

# View

## Quarterly Singing Tonight

### Politics & the Christian

BY DAVID POSEY

In the twenty plus years that I have been preaching, I have never used the pulpit or a church bulletin to campaign for a particular candidate for public office. I'm not going to begin now.

However, I believe the view that Christians shouldn't be involved in politics at all is wrong-headed. While we are not "of the world," we are certainly IN the world and a major part of our living in the world is political. To say we should be

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The reason I am  
cautious, though, is  
because the Bible does

not give us a command or example that would urge us to be overly concerned about who is in power. Paul, in his letters, never says anything negative about the Roman government; instead, he teaches us to submit to it (Romans 13).

However, the Bible teaches principles that, if followed by the majority, would serve to change society for the better. If we followed all of Jesus' and the apostles' teachings, there would be no slavery, bigotry, hate, abortion, euthanasia, poverty or any of the other social ills that dominate the conversation each election season.

There is a major difference in our world and the world in which Jesus and Paul lived and that makes politics a live issue for Christians. Our constitution gives us a voice in the governance of our nation though the right to vote. In the age that the New Testament covers, no such right existed. If Jesus and the apostles worked within the context of living in a nation

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Sunday Morning Assembly

9:30 AM

Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM

Wednesday Bible Study

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like ours, I'm convinced there would have been some teaching about what principles to apply when one goes to the voting booth. They may or may not have told their followers to vote for a particular individual, but I'm confident that they would have urged us to apply certain core principles to the decision.

I say that because the "core principles" are found in the New Testament. Paul, for example, spells out what he terms "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21). In that list is "sexual immorality." If we are serious about applying biblical principles to our decision-making process, we will vote for candidates and propositions that take positions that are the least likely to promote sexual immorality. As a practical matter, then, I'll be more inclined to vote for a candidate that believes that the best approach to reducing teen pregnancies is abstinence, not one who condones handing out condoms in high school.

Another core principle is that of marriage. The Bible teaches plainly that marriage is only possible between a man and woman (Gen.

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2:18-25, etc.) and that homosexuality is a sin (I Cor. 6:9-11). So, when the state offers me the opportunity to make my views known on these issues, I'm going to do so. In fact, for Christians in California, this is a no-brainer: I'm going to vote Yes on Proposition 8, the referendum that would clarify the definition of marriage as that between a man and woman. Right now, with the recent court decision, marriage certificates no longer say "bride" and "groom" but "Party 1" and "Party 2." I find that repugnant and will do my part to change it.

Perhaps the most obvious principle taught by the Bible is the principle of life. Throughout the Old Testament, the intentional taking of life calls for the most severe penalty; it is always a capital crime. God hates

murder. In its simplest form, the Bible says "Thou shalt not kill." This is basic. Romans 1 speaks of those who are full of murder as those with a

"debased mind" (vv. 28-29).

If we adhere to that principle, for whom will be pull the lever in the voting

booth? It makes sense that the only logical choice is the candidate who supports life; today, we call that "pro-life" while others are termed "pro-choice." Pro-life candidates are the only ones who will support the rights of a child; pro-choice candidates favor the choice of the woman over the rights of the unborn child.

Before we send in our ballot or pull the lever, we should ask, what would Jesus do? No candidate will always do what Jesus would do. But they will do some of what he would do, and we ought to vote accordingly on those issues we deem most significant. I do not believe I can sit on the sidelines and let others determine which leaders we put into office when I have power to speak, through the privilege of voting.

# The Politics of Crookedness

BY BERRY KERCHEVILLE (FOCUS MAGAZINE, NO. 101)

We will elect a new president next month. For most of us this is a time of hope and a time of fear. Hope that the future will hold for our nation and us something better than what we have had in the past. We hope for justice and moral uprightness to prevail. We dream of leaders who will believe and stand for what is right and act with courage and godliness. Most of all, we pray for leaders who will simply allow us to be free to serve the God we love. Upon these principles every Christian should agree. But we also have fears that the new president will encourage wickedness and corruption: "Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child, and your princes feast in the morning!" (Eccl. 10:16). And then the Preacher describes the philosophy of such rulers: "Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life, and money answers everything" (Eccl. 10:19). Unfortunately, many political speeches embody this philosophy. "Do you need food and the finer things of life? We will give it to you! Do you have problems that need solving? We will throw money at it!"

The Preacher gives us an answer to the contrast between these hopes and fears: "Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him" (Eccl. 7:13-14). Notice that God has made things crooked and there isn't anyone who can straighten what He has made crooked. The Preacher isn't saying God has caused people to be wicked or unjust.

But God has placed us in a life where He allows such to go on. In fact, God intended for us to live in a world where crookedness would prevail. It is an evil frustration, and our political season seems to exacerbate it.

But regardless who is elected president, here is what the future holds: there will be days of prosperity and there will be days of adversity.

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The best of presidents will not stop adversity and the worst of presidents will not permanently stop prosperity. Every person who thinks otherwise is foolishly exalting the power of men to a level "beyond their pay-grade." The Preacher describes this boastful ruler: "A fool also multiplies words. No

man knows what is to be; who can tell him what will be after him? The labor of fools wearies them, for they do not even know how to go to the city!" (Eccl. 10:14-15).

So what should the godly man do? In the day of prosperity, be joyful. It is a gift from God. Tomorrow may be different, so enjoy what God has given you today. That's nice. But in the day of adversity consider. Consider what? Consider that God has made both kinds of days so that we cannot find out what will happen tomorrow. Why wouldn't God want us to know what will happen tomorrow? Because not knowing will cause us to turn to Him. If we knew what would happen, we would trust ourselves to change what we didn't like. We would be in control. But we do not know. Therefore the righteous person will trust God, not themselves, and not the next president of the United States.