THE GOOD CITIZEN PROJECT

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY BRIEFING:
CURRENT CHALLENGES TO OUR FIRST FREEDOM

BIG IDEA: RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, WHICH IS CRITICAL TO OUR ABILITY TO PROCLAIM AND LIVE OUT THE GOSPEL, IS UNDER DEEP SCRUTINY AND EVEN ATTACK THESE DAYS. NEW COURT CASES AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ARISE WEEKLY IF NOT DAILY, AND CHURCH LEADERS AS WELL AS OTHER COMMITTED CHRISTIANS SHOULD STAY UP-TO-DATE ON THE DEVELOPMENTS. WHY? BECAUSE JAMES MADISON ONCE DESCRIBED THE RIGHTS GUARANTEED IN THE CONSTITUTION AS "PARCHMENT BARRIERS." THESE RIGHTS ARE FRAGILE AND CAN FADE AND TEAR EASILY. **THEREFORE, WE MUST BE VIGILANT IN DEFENDING AND PROMOTING OUR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IF WE EXPECT THIS UNIQUE (CONSIDERING HISTORY AND THE GLOBAL CHURCH) FREEDOM TO ENDURE TO THE NEXT GENERATION.**

OUR APPROACH: WE AVOID A CATACLYSMIC, THE SKY-IS-FALLING TYPE OF APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY. **THE CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES STILL ENJOYS SIGNIFICANT FREEDOM AND IS LARGELY UNREGULATED IN ITS MINISTRY ACTIVITIES.** FURTHER, WE BELIEVE GOD IS IN CONTROL. FOR THESE REASONS, WE BELIEVE THAT WE MUST DEFEND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN A BIBLICAL WAY. **WE MUST ENGAGE THIS ISSUE WITH THE GOAL OF MAKING DISCIPLES AND SEEKING THE COMMON GOOD** RATHER THAN DEFENDING THE CHRISTIAN SUBCULTURE OUT OF FEAR AND SELF-PRESERVATION.

TOPICS COVERED:

- **THE FIRST AMENDMENT "BUBBLES"**
- **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FIRST AMENDMENT CASES**
- **THE BEST WAY TO DEFEND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**
- **THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

FIRST AMENDMENT BUBBLES

IN MY EXPERIENCE, MANY CHRISTIANS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE FIRST AMENDMENT'S DIFFERING STANDARDS OF PROTECTION (OR BUBBLES) FOR MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH BUILDING, MINISTRY THROUGH INDEPENDENT NONPROFITS AND SCHOOLS AND MINISTRY IN THE MARKETPLACE. THESE LEGAL FACTS ARE CRITICAL TO UNDERSTANDING THE STRUGGLE FOR AND PARTICIPATING IN THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FIRST AMENDMENT CASES

I OFTEN SAY, "DON'T CALL SAUL, BE LIKE PAUL." PAUL USED HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ROMAN LEGAL STANDARDS TO FURTHER HIS MINISTRY (ACTS 16, 22, 25), AND SO SHOULD WE. BUT, TO DO THAT, WE HAVE TO STAY UP-TO-DATE ON THOSE LEGAL STANDARDS. **IN THIS PART OF THE PRESENTATION, WE EXPLAIN IN PRACTICAL TERMS THE CURRENT CASES AND OTHER LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.**

THE BEST WAY TO DEFEND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

THOUGH ATTORNEYS AND ADVOCATES IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE ARE CRITICAL TO THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, IT IS SHORT-SIGHTED TO FULLY DELEGATE THE DEFENSE OF OUR FIRST FREEDOM TO THEM. LAW AND POLITICS ARE DOWNSTREAM FROM CULTURE. SO, WE CAN DO MORE THAN PRAY (AS IMPORTANT AS THAT IS (I TIM 2:2)) AND CROSS OUR FINGERS WHILE WAITING FOR THE NEXT U.S. SUPREME COURT CASE. **WE CAN ALL CHAMPION RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN OUR CORNER OF THE COUNTRY,** AND I EXPLAIN PRACTICAL WAYS TO DO THAT.

THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

YOU PROBABLY HEAR QUITE OFTEN THAT RELIGIOUS FOLK ARE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF HISTORY, BUT HISTORY IS QUITE FICKLE. GOD IS AT WORK IN THIS GENERATION, AND WE HAVE MUCH TO WORK AND HOPE FOR. IN THIS PART OF THE PRESENTATION, I SHARE PROJECTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PROTECTIONS AND HOW TO PREPARE FOR THAT FUTURE.

MATERIALS PROVIDED

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION/HANDOUT FOR NOTE TAKING
PHOTO AND BIO OF SPEAKER