

The Christian And Politics

On November 7th a national election will be held. Americans will choose a President, Vice President, members of Congress, and many other State and local officials. In this voting process lies a great potential for important changes in the moral climate of our society in the days ahead. The further breakdown of our already corrupt moral standards, and the removing of even more of the shrinking Godly influence from society can occur. On the other hand, the election could bring about a slowing down of moral decay, and emphasize the importance of moral uprightness and the values which helped to make our nation great in the first place.

Members of the Lord's church have an important part to play in the upcoming election. They could help encourage a condition in society which would be more conducive to the furtherance of the cause of Christ. Or, they could align themselves with those who constitute "*enemies of the cross of Christ*" (Phil. 3:18), and who will make it more difficult to live a faithful Christian life. The part which true Christians can play in this political process is a great opportunity and also a great responsibility. It is about this very thing that our following discussion will be concerned. It is with the full realization that politics is a super sensitive subject with quite a few members of the church. Therefore, I'm inviting criticism from some brethren. But when standing for that which is right provokes criticism, so be it. I do, however, ask our readers to please consider our discussion from the standpoint of God's word and not from a purely political perspective. With these thoughts in mind, let us consider a number of important points.

I. THE MORAL STATE OF OUR NATION

It is a simple matter of fact that our country is now at its lowest moral state ever, and the passing of time sees that condition only worsening. To so many there is no virtue in being truthful. This has reached the highest circles in our nation. The state of sexual immorality is reflected in the great percentage of illegitimate births, to say nothing of the millions of abortions. Sexual perversion is being pushed upon society by top political powers. The support of wanton murder of the unwanted unborn is being heralded in the planks of political platforms as something to be desired. This audacity speaks to the shame of our society. Need we to say more to prove our point that our nation is in the throes of a moral dissolution? "*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people*" (Prov. 14:34). It is clear to all who will see that there is a tragic absence of "*righteousness*" and a rapid growth of "*sin*." That "*All the nations that forget God*" "*shall be turned into hell*" (Ps. 9:17) seems to make little difference with most people, but it certainly should with members of the church.

II. POLITICS INFLUENCE THE MORAL CLIMATE OF OUR SOCIETY

We all know that politicians have a considerable influence upon society. They have a great part to play in the enacting and enforcing of various laws, some of which may contribute to the bettering of moral conditions, or to the encouragement of immorality. The time was that both our major political parties stood for much higher moral standards than those which are generally in vogue today. In more recent years this has changed greatly. Generally today, with a few exceptions, it is clearly seen that one major party more often favors a rather wide range of immoral things such as: abortion, sexual perversion, providing for the lazy who could but will not work, and dishonesty. The standing for these things is actually used to appeal to people on the basis of these evil things. The politicians often sense that a great many people desire these things, and sadly, it is so often the case that it is true. It has become more common for those of the party which stands for those things mentioned above, to severely criticize those they choose to label as "the religious right," or even "the radical religious right." A forceful example of this is that of Hillary Clinton when she tried to exonerate the shameful and degrading actions of her husband, the President, by blaming the "religious right." Only the President himself was to be blamed, since he was accountable for his actions. In this group of people which is castigated by the political party referred to above, I would be included, as well as all members of the church who stand for the truth. The evil spirit which opposes the doing of that which is morally right seems to be growing stronger as time passes.

The church members who choose to support the major political party which supports immoral activities have a real problem. It would sound so hollow for such members to say anything about "*seek[ing] first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness...*" (Matt. 6:33).

III. CHRISTIANS SHOULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN POLITICS

Government, which is to such a great extent run by the political process, is clearly ordained by God (Rom. 13:1-7). As citizens we are to submit to the rule of civil government, unless such would violate the principle set forth in Acts 5:29, that *"We ought to obey God rather than men."* As citizens we have the opportunity to be involved in the political process by voting. Who can say that such involvement is wrong when one exercises the privilege of helping to select the politician who will be most favorable to the cause of Christ and the principles for which it stands? Those who willfully cast aside their privilege and opportunity to uphold in politics that which is more in keeping with God's will, will be contributing to that which is indifferent or even opposed to God's will for man. Christ pointed out that those who are not with him are against him (Matt. 12:30). This in principle would hold true in the above, as well as in some other areas. Some times it is the case that evil flourishes simply because those who are supposed to stand for righteousness fail to do so.

IV. IS IT TRUE THAT "ALL POLITICIANS ARE ALIKE"?

We've all heard people say, "All politicians are alike." But is that true? Are people really serious when they say such? We can't help but have some questions in our mind when we hear that statement, as to whether or not it is completely accurate. It is true that we have no perfect politicians. We could go a step farther and say that we have no perfect accountable people. Yet, this in no sense of the term proves that "All politicians are alike."

As we consider this statement further, let us consider a few examples which relate to it. Our first example involves abortion, a lively political issue. The first politician we shall refer to as "A." He believes in the right of mothers to murder their totally innocent unborn babies if they for any reason simply don't want them. This politician is somewhat deceitful in his use of the terms "pro choice," and "the mother's right to choose." The facts are that the terms clearly mean "pro murder," and "the mother's right to murder her unborn child." Vice President Gore is actually warning people that if they don't elect him as President, appointments to the Supreme Court in the next four years could make the barbarous act of murdering unwanted unborn children illegal! Brethren, just stop and think! Our nation has gone to a state of ungodliness where such murder as the above is used as political appeal.

The second politician we shall call "B." This man is opposed to the evil practice of abortion, and believes that life should be protected, not extinguished. Now the question — Are these two politicians alike? Yet, we hear people say they are all alike. Something is tragically wrong when that is said, and regretfully, some church members say so.

We could use the same example as that above in principle. One politician makes it a special part of his political efforts to encourage sexual perverts in their ungodly deeds. He becomes a bedfellow with them (no pun intended) and pushes their agenda along with them. He would also approve action to indoctrinate our children with the evil belief that this God-condemned evil is simply another acceptable "life style." Another politician believes sexual perversion is morally wrong, and would grant no special rights to this shameful group in our society, and would in no way encourage this practice. Now a question — Are these two politicians just alike? It is beyond me how that a person could in honesty say they are alike. We have two men running for the office of President, they are as different as daylight from dark on the above issue. Are they alike? The same question could be asked with regard to various politicians on a number of issues. When one politician upholds that which is contrary to God's teaching, and another does not do so, how in the name of common sense can it be said that they are alike? I've not heard a logical answer as of now.

V. DOES GOD APPROVE THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF EVIL THROUGH POLITICS?

Though civil government is approved of God (See Rom. 13:1-7), God does not approve the encouragement of evil by those who would serve Him, be it through politics or any other means. That God's servants are to avoid and turn away from evil couldn't be more evident. Job *"feared God, and eschewed evil"* (Job. 1:1). Paul said, *"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good"* (Rom. 12:9). Peter wrote, *"Let him eschew evil, and do good..."* (I Pet. 3:11).

The above passages and many others do not make an exception which allows one to encourage evil through politics while condemning it in all other areas. Even though this is the case, I've known members of the church who while wearing their religious hat strongly opposed the evil which God condemns, but bareheaded they would encourage through politics the evil which they otherwise opposed. The true religion, Christianity, is such that the religious hat must be worn all the time.

When one knowingly supports a politician who stands for that which is evil in God's sight, even using the support of such evil in order to gain political support, that one is bidding *"God speed"* to evil. How can one who claims to be (See page 4) true Christian do such an evil deed? Furthermore, some think that what one does in politics is no other person's business. With members of the church, if others know that that which is evil is upheld or sanctioned by members of the church, this is a bad reflection upon the church. We, of the church, are supposed to uphold good, not evil, and this would apply to the area of

politics as well as other areas.

VI. DOES PARTY LOYALTY JUSTIFY VOTING AGAINST ONE'S SPIRITUAL CONVICTIONS?

To my knowledge there is no New Testament teaching which would disallow one from belonging to a political party. This is not to say, however, that one is at liberty to support evil which the party may uphold. Currently, there is in general a wide difference between the two major parties relative to standards of morality in the wide sense. There are some exceptions, of course.

When one's political party stands for something which is wrong in God's sight, it is then that party loyalty must be set aside if God, not man, is to be pleased. It is a sad reflection upon the Lord's church when its members who stand strongly opposed to such things as: abortion, sexual perversion, supporting those who are able to work but will not, and outright dishonesty, will turn right around and vote for those who do stand for those very things which they oppose. Brethren, this does happen!

When the above happens it makes one wonder just how much love such people have for the Lord and His cause. At the day of judgment I doubt there will be a special endorsement for those who betrayed their spiritual convictions due to party loyalty. When it comes to party loyalty, some are what we call, "dyed in the wool." People who have such loyalty are going to put party first and the Lord second, yet the Lord will not accept second place. It would be great indeed if every member of the Lord's body had the same loyalty to Him as some have for their political party. Our Lord told the church at Smyrna to be faithful unto the point of death (Rev. 2:10). If we are supposed to have such loyalty to Christ that we would give up our lives for Him, then surely we should have enough loyalty to Him that we would give up our loyalty to our political party, when that party goes contrary to our Lord's will.

VII. IS IT RIGHT TO UPHOLD EVIL FOR MATERIAL GAIN?

It is a matter of fact that some have supported a political party when it upheld evil, thinking that they might get hold of an extra dollar. Even if one is convinced that a certain party would help him gain a little more materially, it is totally inconsistent with our Lord's teaching to seek material gain when it involves the violating God's will.

Materialism has probably been one of the greatest enemies of the Lord's church for the past several years. When people are "*rich, and increased with goods,*" as were those of the church at Laodicea, there is a great danger that they may come to feel they "*have need of nothing,*" including the Lord (Rev. 3:14-17). When I was growing up I used to hear greedy people described as one "Who would take the nickels off a dead person's eyes." Some younger people probably wouldn't know what that means. Back then, when a person died they were in many cases "laid out" at home. Nickels would be placed on the eyelids of the dead person to keep them shut. There may be such people as that in our day. They would for a dollar support one who is an enemy of the cross of Christ. To them "money talks" but not in the right way. On the better side, we trust there are many who will put Christ first.

VIII. IS MORE GOVERNMENT CONTROL CONDUCTIVE TO SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING?

In the past few decades we have seen a rapid increase in governmental control of society. Along with this government control has been a decrease in religious liberties. Various laws have been passed or court decisions made which give outright approval to things which are diametrically opposed to the teaching of God's word. This involves abortion and the sanctioning of homosexuality, and others.

While working in Ukraine over a period of some three years it became evident that there were virtually no moral standards observed by people in that society. Complete governmental control had existed for most of those people's lives, and believe me it has had a telling effect. That effect has not been for good in any sense of the term.

The male translator which I used most often in Ukraine revealed some interesting information about their moral standards. Abortion was described as being, "No more uncommon than going to the dentist." When asked about prostitution, my translator said: "There is not much need for prostitutes. Most people have their own [woman]."

The thing which stood out most with regard to complete governmental control of a society, was expressed by my translator in the following words: "If people could just come over here and see how it is, they wouldn't want complete government control." I've been flabbergasted that powerful forces in our country would take our country into the very condition from which the Ukrainians are still trying to extricate themselves.

As we approach the election there is one thing which we can mark down and be certain about, relative to more government control. That is, the Vice President, if elected as President, will do his utmost to bring about more rigid control of our society by government. Though he is widely known for his lack of integrity, we can trust him with regard to advocating more

control of our society.

SOME CLOSING REMARKS

Election day is near. A lot is at stake. The sordid moral condition which has swept over our society may be made even worse on the one hand, or on the other hand it could be impeded to some extent. In order for our country to get back to what it was in the 1950s some time will be involved, but unless a start is made now, it may never see those days again. Members of the church have an opportunity to influence the future by supporting those who will pursue policies which are more conducive to the well-being of the cause of Christ. It grieves me greatly that even one of my brethren would turn his back upon Christ by supporting that which is evil.

Let me suggest that on election day the following things be seriously considered when casting your vote: 1) If you believe in the wanton murder of the innocent and unwanted unborn children. 2) If you believe in upholding and encouraging the various shameful forms of sexual perversion. 3) If you believe the government should support, at taxpayers expense, those who are able but too lazy to work, and those who are accountable for a great majority of the illegitimate births. 4) If you believe in dishonesty rather than integrity in our top leader of our land. 5) If you believe in more governmental control of our lives — You should vote for Vice President, Al Gore, and those who stand where he stands. There is one way you can trust him and them, and that is that they will promote a number if not all the above things. This is clearly evident to those who are willing to listen. As Christians we should by all means listen, and then make decisions which are most in keeping with our profession as Christians.

On the other hand, if you are at all serious about living a Christian life, and truly love the Savior who died for you, you will think seriously as you enter that voting booth and pull the lever or press the button. Though as stated earlier, we have no perfect politicians, but who can deny that some are better than others? This idea that “All politicians are alike” is nothing more than a cop out. Vice President Al Gore’s opponent in the presidential race, Governor George Bush, most clearly stands for those moral values which are more in keeping with those values ordained by God. Who can deny it?

Over the past several years I have been deeply hurt and saddened by what is happening to our Lord’s blood-bought church. One of the things which hurts most is that which is happening from within, and about which we are repeatedly warned by inspired men in the New Testament. When I obeyed the gospel nearly fifty years ago, it never occurred to me that I would live to see what I’m now seeing. Right here in the “Bible belt” some are turning their backs upon our Savior by their acceptance of or affinity for denominationalism.

Brethren, let me plead with you to pray for the best outcome in this coming election. Our opportunity to help make this happen will not always be with us, but it is now. Our children, grandchildren and even those yet unborn may well be affected by what happens on November 7th. Please don’t pass up the opportunity to stand up for good, not evil.

Walter W. Pigg

Politics And The Christian *Oil and Water?*

Life is compartmentalized into various realms or spheres such as religion, family, job, economics, and hobbies. For the limited purpose of this article, we simply state the premise: Each area of life is its own well-defined entity with its peculiar parameters and prerogatives of obligation and operation. Let it further be noted that each of these areas naturally coincide at certain points, and just as naturally conflict at certain points. For example, jobs and hobbies can, not only ideally complement family life; they can also interfere with it. The same is true of family and religion.

Our burden will be to deal with how these compartments of life interrelate in general, but in particular, how *two* of these areas interrelate: **religion** and **politics**. By *religion* I mean believing and practicing what God’s Word teaches (e.g. Jas. 1:27). I am using *politics* in the limited democratic sense of support for one party or candidate as opposed to others.

RELIGION, THE DOMINANT FACTOR

The biblical view is that each of life’s compartments, though distinct and unique, overlaps at points with all others; but, the point at which all areas of life converge is right at the point of **religion**.

Think, for example, of four concentric circles representing such areas as economics, job, family, and politics. Being concentric they would each have parts totally different from all others, and they would each have points at which they converged with first one or the other; but they would also all have a common center, which is religion.

The Bible teaches that our religion subsumes all other areas of our lives of only comparative or relative worth; and, it is the governing part of our lives with all others in subjection thereto.

The *profit* of religion in all of life is taught in such passages as First Timothy 4:8. Whereas “exercise” has its peculiar “profit,” such profit is “little” when compared with “godliness [read: religion, AA].” This is because “godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.”

The thrust of the Book of Ecclesiastes is to show that the pursuits and endeavors of men, though certainly not innately evil, yet when undertaken apart from the binding force of true religion, they, rather than effecting satisfaction, instead fill us with a sense of “vanity and striving after the wind” (1:12). The cement of life is “fear God and keep his commandments” which, the Preacher say, is the “whole of man” (12:13).

The *priority* of religion in our lives is seen in Matthew 6:19-34. Having discussed the relative and transient value of life’s physical necessities—“eat...drink...clothe”—, the Lord then ranks “these things” by saying, “seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

The *primacy* of religion over the other compartments of our lives is seen in Romans 13:1-6 and Acts 5:29. One the one hand, a Christian is dutiful, respectful and law-abiding citizen; yet, when what the “rulers” say conflicts with what God says, religion takes jurisdiction for we “must obey God rather than men.”

The *pervasiveness* of religion is maintained in that grand, encompassing passage of Colossians 3:17, “Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed,, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” It’s a poor effort in Bible study that leads one to conclude that this “whatsoever ye do” is limited to what we say in worship. In reality this Scripture is the sweeping conclusion of a point begun in chapter three, verse one. Every area of our lives is subject to the authority principle—“in the name of the Lord.”

CHURCH AND STATE

Religion and government have had a rocky historical relationship. Christianity went from being tolerated in the First Century, suffering intermittent bouts of persecution, to being sought with the intent of extermination early in the 3rd Century. Finally, an apostate church was subsumed within and added to the government, thus becoming the state religion later in the same century. Out of this was born the Catholic Church, both Orthodox and Roman; then, later the Anglican Church. These humanly originated religions were the repositories and incubators for the subsequent birth of Protestantism and its myriad Denominations.

What we know as America largely came to be as a result of people fleeing state-controlled religion and coming to the New World seeking religious freedom. The movement to restore primitive Christianity flourished in this environment, and members of the church of Christ today are beneficiaries of these great historic happenings.

The framers of the American Constitution were careful to establish a system that prevent the creation of a state religion. However, the present prevailing notion about government and religion— “ne’er the twain shall meet”—is far removed from anything the Constitution says. The cry, “Separation of church and state,” is being used to purge God from all public discourse. I’ve been right there in the White House and the Capitol, and I’ve never seen it written, “Before entering leave your religion at the door.” Go to the Jefferson Memorial and you will read some words to the effect [paraphrased], “When I consider that God is just I fear for my country.” This, Jefferson said, in view of the blatant hypocrisy that existed because of slavery. As I recall, it was people of religious conviction that brought pressure to bear in outlawing this social evil, which was in fact already outlawed by the Constitution. It is so ironic that when religious people today object to and push to outlaw the social evil, abortion, they are accused of violating separation of church and state.

How then does a person who believes in and loves God relate this belief and love to his political activity and expression? Does he just ignore it, or turn it off when he goes into the voting booth, or when he supports a party or candidate?

VARIOUS VIEWS OF RELIGION AND POLITICS

With some people, religion is subordinate to politics. You might even say that their religion is another means of expressing their sociopolitical views. These people are humanists and socialists. To them, government, not God, is the true agent of change and improvement, the true benefactor of man. These are they who are concerned, not with salvation from sin and the hope of Heaven, rather, the human condition. These are the “religious” people who sing songs about oppression in Nicaragua, rather than praise to God. They are concerned with nuclear holocaust and not the Second Coming. Not a few of them have “privily” made their way into the Lord’s church. It is this kind of “religion” that results in missionaries having to go about begging for support to preach the gospel of salvation, when literally millions can be raised in a hurry to help hurricane and flood sufferers.

A second view of religion and politics is that of antagonism. It is manifested from two directions. For example, totalitarian governments such as Communist or Fascist regimes, see religion as a competitor and a threat to their power. But, this antagonism can also come from ostensibly religious people themselves. People such as the Amish view government as something to be avoided.

Now a few brethren have essentially taken this same view. Several of our brethren, some quite renowned, have penned treatises the thesis of which is Christians should not be involved in government and politics. When I read of noble First Century brethren who were involved in government, such as the Ethiopian eunuch, Cornelius, the Philippian jailer, Erastus the treasurer; and, when I read that such “powers” or “rulers” are “ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1ff), I just can’t accept this conclusion of inherent estrangement between the Christian and government.

Finally, there are those who live and act as though there is a disconnect between religion and politics. Some are even brethren who say they love the Lord, and who believe in godly and pure living; yet, when it comes time to vote or support a political party or candidate, they seemingly do not allow their religion to have anything to do with their choices and actions.

Is there truly no connection between the two? One might as well argue that there’s no connection between religion and the home; religion and the work place; religion and daily living, as to argue that there’s no connection between religion and politics.

If we lend support to candidates of parties which promote policies which are in direct violation of, or in contradiction to Bible teaching, why are we then not guilty of “bidding God speed” to evil? Let me suggest a few areas of political philosophy and policy that fly in the face of clear Bible teaching.

Abortion. The Bible makes no distinction between pre- or postnatal life. Whether embryonic, fetal, unborn, newborn, or infant, the Greek New Testament refers to them all as *brephos* (Lk. 1:41, 44; 2:12, 16; I Pet. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:15). God knew Jeremiah “before” he was in the womb (1:5). Execution was the punishment for brawling men who caused a woman to give premature birth to a child who subsequently died (Ex. 20:22-24). God still “hates hands that shed innocent blood” (Prov. 6:17). I have heard both Mr. Clinton and Mr. Gore promise to fight for a woman’s “right to choose [abort].” This is a plank in the platform of the Democrats.

Welfare. I have reference here to the government paying people *not* to work. I’m talking about able-bodied, not helpless people. I see them daily even here in my tiny community. I’m talking about the folks that you and I see regularly in Wal-Mart and Kroger who purchase with food stamps things I cannot afford to buy. I’m talking about people, who, when my teenagers mowed grass and flipped burgers, could not “find jobs.” I’m talking about people who wouldn’t hit a lick at a snake.

The Bible says people ought to “labor” (Eph. 4:28). It says, “if any will not work, neither let him eat” (I Thess. 3:10). Contrary to Hillary Clinton’s *It Takes a Village* concept, the Book says that a man should “provide...for his own” (I Tim. 5:8).

Class Envy. The “rich” are regularly excoriated for not wanting to pay “their fair share.” A Christian, and a former elder in the church, once said to me, “Alan, there are people in this country with too much money. I think we should take it from them.” He meant “take” it by means of the tax code. I said to him, “Doesn’t the Bible teach that we are not to ‘covet’ our neighbor’s property (Rom. 13:9; Acts 20:33)? Doesn’t it teach that what belongs to a man is his (Acts 5:4)? Besides, who precisely are the rich?” He did not answer. This class envy thing can come back to bite one. There are many people in this world that would view most of us as “rich.”

Homosexuality. President Clinton’s first serious policy effort was to change the military’s rules toward homosexuals. He has surrounded himself with more than twenty-five avowed homosexuals. Mr. Gore says he intends to go even farther in forcing the military to accept homosexuals.

The Bible says that homosexuality is “vile... - against nature...unseemly [and] error” (Ro. 1:26-27).

The point of this article is not to root for one political party over another. There is no perfect party, and corrupt politicians come in every stripe. It sometimes appears that many, if not most, of them will lie and pander to gain and keep power.

Whereas all sin is equally sinful; yet, it cannot be said that all sin is equal in result or consequence; particularly, social consequence. Both “liars” and “murderers” will go to Hell (Rev. 21:8), but temporally and consequentially speaking, we would surely admit that having one lie against us is not quite as bad as having them murder us. The Bible does teach the many–stripes–few–stripes concept of sin and punishment (Lk. 12:47-48).

It is impossible for us to disconnect our religion from our politics. And, whereas it may some times be a matter of supporting a candidate on the basis that he is “not as bad as the other one,” it is nonetheless a choice that can and must be made. One thing is for sure, people who love God cannot either actively or passively support the sorts of things listed above, which things are indeed the present philosophy and policy of many candidates and their party. As surely as God “joins” a man and woman in marriage, He likewise joins our religion to our political choices. Woe unto the man who thinks he can separate what God has joined together.

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“Righteousness Exalteth A Nation”

Bob J. Henson

It is unfortunate when the leaders of our nation lose their moral compass, but sadly it does happen all too frequently. Seemingly endless allegations have been leveled against America’s chief executive, President Clinton. He has been accused of lying to the American people, lying to Congress, perjury before a grand jury, engaging in illegal fund raising, and various unethical sexual activities, to name a few. It is obvious that he was guilty of some of these things. Others of high office have also acted in shameful ways, to the disgrace of our nation, but such seems only to worsen.

In polls conducted and in on-the-street interviews, people have said in effect that “morals make no difference.!” One woman was heard to say, I don’t care what he does as long as I am doing good. I voted for him once and I would vote for him again.” What a sad commentary. That woman lives by a worldly principle and judged accordingly.

The purpose of this discussion is to focus on the principles to which Christians are accountable. Brethren, we know that few people in high places, including the President, follow the teachings of the Lord. Does that mean, then, that Christians are under no obligation whatever as voting citizens, to follow right principles? Some would have us so believe. But Jesus taught an eternal principle in Matthew 12:30. *“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”* Let’s think about that principle as follows:

Our President stated very plainly, BEFORE his election, just what his views were on Abortion, Homosexuals, the Feminist Movement, Humanistic Education and Morality in general. Nevertheless, and to our shame, many (including some of our brethren) helped elect a man who has since proven what he said. He has surrounded himself with homosexuals, he is a friend to the abortionist, having vetoed two bills which would have outlawed the barbaric practice known as “partial birth abortion.” As for his morals, including sexual, they speak for themselves. At the very best we may not have the caliber of men which are most desirable for public offices. But, it is for certain that we cannot, in the name of political expediency, cast a vote for a thing which is KNOWN to be morally wrong and in so doing, ignore the principles which are to guide every Christian. As a voting Christian, voting for that which is known to be wrong is not an option.

Another election is almost upon us. Sadly, the Vice President demonstrates some of the same undesirable traits of the President. I noted that he has hired a lesbian as his principal campaign advisor. He and his wife, while in the company of a large delegation of homosexuals, expressed their affection and approval of these people and their so-called “life style.” I listened to Mr. Gore as he argued with Mr. Bradley as to which of the two were the most PRO-ABORTION! Imagine that, if you can, that a candidate for President will seek to promote himself as the candidate who is MOST in favor of killing infants in their mother’s womb. And I hear people say quite frequently, even my brethren, that voting for party is “Just politics.” Do you believe that voting for a leader who will not approve legislation to stop the murdering of innocent children in their mother’s womb is JUST POLITICS? I have brethren who so argue, and that’s sad beyond words. I personally believe they know better.

We are soon to have an opportunity to prove ourselves. Where is our allegiance and loyalty? Will the American people once again put party ahead of principle? Just politics? They may. But I hope and pray that we as the Lord’s people may NEVER put PARTY ahead of the Lord’s principles. Indeed, *“Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people”* (Prov. 14:34). Nations that *“forget God”* shall be *“turned into hell”* (Ps. 9:17).

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Viewing Marriage Through A New Set Of Lenses

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Editor’s Note: This article is continued from the August issue of B. O. T. We encourage you to read the first part if you have it in your possession.

Here it should also be added that “adultery” also occurs when people declared to be ineligible by God “marry.” Being ineligible, though they may “marry” in some legal sense, God does not and will not join them. God will not “join” (A) Two people of the same gender (Mk. 10:6); Rom. 1:26-27); (B) A person who was once married but divorced his spouse for some

reason other than fornication (Mt. 19:9); (C) A person who was once married but was put away for some reason other than fornication [Ibid, also Mt. 5:32]; and (D) A person who was once married but was put away because he/she committed fornication (Matt. 19:9).

Put another way, it should be impressed upon all parties—particularly young people—that they may find eligible mates **only** from among: (A) Those of the opposite sex; (B) Those who have never been married to anyone; (C) Those who were once married but whose spouse has died (Rom. 7:1-4), and (D) Those who were once married, but who have put away their former mate because of fornication.

To recap: Sex is “good,” “honorable,” and “undefiled” when it takes place between the *people* and within the *parameter* God has appointed.

3. Sex is good for the purposes God intended, and there are several. There is,

Procreation. It is clear from God’s Word and from His natural laws that God intended the sexual union of a married male and female to be the means by which the human race procreates (Gen. 1:28; I Tim. 5:14). Some think procreation to be the primary purpose behind sex, yet Scripture makes clear that much more is involved. There is also,

Education. By this we mean that in the sexual relationship as ordained by God, there are some valuable lessons to be learned: About—

(A) The nature of man. We are flesh and the appetites, desires and passions of the flesh are natural and wholesome; but flesh is not the sum of man. We are obliged to reign in the flesh and make it subservient to the spirit which itself is to be governed by the will of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 7:25-8:7; compare Gen. 6:1-3). In the Garden, God gave the first couple things, rights, and means by which to satisfy desire. He gave them each other, and in the most intimate human sense they were “not ashamed” (Gen. 2:25). He gave them access to things “pleasant to the sight, and good for food” (Gen. 2:9). The failure of Adam and Eve, and the failure of all their offspring, is that of allowing desires, even needs, to be governed by the Law of God and fulfilled only in the ways He has prescribed.

So in the matter of sex, God has arranged that “each man have his own wife, and...woman have her own husband” (I Cor. 7:25-35 – “distress,” “tribulation,” “time,” “distraction”—and then again verses 1 and 5 show that we must recognize that some things take priority over marital sex. Another point of education in the matter of sexuality is,

(B) Respect. Paul says, “The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife.” Couple this with the fact that “husbands *are* to love their own wives as their own bodies” and that “He that loveth his own wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it” (Eph. 5:28-29). In other words the husband has power over the body of his wife, and she over the body of her husband, yet both are obligated to treat the body of the other as though their own. Each will view the other, not as mere property nor as simply an object through which to satiate oneself; rather, there will be mutual sense of nourishing and cherishing.

Sex is far greater in meaning than just taking a drink of water because one is thirsty, or eating because one is hungry. It involves two unique personalities respectfully, kindly and honorably seeking the good of the other. This, among other reasons, is why young people should guard and preserve their bodies and passions, that one day they will know the beauty of offering this pure and wondrous gift to their soul-mate.

Inasmuch as God has “instructed us about sex, and imbued sex with “purpose,” one such being, “education,” then on the surface we are compelled to conclude that it is more than just a physical function. To be as God intended it, it must bring to bear the will, the intellect, the conscience and the emotions of man. It is tragic, unnecessary, and wrong for parents not having taught their children God’s will on the matter of sex to just let them grow up, get married, and just do their best to figure things out and get by. Besides being educational in such matters as the (A) nature of man, and (B) respect, sex helps educate people in the matter of,

(C) Giving. The Lord has said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35), and the Holy Spirit through Paul has said that among other things, sex is about giving:

Let the husband render unto the wife her due [due benevolence, KJV] and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power over he own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body (I Cor. 7:3-5).

Note such words as: “render” [*didomi*: Of one’s own accord to give one something, to his advantage; to bestow]; “due” [*opheilo*: To owe; in the same sense that we “owe” it to our fellow-man to “love one another,” Romans 13:8]; “benevolence” [*eunoia*: Good will, kindness, heartiness]; “power” [*exousiazdo*: To have power or authority; exercise one’s will over]; “defraud” [*apostereo*: To rob, despoil, deprive]; “consent” [*sumphonos*: Accord, agreement, symphony, harmony].

As in all human relationships marital sex, in order to produce the “good” intended in it by its Creator, must be seen as a two-way street, wherein both parties are concerned not only with their own needs or “advantage,” but also their partner’s.

Parents should and could help their children be prepared for this part of life, not only by open and honest discussion and instruction in light of God’s Word, but also by **not** raising their children in a doting atmosphere where the children learn to be selfish and believe that the world revolves around them. Here, we might add that marital sex is “good” for our learning in the area of,

(D) Mutuality. Marital strife often occurs when one or both parties use sex as a bargaining chip to get their way in other

matters. Such is self-centered and is in clear violation of Paul's inspired teaching on the mutual obligation and privilege of husband and wife (I Corinthians 7:1-9). Jesus taught that we should treat others as we would be treated (Matt. 7:12). This "Golden Rule," if applicable in all areas of life, is most certainly applicable in the area of marital intimacy. Likewise with Paul's teaching that we "each count...other better than himself" (Phil. 2:3).

(E) Loyalty. The concepts of duty and loyalty have taken quite a beating in our overly egalitarian and selfish society. This has manifested itself in marriage covenants freely and without guilt being broken. One of the most horrible lessons a man or woman can teach their children is that of sexual infidelity. Children who see Moms and Dads break their word in this solemn serious part of life stand in great danger of growing up without a sense of honor, duty, and loyalty. Need we even point out the visible results of this? Quite a number of Americans voted to make a man President who was, and is, known to be an impenitent, fornicating, philanderer. Why assume that such a person—though he put his hand on the Bible and swore that he would—would be honorable, loyal, and dutiful toward his presidential obligations?

Early on, children should see in their parents mutual love and loyalty. There should not be a hint—be it through TV, movies, or any action toward another—that Mom and Dad are anything but interested and devoted to the other in mind and body.

Let it also be added here that Moms and Dads should **never** go out in public dressed immodestly. Clothing designed to show skin, to accentuate those parts of the human body which are specifically related to sexuality should never be worn for anyone or any purpose save that of one's own spouse and pleasing him/her. Parents who frequent the beach, or any public place, wearing provocative dress and teach their children to do likewise are helping cultivate a dangerous attitude. They are teaching their children that the human body and human sexuality is something that may be put on display for people other than the one to whom they are married. Paul plainly says, "The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife." Nobody else, much less the public, figures into this formula.

I would suggest the Song of songs as a good place to set forth God's will on romance, love, duty, and loyalty. Briefly, we have in ode form the story of a young maiden who loves and is betrothed to a shepherd. Her brothers perhaps initially oppose the betrothal and send her out to work in the vineyard. No less than the great king Solomon who had women galore cast his eyes upon the beauty of this young woman. Solomon carries her off to Jerusalem and attempts to woo her love with all the splendor, power, and luxury that he had at his fingertips. Her young shepherd even followed her to Jerusalem where she promises him that her heart remains his. Seeing the depth of her loyalty and love for another, Solomon frees her after which she returns to the welcome and commendation of her brothers. Compare this Song to the absolute garbage that presently passes for music about love and romance. How very nauseating to see and hear even elementary school children infatuated with the Spice Girls. Some, in my hearing, have even mentioned Mommy and Daddy taking them to see the Spice Girls' movie. These women trollops. Actively or passively teaching your children that such is good wholesome entertainment is "a sin against a child" (Gen. 42:22). And let me be so bold as to say, I am sick and tired of—whether ignorantly or defiantly: either is inexcusable—Christian parents lending their hand to such "earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. 3:15) doings. In the words of Dr. Laura Schlesinger, "How can you do that." But let us move to consider how marital sex is also educational in the area of,

(F) Control of mind and body. Paul said, "because of fornication, let each have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband" (I Cor. 7:1), and "if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (v. 9). It is clear from his words as to what a force sexual desire is in human beings: "not continency," *akrasia*, want of control; "burn," *puroou*, inflamed with sexual desire. Paul, because of what he called "the distress that is upon us" (v. 26), was concerned that some might be "divided" (v. 34) in their loyalty between Christ and their spouses; yet he recognized the force of passion and said, "It is better to marry than to burn."

But note carefully that it is to be a controlled "burn," that is, within the confines of marriage. For all that is here said about "incontinency" and "burning," yet it is clear that man is likewise equipped with the will to avoid "fornications." "Fornicators and adulterers God will judge" Heb. 13:4).

Marital sex is a blessing from God which limited environment helps us to learn to control both our minds and bodies and not to give ourselves over to "sinful passions" (Rom. 7:5). It helps us to avoid committing "adultery" either in our hearts (Matt. 5:27-30) or in the flesh (Jno. 8:3) either of which will be judged by God.

103 South Willow St.
Cowan, TN 37318

HAS YOUR ADDRESS CHANGED ??

Every month we have quite a number of copies of B.O.T. returned due to a change of address. Since each returned copy represents a cost of about fifty cents, we delete from our mailing list those who do not

send a change of address. We realize that people often forget, but we have no way of knowing whether one has forgotten to send a change of address, or no longer desires to be on our mailing list.

Welcome, New Readers !

What To Take Into The Voting Booth

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34)

Alan Adams, Assistant Editor

This article was written with view toward the 1996 Presidential election. Its premises still hold true.

November 5 is just around the corner. People of various ages and distinctions will enter voting booths and will lend their support to the candidate of their choice. For many people that choice is essentially predetermined: It will be for the political party of their parents, or of their youth; little or no consideration will be given to the candidate, his beliefs, or his character. I have often pondered the irony of Christians who have far more devotion and dedication to political parties than they do the Lord and His church.

In the First Century, the Holy Spirit commanded Christians to “be subject unto the higher powers...[or]...rulers” (Rom. 13:1,3), and to “honor the king” (I Pet. 2:17). He explained that civil government is “ordained of God...[exists by]...the ordinance of God...[is]...the minister of God” (Rom. 13:1,2,4). At that time, the people had no choice as to who or what kind of person(s) would make up their government. I believe that history will bear out that the Roman government of the First Century was headed up by some ruthless and godless men. The Christian can no more sever himself from connection with “rulers” or government than he can sever himself from the “bounds of [his] habitation” (Acts 17:26).

Twentieth Century Christians in the USA are likewise obligated to obey and pay tribute to the “rulers.” Yet we, unlike our First Century brethren, have some power of choice as to who or what kind of person(s) and policies will make up our government. It’s call voting. Our leaders are chosen. The kind of people they are and the policies and laws they will promote are expressions of, and therefore the responsibility of, the people who support them with their votes. In fact, a vote can as much be against a person or an ideology, as it is for the same. That gives us the unique power of expressing, if not support for the one, at least opposition to another that we find particularly abhorrent. Opposing evil is certainly nothing new to the Christian. When we have the opportunity and power to oppose what is ungodly, including the power to vote, we are obligated to so (Jas. 4:17).

“Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34)? As citizens, we are responsible for doing what we can to contribute toward the “righteousness of our nation,” by living our personal lives according to God’s commandments which are “righteousness” (Ps. 119:172), and by using any and every opportunity we have to support what is good and defeat what is evil. Come Tuesday, as you enter the booth, I hope you will think about —

ABORTION. Do you believe it is evil to pull a baby out of his mother’s body, all except the head, make an incision in the base of his skull and then suck his brains out? Our President vetoed a bill that would have outlawed this procedure. He said he was concerned with the health of the mother. That is a lie. This procedure has nothing to do with her health.

HOMOSEXUALITY. Do you believe people of the same gender having sex with one another is “vile” and “unseemly” (Rom. 1:26). In his first official act, our President attempted to make the US military accept homosexuals. He agreed to sign the Defense of Marriage Act passed by Congress. This bill stipulates that “marriage” is to be legally defined as between a man and a woman. However, Mr. Clinton signed the bill at midnight, and even said the whole thing was “gay baiting.”

When you enter the voting booth, you will vote for or against these things and many more. If you choose to remain silent and not vote, you will be tacitly voting for what the Bible condemns.

103 S. Willow St., Cowan, TN 37318

Editor’s note:

Vice Pres., Al Gore, upholds abortion as a plank in his platform. He is also very “pro” homosexual, and uphold much of what Pres. Clinton upholds.

Denominational Fellow-

ship Comes to Murray, KY

For years the two large congregations in Murray have been engaging in liberal practices. As is usually the case, **Liberalism** tends to grow. An example of this got public attention in the *Murray Ledger & Times* of Thursday, September 21, 2000.

A quarter-page ad was carried in the above issue. The title of the ad was: **Jubilee 2000 Revival!**. Services were announced for September 24 - 27, at 7 p.m. Five speakers were named in the ad, along with their subjects. A photo of each speaker was at the left and/or right of their respective subjects and a paragraph of information relative to religious affiliation, education, etc.

The first speaker, Sept. 24, was "Sister Mary Maragret Pazdan, OP." This woman is "Professor of Biblical Studies at the Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Missouri." Her subject: "Jubilee — A Catholic Biblical Perspective."

The second speaker, Sept. 25, was "Reverend Herman Toles," speaking on the subject: "An African-American Baptist Perspective." He "is currently the Shepherd/Founder of the Blessed Hope Missionary Baptist Church in St. Louis, Missouri."

The third speaker, Sept. 26, was "John Dale...the Pulpit Minister at Glendale Road Church of Christ in Murray." His subject: "Living Jubilee in Murray & Calloway County."

The speakers for Sept. 27 were: "Reverends Ann Marie and David Montgomery...the co-pastors with First Presbyterian Church...in Murray." Their subject: "Jubilee — An Ecumenical Perspective."

The above activity took place at the **St. Leo Catholic Church** in Murray.

Another gospel preacher and I were present to hear John Dale speak. A member of Glendale Road said the Glendale elders were present, along with a great many members from Glendale.

This fellowship with the Catholic Church represents another step in liberalism. We will have more to say about this sad event in the future. If this is not a matter of great concern to faithful members of the church, what would be such? - - *Editor*

READERS' RESPONSE

"Bro Ralph Denham gave me a copy of Banner of Truth for July 2000. Enjoyed it much. I would like to be on your mailing list. The info. in the July issue is most revealing of what the Lord's people are facing. Lord, help us! - **Hazel Powell.**" - **OH.** (*We are indeed living in "perilous times." With the Lord's help, we can stand fast in the faith and be victorious - Editor*).

"Please take me off your mailing list - **Joyce Bailey**" - **LA.** (*Thanks for letting us know - Editor*).

"Thanks for sending the extra copies of Banner of Truth concerning Gwen Shamblin. Please accept the enclosed donation toward the expenses of your free publication - **Lydia O Tubbs.**" - **FL.** (*The Nelson Publishing Company has refused to print Shamblin's third book. There has been disagreement in religious circles relative to her position on the "trinity." Shamblin has started her own church, and her religious errors are quite a few. Even so, some of our brethren are bidding "God speed" to her errors by using her program. Thanks for the contribution to help in our work - Editor*).

"Do not send me any more Banner of Truth Newsletters - **Glenn Boyette.**" - **LA.** (*Banner of Truth is not for everyone, and we are thankful when people have the courtesy to let us know they don't want it - Editor*).

"I receive BOT and agree with most of what you write. I noted in a recent article that you refer to the work of the church as being evangelism and benevolence. I also think that is what the Scriptures teach, and like you, believe that entertainment is not the work of the church.

There are a couple of things I would like to ask you. Many churches have van's/busses which are frequently used to transport the elderly and the youth to places of entertainment such as Six Flags or perhaps some type of craft show. Do you feel, in light of the mission of the church, that it is Scriptural for the church to use its money to provide transportation for recreation....**Joseph M. Johnson.**" (*The work of the church includes edification. There is no New Testament teaching that I'm aware of that authorizes the church to provide recreation and entertainment. It appears to me that those churches which do this do not seek a "thus saith the Lord" to authorize the practice. On this basis any number of things can be done which are not authorized. The "Social Gospel" is invading our ranks in an increasing way. Many of the denominations have gone this route in the years past. What they do, many of our brethren often do. The Lord's church is losing its distinctiveness in a great many places; a cause for concern! - Editor*) See p. 15

FELLOWHELPERS

July and August 2000

Maple Hill	200.00
Lou Nell Elkins	50.00
Green Plain church of Christ	100.00
Hornbeak church of Christ	200.00
Alhambra church of Christ	50.00
Anonymous	100.00
William H.C. Miller	25.00
Wanda C. Thompson	50.00
Berea church of Christ	100.00

Durham church of Christ	100.00
The Ridge church of Christ	100.00
Anonymous	225.00
M/M Ron Hutchison	40.00
M/M John H. Brown	50.00
Christiane Coopwood	12.00
Carl T. Bullock	20.00
Betty H. Reed	20.00
Mamie Billadeau	100.00
South Middleton church of Christ	100.00
John Q. Mitchell	15.00
Iva M. Swain	10.00
Royce E. Adams	60.00
Bob & Barbara Jones	10.00
Peggy Jackson	50.00
Charles E. Miller	50.00
Lenard Hogan	50.00
Mildred P. Bryant	30.00
Elizabeth Sublett	10.00
July and August contribution	1,877.00

***“That we might be fellowhelpers
to the truth” (3 John 8)***

Your continued generous support of our part in the Lord’s work is greatly appreciated. We know our work depends upon you, and for you we are sincerely thankful. It is our desire to send personal thanks to everyone who helps in our work but we aren’t always able to do that. Please consider this as our personal thanks in the absence of an individual note.
- - Editor

Banner of Truth Financial Report
July and August 2000

Balance on hand July 1	12,472.70
July & August contribution	1,877.00
Total funds available	14,349.70

July and August expenses:

Mailing <i>Banner of Truth</i> and other postage	1,202.26
Mailing labels	48.74
Ink, developer, other supplies	149.81
E-mail for six months	114.00
Total July & Aug. expenses	1,516.81

Total funds available	14,349.70
Less July & August expenses	-1,516.81
Balance on hand Aug. 31, 2000	12,832.89

Readers’ Response Continued

“I received my first Banner of Truth. I am very glad to get it. I know it contains the truth. I am 83 years old. I have been in the church for over 30 years. I was a Baptist first. I didn’t know there was a church of Christ. As soon as I learned about it I obeyed the gospel. My father was 77 years old and was taught and obeyed. Later my husband obeyed and was saved... - **Christine Coopwood.**” - MS. (*Your example is one that many others should follow. When people are honest with themselves and with God, when the Truth is learned they will be receptive to it and will not make excuses - Editor*).

“Want to send a little something to help with B.O.T. Keep up the good work. I’m so glad some will stay sound - **Pearl Bryant.**” - WA. (*If we are concerned about the well-being of our souls, we can’t afford to be other than “sound.” Thank you for your help - Editor*).

“Just received the July issue of Banner of Truth. I have been getting it for almost a year now and enjoy it very much. I would like to add

a couple of names to your mailing list - **Vernon Bracknell.**" - **IL.**

"Thank you so very much for talking with me and thanks for sending me the extra issues of the March 2000 Banner of Truth. It encourages me to know there are still faithful brethren who stand on the truth of God's word - **Deborah C. Braswell.**" (*Those who stand on the truth of God must encourage each other - Editor*).

"I was just wondering if you had seen or heard about anything of this sort before {A "Day of Praise"}. Is this a "Day of Praise" or a worship service??? It was said to the nation of Israel, "Give us a king that we may be like the nations around us." Now my brethren (?) say, "Give us those things practiced by others that we may be like the denominations around us. Too many places the Lord's church is no longer a distinctive organization. In my home state of North Carolina the congregations that follow "the old paths" are few and far between. The same is rapidly transpiring now here in Virginia. I continue to be thankful for men such as yourself and your publication "Banner of Truth," which keep us informed as to what is happening in the Lord's church. May the Lord continue to bless you with good health and prosperity - **Jimmy R. Canup.**" - **VA.** (*As sad as it is, things similar to what you describe are happening all across our country, and even in foreign countries. I don't know what happened in the "Day of Praise" you mention, but I do know groups known as "Praise Teams" are being used in various places. It seems that many people are no longer satisfied to abide by the plain teaching concerning worship as set forth in John 4:24, by our Lord. There are many instances of our brethren cozying up the denominations. Right here in our home town, the preacher, elders and some members from the largest congregation in Kentucky, Glendale Road, engaged in fellowship with the Catholic Church. Our need to "stand fast in the faith" has never been more urgent in our lives than right now! - Editor*).

Editor's Note: In the Aug. 2000 issue of B.O.T. I discussed an e-mail which I received, bearing the name of Chris George. Since that time I've received an e-mail from a person who said she was the wife of Chris George. She said that she had written most of the letter bearing the name of Chris George. My response in the Aug. issue still stands, whoever the e-mail containing the error came from.

Editor's e-mail: < wpiggbot@apex.net >

B.O.T. can be viewed on bro. David Lemmons' web at: < <http://www.hcis.net/users/ddlemmons/BOTlist.htm> > Readers may get on David's **LemmonsAid e-mail** by sending an e-mail to the address below:

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