

The Relationship Between Church and State: A One Way Street.

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There is nothing in the US Constitution that draws a line to separate 'church' and 'state.' The restriction is that the government "...shall make no law respecting religion." In other words, religion is not to be regulated or controlled; furthermore, no one religion is to obtain preference over any other by virtue of a government action.

This is why churches are tax exempt, for one thing. It is also a pretty sticky point in zoning laws where cities and counties must decide on where a church can be built. The decision must be made based on traffic, roads, and parking, not what is said inside the building.

In the Constitution, there is no reverse restraint on religion not influencing government, as long as that religious influence does not impair the ability of another religion to tend to their followers.

Since the gay/lesbian issue was brought up earlier, the application here arises when one person believes that such activity is wrong based on religious belief. That's all well and good. Imposing that religious belief on others, however, is clearly in violation of the first amendment. If the gay/lesbian issue or any other for that matter were of a non-religious nature, then a law could be made 'respecting' it [note that respecting does not mean respect in current language, but means 'having to do with'].

The intent was quite clearly the result of the European practice of state mandated participation in the religion chosen by the monarchy.

Why is this important?

Because adhering to the provisions of the Constitution is a greater national interest than is the legislation of the morals of others.