

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

P.O. BOX 750 • MADISON, WI 53701 • (608) 256-8900 • WWW.FFRF.ORG

June 8, 2022

SENT VIA U.S. MAIL AND FAX: (919) 733-6595

The Honorable Mark Robinson
Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina
20401 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-04

Re: Retract and apologize for your abhorrent sexist and Christian nationalist remarks

Dear Mr. Robinson:

Your remarks to a Charlotte-area church congregation last month have come to our attention. We represent more than 36,000 members nationwide, including a Triangle-area chapter and more than 840 North Carolina members. The Freedom From Religion Foundation works to protect the constitutional principle of separation between church and state and to educate the public about nontheism.

We are writing to request that you immediately retract your intemperate and ill-considered remarks and apologize not only to women as a whole, but to the citizens of North Carolina, particularly non-Christians. Non-Christians make up more than 35 percent of the U.S. adult population — with three-in-ten Americans rejecting religion altogether (atheists, agnostics or nothing in particular).¹

You reportedly told the congregation on May 22 that Christians are “called to be led by men,” that men are to “put on the whole armor of God” and “take the head of your enemy in God’s name.” You also said you were “getting ready to get in trouble.” You continued, “We are called to be led by men. God sent women out . . . when they had to do their thing, but when it was time to face down Goliath, [he] sent David. Not Davita, David.” You said God sent Moses, “Not Momma Moses. Daddy Moses.”²

You opined that too many people listen to the doctrine of social justice instead of the doctrine of Jesus Christ” and that “they will be on their way to Hell.”

A disturbing number of your remarks carry a perceived threat that is particularly tone deaf following the unspeakable violence on Jan. 6, 2021, to foment an insurrection to stop the legal certification of the presidency.

Your ill-advised and ignorant remarks, made as the second-highest elected officer in your state, create a hostile environment for women, nontheists and other non-Christians.

¹ “About three-in-ten U.S. adults are now religiously unaffiliated,” Pew Research Center, Dec. 14, 2021 <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/12/14/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-are-now-religiously-unaffiliated/>

² “NC’s lieutenant governor: ‘We are called to be led by men,’ not women, WRAL.com, June 6, 2022 <https://www.wral.com/nc-s-lieutenant-governor-we-are-called-to-be-led-by-men-not-women/20318578/>

“When the government associates one set of religious beliefs with the state and identifies nonadherents as outsiders, it encroaches upon the individual's decision about whether and how to worship...Allowing government to be a potential mouthpiece for competing religious ideas risks the sort of division that might easily spill over into suppression of rival beliefs.” *McCreary Cty., Ky. v. Am. C.L. Union of Ky.*, 545 U.S. 844, 883 (2005)(O'CONNOR, J., concurring). By showing a purpose to favor religion, the government “sends the ... message to ... nonadherents ‘that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community, and an accompanying message to adherents that they are insiders, favored members’” *Santa Fe Independent School Dist. v. Doe*, 530 U.S. 290, 309–310 (2000) (quoting *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 668, 688, (O'CONNOR, J., concurring)).

While you are free to believe whatever you like and attend whatever church you wish, as lieutenant governor you represent all North Carolinians — not just fundamentalist Christian men. Your discriminatory remarks based on biblical literalism are an embarrassment to your office and to the state of North Carolina.

You are evincing an unfortunate pattern of giving sermons in church as a public official that blur the line between state and church and are deeply offensive. We take note of your encouragement to censor books in school libraries and your anti-LGBTQ remarks, particularly saying in a March church sermon at Prospect Baptist Church in Albemarle that if someone reads a book about transgenderism or homosexuality, they are “as much of a groomer as that person was down at that playground.”³ The primitive and violent teachings of the bible should not be invoked by you as a public official to wink at violence or to demean women citizens.

You took an oath of office to protect and defend the U.S. Constitution, which is a godless and entirely secular document that scrupulously separates religion from government and which also protects equal justice under the law. Live up to that oath. Retract and apologize!

Very truly,



Annie Laurie Gaylor and Dan Barker
Co-Presidents
Freedom From Religion Foundation

³ <https://vimeo.com/687724250>