

November 2002: Religion and Politics

by Aaron Greenway

In just a few days we will be faced with that tough decision of voting for the “best” candidate in the upcoming elections. This is an interesting day in American life because we have many different issues that are on our minds:

- the education of our children
- homeland security
- war with Iraq
- the economy
- taxes

The question is, who is telling the truth? Who is not? Getting involved in elections is something my parents did for a few years and so I was exposed to politics early on. Also I am an avid listener of Rush Limbaugh and love and support President Bush.

Not too long ago in one of the local, school board elections, I came in contact with one of the candidates through my job. Because the election results were so close between him and the other candidate there was a runoff election. In his promotion he listed his personal endorsements which included educational institutions, or related support. At the end of the list, the last endorsement was from a gay and lesbian organization here in Dallas. The first thought I had was, what does the homosexual community have to do with education or a parent's concern over what their child is learning since that particular contingent cannot have children of their own? What this particular person did was to let the "cat out of the bag" as to what he was really up to. He

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was not concerned about the education of children, but rather the advancement of his own social agenda otherwise his so-called “sexual preference” would not have been an issue. Why would he even quote the gay and lesbian organization as an endorsement when they have nothing to do with what he was running for? Fortunately, he lost to his competitor and hopefully will not run again.

There has been a long standing debate over whether or not the Church of Jesus Christ should get involved in politics? Some surmise, “Since Jesus is coming back, so what difference does it make whether a gay, school board member is elected?” Others say, “Christians are to be salt and light in their communities, so we must get involved and fight the evil in our society.” For obvious reasons Christian parents ought to be concerned about who gets elected to the school board and who is teaching the classes when it seems that most of what the public schools teaches today flies in the face of deep convictions and instruction at home. Also, jobs are always important! If there are no jobs in society, there is no money not even in the church. Everyone becomes affected. Ministries suffer.

The question is, what does the Bible say about such issues? What kind of influence did the people, who lived two thousand years ago, have on the political climate of their day? People such as Samuel, Nathan, and Elijah influenced kings. God even used Israel to overthrow the political structures of other peoples because the leaders of those nations were evil and corrupt. People like Daniel and Esther stood their ground in their beliefs even when it seemed everything was against them. When we get to the New Testament, we find John the Baptist publicly humiliating King Herod and the Apostle Paul pleading his case before Caesar. Believe it or not, there were always politics involved.

While the debate goes on over Church involvement in the political system, I do believe we have a responsibility to at least vote. And when we vote, there ought to be a conscience over which candidate reflects our core beliefs. If we believe aborting little babies is reprehensible, then we will vote for the candidate that holds that same belief. If we hope to secure our borders against more terrorism, then we will elect the person we believe will do the best job!

However, I also believe that a Christian can get so caught up in “public policy” that he/she loses focus on what is really important. What is important? While we have a spiritual responsibility to overcome evil with good, we are also the Bride in waiting. We are the Church awaiting the coming of the Lord Jesus. I know sinful people from both political parties in this country. One is just as lost as the other even if one happens to hold in common my general ideologies. Eternity therefore becomes the issue. The hearts and souls of people become the issue, not the elephant nor the donkey!

When we vote on Tuesday, let us not go with any other intention than to honor the Lord Jesus Christ in our decision. This means putting people in office who are God-fearing people, but it also means that we understand that people are lost and still need Him. If we lose this focus, our politics is meaningless and we have become consumed with something completely earthly. So until King Jesus comes, let us occupy and be faithful to vote.