children. Today he'll be discussing the role of Christianity and the church and how it plays into American public life. So let's listen in to Gary Bauer right now on today's edition of Family Talk.

Gary Bauer: There are so many things going on in the United States that threatens our religious liberty, threatens our families and the values we're teaching. All of these things at the end of the day get back to our freedoms that I'm afraid we tend to take for granted because this is a country built on the idea of constitutional liberties. A lot of these things have been in the news lately as a matter of fact. There was stories breaking in recent weeks about folks that came to Washington for the Right to Life march. Some of them young people that got thrown out of the Air and Space Museum of all places, because they had gone there and on their clothing they had insignia or sayings or little sentences that showed their Christian faith and also their pro-life views and they got thrown

out of the Air and Space Museum. And then of all places, the National Archives. This is the place that keeps the great documents of the American founding as well as a lot of other important writings and documents.

And in this case, it was some Christian adults that went in to the National Archives and were unceremoniously showed the door because they too appeared to be Christians that had messages that some people might find offensive. You know, you don't know whether to laugh or cry about those things. But then something happened a couple of days ago that I think is even more indicative of what appears to be happening within the American government, within our government. The FBI office in Richmond, Virginia working with a group called the Southern Poverty Law Center, which I believe is located in Atlanta and in spite of what its name is, is a radical, far left, very anti-Christian organization that we've discovered that a number of agencies in the federal government are going to for advice. This organization some time ago labeled the Family Research Council as a hate group.

Now you may not know this, the Family Research Council began with Dr. James Dobson. It was a division of the work that he was doing and it was supposed to represent that work here in Washington, DC, and then I was honored to be the person heading the Family Research Council and that Council isn't doing anything different now than it was doing then. Well, the FBI office in Richmond, Virginia working with that group and also depending on some articles in very left-wing magazines, wrote a memo to its own staff saying that orthodox Catholics that believed in the Latin Mass were a potential danger because their attitudes were the kind of attitudes in which Nazis and Fascists and Christian Nationalists and bigots might find a home. Yep, that's what the FBI office in Richmond, Virginia said. And so a memo was written to the staff. Be on the lookout for it and even suggesting that maybe the FBI needed to infiltrate some of those orthodox Catholic churches in order basically to take names.

This is not that much different than what happened you'll remember some months ago, when parents, including Christian parents, were showing up at school board meetings and complaining about some of the things that were being taught in the schools. And some of that related to how the schools were teaching American history, things about the transgender movement, a whole lot of those issues. And lo and behold, those parents were being labeled as potentially domestic terrorists and a warning was issued that the FBI might be keeping track of those parents. So these are things that should never ever, ever happen in the United States of America that was built on religious liberty and religious freedom. Now when these stories have become public, I was quite frankly not only concerned about the substance of the stories, but I was amazed at how sort of tepid the backlash was. Come on, every church in America ought to be preaching about this.

Why not? Why were not more pastors, more priests saying something publicly about this? Now I am happy to tell you that 18 attorney generals around the country sent a letter to FBI Director Wray and to the Attorney General of the

United States saying, "Okay, save all your documents. We want to see every memo, every email that was written at that FBI office between FBI employees that led them to writing this memo. This is not acceptable in the United States of America." And the more I thought about it, one of the reasons I think there might not be as much said as let's say you would've heard 20 years ago or 30 years ago, is sadly there's a lot fewer Christians and a lot of the churches that are still meeting, some of them are buying into this idea not that America is the country built on freedom of religion, but that America is a country built on freedom from religion.

Big difference folks. I mean those are two entirely different concepts and the one's right and the other one is quite frankly dead wrong. But you know, if you've taken a look lately at your kids' textbooks, in a lot of schools they are teaching your children, your grandchildren, that religion is not supposed to have anything to do with American government, with public policy, with politics, with the public square. I know from experience talking to a lot of school kids, high school kids, that that's what they've been taught. And quite frankly, they don't understand why me as a Christian, come to their school to talk about government and public policy. Yeah, I get this line. "Haven't you heard of the separation of church and state?" So I'm afraid that even a lot of Christians have been sold a bill of goods and believe there's something in the Constitution that leads them to stay away from government.

Today I was in Washington walking around and doing some meetings and I started reminding myself that all over Washington, DC, on the public buildings there is literally etched in the stone the evidence of what previous generations of Americans all the way back to the American founding right up till now, thought about the role of religion in American public life, the role of God in the American founding and quite frankly, the role that Christians played in the American founding. There wouldn't be an America without involved Christians, men and women that believed in God and believed that Jesus Christ was the son of God. At the American founding, 99% of the American people were self-described Christians.

If they thought their new government was building a government built on the idea that they were not supposed to be involved in American government and America's public debates and the public square, they would've never formed America to begin with. They would've had more religious liberty under the British Empire than under an America that was built on the idea that Christians and the church had to be completely separate from the government in the United States. Now, what they did believe is, America shouldn't have a government church. There shouldn't be an official church that government tried to force everybody to worship. That's completely different than the idea that Christians and believers shouldn't be involved in American government and in public debates.

Roger Marsh:

You're listening to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh jumping in here for just a brief moment to remind you that we are listening to Gary Bauer as he explains the

role that Christianity and the church play in American public life. Gary Bauer is senior vice president of public policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. He's also the voice of the new Defending Faith, Family and Freedom podcast. Let's rejoin Gary Bauer right now for the rest of today's program here on Family Talk.

Gary Bauer:

Well, as I was walking around today, I started jotting some things down because I didn't want to forget any of them. The U.S. Capitol Building. If you've ever come to Washington, DC, I'm sure you've gone to the U.S. Capitol building. The words, "In God We Trust", are all over that building. I mean, you almost have to intentionally try to avoid looking someplace that says, "In God We Trust." If you go into the House of Representatives, along the top of the chamber there are renditions of 23 famous lawgivers. Now, 22 of those lawgivers, we see the profile of the lawgiver. There's only one lawgiver that looks right at you. He's looking right at those members of the House of Representatives when sometimes they do some really stupid things. And that's Moses, who the founders believed was the most important lawgiver of all.

Now, as you know, he didn't write the laws. He was given the laws by the God of the Bible. And so he wrote down God's dictation and brought those laws to the Jewish people and the founders of America, the early Congresses, thought he was so important because these were God-given laws. They presented him in a way different than all the other important lawgivers. There's religious artwork all over the United States Capitol. You probably have heard of the Rotunda. That's where John F. Kennedy or Ronald Reagan laid in state in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol building. And in that rotunda, if you're a tourist and you walk around or if you go up there to talk to members of Congress about things we care about as I do regularly, you will see in the rotunda depictions of Columbus praying. You'll see an artist's rendition of the Indian Princess Pocahontas being baptized into the Christian faith.

You'll see Pilgrims praying in one of the hallways of the Capitol. You'll see the phrase, "America, God Shed His Grace on Thee." I mean it just goes on and on and on. Why don't you leave the Capitol with me and we'll get on one of those tourist buses and we'll drive over to the Jefferson Memorial. Now, keep in mind, Jefferson was the guy that the left claims wanted church and state to be completely separated because he referred to the separation of church and state in a letter that he wrote to a friend. Well, in the Jefferson Memorial, there are five sections in the Memorial and all these sections feature quotes from Thomas Jefferson and four of the five quotes are God-centered. "Well, wait a minute, didn't Jefferson read his letter about the separation of church and state?" Well, of course he did. He wrote it. He just didn't interpret the separation of church and state to mean what some people are trying to make it mean.

Now, one of those quotes is this. "God, who gave us life, gave us liberty." Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that those liberties are the gift of God? Come on. I mean, does that sound like a guy that doesn't want religion or Christians involved in the government of the

country? And what Jefferson was doing is, just in his own way, repeating the idea that's in the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, where we said our liberty comes. Not from Thomas Jefferson, not from the Congress, not from a president you like or five magical votes on the Supreme Court, our liberty comes from God. That's the whole idea of America. Now around the interior of the dome of the Jefferson Memorial, he says this, "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility ..." Against religion? Of course not. "Against every form of tyranny over the minds of men." Wow, what a powerful quote.

But again, it's a daily reminder for anybody that sees it, that no, America is not supposed to be separated from Christians and Christians are not supposed to stay out of government, are not supposed to stay out of politics, and pastors and priests and rabbis and the leaders of any other faith are not supposed to be silent when it comes to preaching or talking about the most important issues facing the American people. Now, I could go on and on. Images of the 10 Commandments, they're in federal buildings all over Washington, DC. There is a bronze etching of the 10 Commandments on the floor of the National Archives where employees there kicked those Christians out just a few weeks ago. Well, I want to go to the place that I find the most compelling and that's the Lincoln Memorial. And again, if you've been to Washington, DC, you've seen it.

If you haven't come to Washington, DC, it's worth coming for one day just to visit the Memorials even if you didn't do anything else. And by the way, you could drop by the Museum of the Bible while you're here. A whole museum devoted to the Bible. Incredible place. But at the Lincoln Memorial, two speeches are displayed. The Gettysburg Address, which is only 267 words. It's one of the most famous speeches in American history. Growing up, and maybe many of this happened to you, I had to memorize the Gettysburg Address. I don't think they're doing that in many schools anymore. So if they're not doing it in many schools, do it in your own house and then talk to your children and grandchildren about the words. But one part of the Gettysburg Address, and I've got it written down, even though I memorized it as a kid, the ticker here is, you know, I'm not as quick on my feet as I used to be, so I want to make sure I don't mess up the words.

One of the things Lincoln said, "We here highly resolved that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation," hang on now, "under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth." We didn't add Under God to our Pledge of Allegiance until 1954 when President Eisenhower went to a church service and was reminded by the pastor that our pledge of allegiance could be said by the children of almost any country including some very bad countries. That we had to add something that made us different and because of that, General Eisenhower because he heard that pastor, set in motion on Capitol Hill, in the Congress, adding the words, Under God, to our Pledge of Allegiance. On the right side of the Lincoln Memorial are the second inaugural address. It's one page long. I mean really you could do it over breakfast with your kids and your grandkids.

In that one page, Abraham Lincoln, a crushed president. He had presided over the deaths of 650,000 Americans. Can you imagine? And in that one page he mentions God and quotes the Bible 14 times in one page. Now there's something else in the Lincoln Memorial. A hundred years after Lincoln gave that second inaugural address, Martin Luther King spoke at that site and he gave what is arguably his most famous speech, his "I Have a Dream" speech. And there is a portion of that speech that was added to the Lincoln Memorial not a hundred years ago, not 50 years ago, in 2003. They changed the Lincoln Memorial. And the part of the "I Have A Dream" speech that they gave was based roughly on Isaiah 40:4-5 that says, and this is in the Memorial. "I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted and every hill and mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be made plain and the crooked places shall be made straight. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed to all flesh. All flesh shall see it together."

That is a verse referring to the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In 2003, the government of the United States, the Congress of the United States had to vote to put that biblical verse inside the Lincoln Memorial. So you know, if the left wants to change history, they'll ultimately have to sandblast half the walls of official Washington because our Christian heritage, our biblical heritage is everywhere to be seen. But what I'm afraid of is while they might not be able to get away with sandblasting those walls, Christians, by buying into the idea that we are not supposed to be involved in the public square, are changing the history of America by our surrender to the forces of the left either out of fear or out of who knows what.

So I want you to think about those things. This is your homework. Read Lincoln's Second Inaugural, read some of those quotes, read the Gettysburg Address. More importantly, teach them to your children and grandchildren. This is particularly necessary if circumstances don't allow you to get your children out of public schools. And I want to close with one other thing. There are powerful forces inside government and there are powerful forces outside of government that hate Christians, hate the Christian faith, and they're going to do whatever they can to shut us up and shut us down. During the riots in the summer of 2020, right here in Washington, DC, leftist, atheists, neo-Marxist radicals attacked every one of those Memorials that I mentioned today. They even wrote disgusting things on the Lincoln Memorial, the president most responsible for freeing the slaves.

My friends, America's up for grabs and the only way it's going to be saved is if the Church of Jesus Christ wakes up in time. Well, thanks for being with us, the James Dobson Family Institute, Dr. Dobson, our entire staff, me. We are committed to standing with you in this great battle to protect our religious liberty, protect our families, and protect our freedom, and we want you to be with us in this great battle.

Roger Marsh:

You're listening to Family Talk and I'm Roger Marsh. What a powerful presentation given by our own Gary Bauer today here on the program. Now, if

you enjoyed what you just heard and you haven't had a chance to catch Gary on the new Defending Faith, Family and Freedom podcast, remember you can do so by visiting our website at drjamesdobson.org. Gary shares his unique perspective on current public policies through the lens of the U.S. Constitution and an unapologetic biblical worldview. By the way, to listen to this podcast, simply visit our main homepage at drjamesdobson.org. You'll select the Defending Faith, Family and Freedom podcast. Once you do that, you'll be directed to the podcast page and then you can choose your favorite listing program. It's that easy.

I'm Roger Marsh and I want to remind you that Family Talk is a listener supported ministry. It's because of you and your support that we're able to present quality content like what you heard today for you and your family and we do so each and every day. To learn more about how you can support us financially, just visit drjamesdobson.org. Thanks for listening today and may God continue to richly bless you and your family as you grow in relationship with him. Be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.