

## Reflection on the Election

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I am a conservative, when it comes to American politics. That means I want to conserve or preserve our Judeo-Christian foundation of law, the ideals of limited government and individual freedom, along with personal responsibility, and a free-market capitalism that pays as it goes. I want the judiciary branch of government to interpret our Constitution from a philosophy of “framers’ intent,” not from an activist philosophy based on evolutionary philosophy.

I oppose liberalism because it represents the opposite of what I have just stated. Now that a liberal has been elected president, some have asked for my analysis. In the words of Psalm 11:3, “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

This is a rhetorical question and does not imply that the righteous are helpless. The following verse declares that the Lord is in His holy temple and on His throne. The “throne” symbolizes his sovereignty and authority. God did not lose the election nor get voted out of office. He still rules and reigns.

The question is, What should be the agenda of the righteous? For too long our agenda has been to do nothing. For more than a hundred years the prophecy experts have been predicting that we would be leaving this earth soon and so we assumed we did not need to plan ahead. Thankfully, we are beginning to realize that at least we have a responsibility to vote. But we have a far greater responsibility than just voting. Today, many of the righteous get concerned about the direction of their nation every four years. But if things are ever turned around in America, it is up to the righteous to do the turning. If the erosion of our national foundation is halted and reversed, it will be up to the Church to act as salt and light.

Our faith cannot be placed in politicians of either party who give lip-service to our values in order to get elected. We may never see another truly conservative elected as president unless we start defining and defending the values which we want to conserve.

Has America turned liberal? Not entirely. Some traditional values still remain. California, which is considered a liberal state, voted to uphold the traditional meaning of marriage which has existed over the last six thousand years. Are we then becoming conservative? I think we are still in the valley of decision.

The reason we did not elect a conservative president in this election is because we did not have one running in either of the major parties. John McCain was elected to the Senate in 1986, replacing Barry Goldwater. But McCain’s relationship with the Christian Right soon soured. McCain then blamed the Christian Coalition for his defeat in the 2000 primaries, denouncing both Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell. Finally Falwell reached out to McCain in 2005 and McCain decided that Falwell was not “an agent of intolerance,” as he had previously stated. McCain also targeted religious broadcasters with proposed legislation that would have put them at a real disadvantage.

I am not implying that any candidate must have Robertson’s or Falwell’s seal of approval. I am saying that McCain was a maverick/moderate who had worked with liberals in Congress and that he never really adopted conservative rhetoric until after the 2008 primaries. There were some promising conservative ideals espoused during the primary season, but after the conservatives were shut down those ideals were dropped from the Republican agenda.

Nor am I happy that McCain’s second wife, Cindy, was the heir of a multimillionaire who made his fortune from his distributorship of Anheuser-Busch. “Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors” (Habakkuk 2:15). I guess it would still be wrong, if you sold the beer and then used that money to finance your husband’s campaign. I did vote on November 4 and I did not vote for McCain, I voted against Obama and for Sarah Palin.

McCain lost because he was a tired, old career politician who was running against a

charismatic young leader. It was a rerun of Dole vs. Clinton. I did not vote against Obama because of his race or even his party affiliation. I voted against him because I disagree with his liberal philosophy. I believe Obama is every bit as much a Christian as is McCain.

The two people who are most responsible for getting Obama elected are John McCain and George Bush. Most people who voted for Obama still do not know what they voted for. All they know is that they did not want more of the same. Yes, I voted for Bush and I think he may have done some good with regard to national defense. But his economic policies have been extremely liberal. He has presided over massive governmental growth and he utterly failed with regard to the recent financial collapse. How could a Clinton or Obama have done any worse? Bush presided over a \$700 billion dollar bank bailout. His policies are anything but conservative, free market, or limited government. Mr. Bush never used the “bully pulpit” he had to advocate conservative values.

Our “conservative” leadership has failed us repeatedly. It was President Eisenhower who appointed Earl Warren as chief justice of the Supreme Court in 1953. And it was Warren who began the systematic process of dismantling our foundation, in throwing prayer and Bible reading out of our public schools.

It was President Reagan who promised, if elected, that he would abolish the Department of Education as unconstitutional. After elected, he abandoned his promise. Today DOE regulations are about to strangle the life out of the small, conservative Bible colleges, such as the one at which I serve. I still believe Ronald Reagan was the greatest president in my lifetime. All I am saying is that he dropped the ball on that issue and we conservatives have been paying a high price ever since.

In many cases, we have elected Republicans who used conservative rhetoric to get elected and then continued to advance the same liberal agenda after their election — even if it was advanced at a slower pace. While “change” is a postmodern buzzword, we have not had any change. We have simply replaced a liberal Democrat with a liberal Republican. The liberals have maintained a consistent devotion to their agenda, while we have let them set our agenda as well. If the faces of Kerry, Clinton, and Gore show up as Obama’s nominees, there will not be any substantial change; there will simply be an acceleration of the liberal agenda. And so, what can the conservative do?

1. We must live righteous lives. It is not enough to be conservative. A conservative can go to hell as quickly as a liberal. Since the days of Moral Majority, the problem with some conservative leaders has been that they did not practice what they preached. The conservative movement has been plagued with numerous scandals which has resulted in our convictions being discredited. We must lead by example. Perhaps the Lord has given us the next four years to get our own house in order.

2. We have a biblical mandate to pray for our elected officials, including President-elect Obama. If the candidates we supported did not do us that much good, perhaps a candidate we feared will not do us that much harm. According to Daniel 2:21, it is the Almighty who removes kings and raises up kings. He also gives wisdom. Let us pray that he will give wisdom to Mr. Obama. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes” (Prov 21:1).

3. We must avoid fear mongering and unsubstantiated claims. I will undoubtedly disagree with some of the decisions made by our new president and, as an American, I still have freedom of speech. But I will not attack the president because of his race or suggest that he is part of some vast left-wing conspiracy. There is no need to link him to radical Islam or identify him as the Antichrist. I may disagree with his policy, but I will respect him personally. To attack him at these levels will only serve to discredit our cause. The press portrays evangelicals as a right-wing political movement that seeks to control the lives of others. But we are not in control; God is. The only weapon he gave us is Truth and the only way we can change anything is through the power of persuasion. And our hypocrisy often speaks so loudly the world cannot hear our message. We must show our neighbor a better way or else we will be discredited and ignored.

4. We must provide a positive alternative. We cannot ever expect to elect a conservative unless we have one running. And he or she cannot get elected unless there is a groundswell of conservatism in America. They will not learn conservatism through public education. Why should we be surprised that Obama won? The answer is not some deep, dark conspiracy. Obama's victory is simply proof that our tax dollars are hard at work. Obama is articulating the philosophy which public education has espoused for generations. We must start teaching Judeo-Christian ethics, limited government, freedom, and economic conservatism in our local churches. It will not get taught anywhere else.

And yet, my concern is that the average church member cannot even articulate the Gospel, much less a comprehensive biblical world view. In my opinion, the average church member needs two things: many need to be truly saved and most need to learn what the Bible teaches about bringing every realm of life under the lordship of Christ.

I have pastored for thirty years and my biggest obstacle has always been unregenerate church board members. While I have been very involved in taking a public stand on moral issues, I was often humiliated by the way some of my members acted. If we are ever going to reverse the erosion of our national foundation, it will begin with a real, honest-to-goodness, revival among the churches of America. Some who are even conservative will need to get right with God, if they are to have any influence. A holy church, filled with righteous members, is a force for good that can change the world. Early Methodism believed and taught that the millennium would be ushered in when the people of God started practicing what they preached. Of course, we know nothing of doctrine today. Church is all too often simply about making people feel good. There is as much sin in the church, as outside it.

After the conservative crowd gets right with God, then we need to teach them a biblical world view. We need a new generation of pastors who will preach the whole counsel of God. That means we need Bible colleges that will train a new generation of Christian leaders. The Republican party will not save us.

Yet too many Christian colleges are advancing the same liberal agenda as the state institutions. There are only a few Bible colleges left and they must be supported financially. Along with the local church, the Bible college must become counterculture. We do not need their accreditation. It will be up to us to lay the foundation for a new Christian conservatism.

At this point we can learn something from the liberals. They have established trust funds, foundations, and endowments which perpetuate their cause. The best and the brightest are then offered scholarships, which results in a failed liberal agenda being passed on to another generation. Often they never encounter the conservative alternative, because we are not out there in the marketplace of ideas. There are relatively few conservative Christian scholars who are giving an intellectual defense of our faith. And those who are trying must find an independent source of income.

There are a few prophets left who know God's agenda for His Church. But there is not yet any market for such preaching or teaching. Most of these prophets are driving school buses, constructing houses, or teaching school in order to make a living. We cannot beat something with nothing. We will never beat liberalism until we start putting our money behind our mouth.

There are still some who understand the times and know what America must do. When you get ready to hear the truth, send one of these men or women enough gas money to get to your church and then start bombarding heaven for a heaven-sent revival that will rebuild the foundations of our republic. The alternative is more of the same.