



May 21, 2012

Lois G. Lerner, Director
Exempt Organizations Division
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Dear Ms. Lerner,

I am writing today with information concerning a church in Kentucky that I believe has violated federal tax law by intervening in an election.

During services on Sunday, May 13, Pastor Ronnie Spriggs of Hager Hill Freewill Baptist Church in Hager Hill, Ky., told his congregants that he wants to see President Barack Obama removed from office.

The sermon was posted on the video-sharing service Ustream and, as of today, is available here: <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/22561741>. The relevant portion begins around 42:30. I have also enclosed a DVD of the relevant portions of the sermon.

Spriggs says the following:

“I’m very disappointed this morning. I’m disappointed in our country. I’m disappointed in our president. I’m going to go on record. You can say that’s political if you want to and blame me if you want to, but I heard our president say something this week that I never thought I’d ever hear a president of the United States say. Did y’all hear that? He said that he believes that gays ought to have the right to marry in the United States. That’s the president of the United States who said that. Amen. I don’t know about you folks, but I’m going on record and I don’t care who knows it. I want the guy out. Amen, amen....

“This country can’t afford that kind of ideology in that office. Amen. That’s too high office. I can disagree with anyone and we can go on, but when a man sits in the highest seat in this country and my freedom and your freedom is in his hands, I can’t afford for that man to have that kind of ideology and be that far against Christ....

“We need to really be prayerful, and we need to get active. If you’ve ever opened your mouth, you better open it now. Between now and November, God’s people ought to thunder this country. We ought to let this country know that we will not be silent on these issues. We will not just go and let anybody step up and do anything they want to do....

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“You know why that Obama said he believes that? Because the polls represent more people in the United States believe they ought to marry than others do. So this is an advantageous time. You know what we got to show him? There’s more saved people in the United States than he thinks there are. And if we don’t voice our opinion now, we’ll lose our country....

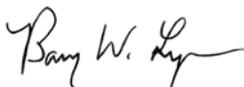
“This is what I want you to do: I want you to open your voice for Jesus Christ. I want you to speak up in these next few months that are to come and let’s not back this kind of ideology. Let’s get this out of the White House. Amen. And let’s show this country that God’s people still have a voice in this country.”

Pastor Spriggs informed his congregation that he wanted to see President Obama “out,” meaning out of office. He said this twice, and went on to link the issue of same-sex marriage to the November presidential election. His message is clear: Congregants should vote against Obama.

I believe these statements constitute a clear violation of federal law, which prohibits 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entities from intervening in elections by endorsing or opposing candidates for public office. Pastor Spriggs has quiet openly stated that Obama should not be reelected. I believe this is a violation of the law, and I request the IRS investigate the matter.

Hager Hill Freewill Baptist Church’s address is: 2344 Kentucky Route 1428, Hager Hill, KY 41222. Telephone: (606) 789-4427.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry W. Lynn".

Barry W. Lynn
Executive Director