

A Response to my Cherished Brother, Pastor Don Green

I have the greatest respect for Pastor Don and have had for many years now. I urge us all to think through the dangers of trying to impose the unity that the church must hold upon the institution of the state.

Presuppositions:

This article presupposes that the reader believes the Bible and knows the differences between the church, the Christian, the state government, the civil sphere, the citizen, the family, and the individual.

Thesis

The claim “If you claim a biblical, Christian witness, you cannot platform false religion” equivocates on *platform*, confuses *church unity* with *civil cooperation*, binds consciences beyond Scripture, and mistakes *engagement in civil good* for *endorsement in religious belief*. It is zeal without knowledge (Prov 19:2), and it burdens the flock where God has not (Col 2:20–23) exposing incipient pietism.

I. Category Error: Church vs. Civil Sphere

Error: Collapsing ecclesial unity into the civil sphere.

- **Church Unity (holy sphere):** Fellowship and pulpit partnership belong only to those who confess the true gospel (Gal 1:8–9; 2 John 10–11; 1 Tim 3:15). We do **not** hold joint worship services, joint Bible studies, or pulpit-sharing with deniers of justification by faith alone.
- **Civil Cooperation (common sphere):** Scripture permits—and often records—God’s people working, speaking, or standing before unbelieving rulers and mixed crowds for the public good and for witness (Gen 41; Dan 1–6; Neh 2; Jer 29:7; Rom 13:1–4; Acts 24–26).

Conclusion: Refusing ecclesial unity ≠ refusing civil presence. Daniel served pagan kings while refusing pagan worship (he even served by leading over magicians, astrologers, etc.). Joseph held office under Pharaoh without compromising covenant loyalty.

II. Equivocation on “Platform”

Error: Treating shared *civil beliefs* as shared *religious beliefs*.

- David united with the Philistines in order to pursue a common enemy justly and was even willing to fight against Israel (1 Sam 29:1–11; 1 Chron 12:19). Paul addressed the Areopagus (Acts 17:19–34), quoted pagan poets (17:28), disputed in public forums (17:17), and spoke before Roman and Jewish authorities (Acts 24–26). He used *their* platform to preach *our* Christ. Presence ≠ partnership.
- Jesus ate with sinners and engaged Pharisees publicly (Luke 5:29–32; 7:36–50). He did not fear “platforming” them by proximity (cf. Mark 7:15).

Conclusion: Sharing a stage is not sharing a pulpit. The pulpit (worship) is exclusive; the arena (civic square) is contested ground where truth must be spoken for the welfare of the body politic. Most Christians already live this way in the civil sphere with respect to their jobs.

III. False Dilemma

Error: Either total separation from events featuring unbelievers or betrayal of Christ.

- Scripture supplies a better way: **engage without endorsing** (Matt 5:13–16; John 17:15–18; 1 Cor 5:9–10).
- Paul commands separation from false teachers **in the church** (2 Cor 6:14–7:1; 2 John 10–11) while assuming interaction with unbelievers **in the world** (1 Cor 5:9–10).

Conclusion: The Bible forbids syncretism, not public witness. Withdrawal is not the mark of holiness; faithfulness in the world is (John 17:18).

IV. Guilt by Association

Error: Implying contamination by co-appearance.

- Jesus’ opponents used the same tactic (Matt 11:19). Scripture rejects defilement-by-proximity moralism (Mark 7:15).
- Paul permits table fellowship with unbelievers (1 Cor 10:27) while keeping doctrinal lines clear in the church.

Conclusion: Moral contagion does not pass by a shared microphone in the civil sphere; it passes by shared doctrine in the church (Gal 2:4–5; 2 John 10–11).

V. Hasty Generalization & Negligence

Error: Speaking without full knowledge violates biblical wisdom.

- “He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him” (Prov 18:13).
- Shepherds must be “sober-minded...sensible” and careful with facts (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8).

Conclusion: TPUSA is and has been an American nonprofit organization that advocates for conservative politics. A little research would have shown what TPUSA is, and has been doing. Announcing sweeping moral mandates on partial information is not pastoral vigilance; it’s foolishness, especially when considering that the civil sphere, while not separate from God’s authority, is not under the same mandates as the church.

VI. Misplaced Zeal: Where Gospel Purity Is Actually Guarded

Error: Treating civic presence as the chief threat to gospel purity.

- The gospel is guarded **inside the church** by sound doctrine, discipline, and qualified elders (Acts 20:28–31; Titus 1:9–11; 1 Tim 1:3–4).

- Outside the church, believers are commissioned to speak Christ publicly, polemically, using apologetics (Acts 17:22–31; 26:19–29), seek the city’s welfare based upon the Word of God (Jer 29:7), and live visibly holy lives while calling others to the same through proclamation, baptism, and discipleship (1 Pet 2:12).

Conclusion: The real danger is not that Christians might stand near unbelievers, but that they might surrender doctrinal clarity *in the church*, retreat from witness *in the world*, or pursue *love of the world*.

VII. Conscience-Binding & Legalism

Error: “It is mandatory for true Christians not to look away from this” (i.e., to denounce any event that includes non-Christians).

- Leaders must not lay laws God did not (Mark 7:7–9; Acts 15:10). Matters of one’s own opinions of prudence must not be elevated to divine mandate (Rom 14:1–4; Col 2:20–23).
- Scripture’s actual mandate: **no ecclesial fellowship with false gospels; civic witness with wisdom and clarity for good.**

Conclusion: Adding new fences where God did not is spiritual overreach.

VIII. The Slippery Slope of Sectarian Withdrawal

Error: Assuming visibility equals compromise.

- Light is meant to be set on a lampstand *in* a dark room (Matt 5:15–16), not hidden in a cellar of separatism.
- Paul’s boldness was public, not cloistered (Acts 26:26). Fear-based fences create fragile saints, not discerning ones (Eph 4:11–15).

Conclusion: Equip the flock to discern error in public, not to collapse from contact with it.

IX. Positive Biblical Pattern for Engagement (Without Compromise)

- **Joseph under Pharaoh** (Gen 41): High civil service without idolatry.
- **Daniel under Babylon and Persia** (Dan 1–6): Loyal service; zero syncretism (consider: that Daniel was “chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans, *and* diviners.” Dan 5:11).
- **Nehemiah under Artaxerxes** (Neh 2): Receives pagan aid to rebuild Jerusalem.
- **Paul before Gallio, Felix, Festus, Agrippa** (Acts 18; 24–26): Uses pagan courts and platforms to preach.
- **Common Grace & Civil Order** (Rom 13:1–4; Prov 31:8–9): Work with any image-bearer for justice and order, while confessing Christ alone as Lord (Matt 28:18).

Boundary Lines:

1. **No joint worship/prayer services** with deniers of the gospel (2 John 10–11).
2. **No pulpit-sharing or spiritual endorsement** (Gal 1:8–9).
3. **Public clarity:** State your gospel, disclaim spiritual partnership, and speak plainly about error (2 Cor 4:2).
4. **Pastoral shepherding:** Explain to your flock the difference between civil cooperation and ecclesial communion (1 Cor 5:9–10).

X. Confessional Support (Reformed)

- **Worship & Fellowship:** Only as God commands; no syncretism (WCF 21; 26).
- **Christian Liberty:** Do not bind where God has left free (WCF 20).
- **Civil Magistrate:** Lawful cooperation for the common good (WCF 23).

XI. Precision Strikes (Errors Summarized)

1. **Equivocation:** “Platform” conflates venue or common just cause with total agreement.
2. **Category Error:** Blurs church fellowship with civil presence.
3. **False Dilemma:** Ignores engage common civil ground without endorsing religious beliefs.
4. **Guilt by Association:** Assumes proximity on what God calls good equals approval of entire belief system.
5. **Hasty Generalization:** “Didn’t bother to look further” and a failure to bring the whole counsel of God violates Prov 18:13.
6. **Conscience-Binding:** Elevates one’s own prudence to mandate, which is an abuse of authority (Rom 14; Col 2).
7. **Misplaced Zeal:** Guards the gospel by retreat, not by doctrine, witness, and good works.
8. **Fear Not Faith:** Treats the world as contagious rather than the Word as conquering (2 Tim 2:9).

XII. A Better Pastoral Stance (Biblically Defensible)

- **In the Church:** Ruthless clarity—no pulpit sharing, no joint worship, no soft-pedaling of the doctrines of Rome, Mormonism, or Hinduism (Gal 1:8–9; 2 John 10–11).
- **In the World:** Visible, vocal, courageous witness—enter the arena, name Christ, expose error, work for civil good according to God’s Law, and do good to all (Acts 17; Matt 5:16; Gal 6:10).
- **To the Flock:** Teach the difference between *altar* and *arena*. Train discernment; forbid syncretism; model courageous engagement.

Final Word

The argument postures as if he is a guardian of purity but actually, he confuses categories, binds consciences, and discourages public witness. Scripture calls us to separation in worship and presence in the world. Refuse the altar of syncretism; seize the microphone of opportunity. Do not mistake retreat for holiness. Retreat is cowardice as it is a public denial of Christ our King. Be clear in the church, courageous in the culture, and uncompromising about Christ everywhere.