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Florida Pastor to Defy Prayer Ban - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2011/11/4 8:37

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A standoff over prayers at a school flagpole is looming between a longtime Baptist preacher and a Florida public school system.

Ron Baker, the pastor of Russell Baptist Church in Green Cove Springs, said he plans to keep on praying, regardless of what happens.

“Did you ever think that in America you’d be in trouble for praying at the flag?” Baker told Fox News. “It’s disturbing.”

Baker was referring to a legal opinion submitted by the Clay County School Board’s attorney and published in Jacksonville.com. The attorney determined that a series of prayers on the grounds of four schools was a violation of the U.S. Constitution. The attorney further declared that the prayers were a clear endorsement of religion and Christianity.

“It is a violation of the United States Constitution for a teacher, school administrator or other school district employee to join in a prayer session during their work time,” wrote J. Bruce Bickner in a story that appeared on Jacksonville.com.

Bickner did not return telephone calls or emails seeking comment.

“I never thought I’d ever see that happen in America,” Pastor Baker told Fox News. “Maybe in North Korea or China or Russia – but not America.”

For quite some time Pastor Baker has been praying at all four of Clay County’s schools. Normally he’s joined by church members, parents, grandparents and students – offering thanks to God around each school flagpole.

But the Baptist preacher said all that changed when an atheist group complained – leading to the ban.

“Who would have thought when you’re praying for the safety of the school, the students and respecting the teachers and faculty – that that would be deemed as wrong and impermissible?” he wondered.

Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-president of the Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation, told Jacksonville.com that their complaints would be satisfied so long as the early morning prayers were halted.

“I’m just so pleased to see that someone else has some legal common sense,” she told the newspaper.

The pastor said he’s contacted the American Center for Law and Justice – and was told that his prayers are indeed – Constitutional.

“I don’t feel I did anything wrong and I don’t feel any need to stop,” he said.

So on Monday morning at 8:15 a.m., Pastor Baker said he will be at the flagpole at Clay Hill Elementary School – in defiance of the school attorney.

“I’m not going to stop,” he said. “We’ll be praying.”

Re: Florida Pastor to Defy Prayer Ban - posted by enid, on: 2011/11/4 8:42

Let's hope there is some prayer taking place during the weekend.

Re: Florida Pastor to Defy Prayer Ban - posted by mguldner (), on: 2011/11/4 8:57

That lawyer needs to get this law thing straight.

1. Prayer is a constitutional Right under Freedom of Religion AND Freedom of Speech.
2. A teacher is more than welcome to join in a prayer session. By law any student initiated religious activity is fair game for teachers so long as the teacher is not the originator or starter of said "prayer session" is that even right? No but that's what our government which is suppose to be the upholders of our freedoms is suppose to do.