

A FAITH at WORK HYPOTHETICAL

Jane Smith works for ABC Systems Integration, a corporation that earns 60 percent of its revenues from business done with the United States Federal Government. She has just received a promotion into a middle management position, where she is responsible for a team of 20 people that is responsible for financial and regulatory compliance oversight on Federal Programs.

Jane is a relatively new Christian, having come to know the Lord Jesus as her personal savior three years ago after going through a troubling time where her husband left her and their 4 year old son. She has not remarried, and is the sole provider for her family. She is actively involved in her Church, and is passionate about aligning her life with Jesus' teachings, including His Great Commands (*Matt. 22:36*) and His Great Commission (*Matt. 28:18-20*).¹

Several months ago, Jane discovered that Betty one of her good friends at work is also a committed Christian. She started meeting with her friend over lunch for casual Bible studies, and she and her friend have discussed the possibility of inviting other friends into their conversations. Betty tells Jane that a co-worker has objected to her "I really work for a Carpenter" sign in her work cubicle. They have also discussed the possibility of starting a more consistent Bible study at ABC Systems Integration, using ABC's conference rooms over lunch. She has had some casual conversations with Human Resources, and has also reviewed ABC's Policies to see if there is any reference to whether groups can use ABC's conference room facilities for a Bible study. Human Resources has verbally discouraged her efforts to form a Bible study, but has stopped short of offering any formal opinion. ABC's policies are silent on this item, but Jane has learned that there is an Executive Committee that is looking into the formation of affinity groups at ABC. ABC has, interestingly, done nothing to discourage a co-worker from organizing an effort to encourage the voluntary marking of offices as "safe zones" which, in this case, refers to social acceptance of homosexuality.

A few days ago, Jane was called by her boss Mary, who advised her that she had heard of Jane's queries with regard to using company facilities for Bible studies. Mary complimented Jane for the passion she had for her Christian faith, but also told her that ABC was a government contractor that had to keep religion separate from the workplace. She also said Jane should be careful not to send the wrong message to her employees and executive leadership at ABC, because they might get the wrong idea. Mary did not elaborate more on what that meant.

Jane is frustrated and concerned. She has the sense that her interest in starting a Bible study is being discussed by ABC's leadership, and that she is being carefully discouraged. She is fearful of putting her job at risk, yet she feels that she must be bold for her Lord and pursue all avenues. While she does not force her faith on others, she fears the possibility that she could be accused by her staff as being intolerant. She has considered contacting a lawyer, but is also concerned that if she involves a lawyer in her activities, she might do more harm to her Christian witness than good, not to mention her obvious fears regarding her job.

¹ **The Great Commandments:** "[Jesus], which is the great commandment in the law?" And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." (*Matthew 22:36*)

The Great Commission: "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (*Matthew 28:18-20*)