

The Voting Christian

By Doug Hamilton

I don't know about you, but to me this is the most exciting Presidential election of my lifetime!

- We are virtually guaranteed that there will be a woman vice-president or a black President. This is exciting because blacks and women were not allowed to even vote for President until 1870 and 1920 respectively. We are here for this great moment of history.
- The stakes are very high for us all. The world is growing ever so hostile against Christianity. Our country has changed in a way that is not spiritually healthy. In locations all over the world, Hindus, Muslims, communists and humanists are plotting to destroy the wholesomeness of the Bible and God's people.
- The last two Presidential elections have been so close, indicating a great clash of a traditional culture and the post-modern age. This election does not seem any different in that respect.
- The Internet, cellular communication, television and media has made it possible for the average person to be able to do research far beyond what we could have in the past. With a couple of strokes of the keyboard, we can do more detailed research.
- We are at the threshold of many crucial national decisions that will determine whether we as a nation can survive. Who we choose as our leaders will influence these events.

With such a huge event as the Presidential Election upon us, I would like to take a few weeks and address some thoughts to better prepare us. The title of the series is *The Voting Christian* and deals with just that, making sure we use a Christian conscience when we pull that lever. We all have a conscience, for God has put that in us. Our decisions in this life ultimately affect the workings of our conscience, either convicting or condemning us as a result.

- When David cut the edge off Saul's robe in 1 Sam 24:5, David's conscience bothered him for he had done wrong.
- Paul told the Council in Acts 23:1 that he had lived his life in such a way so as to have a good conscience. He went on to say that he strived for a "blameless conscience in Acts 24:16.
- He told Timothy concerning his instruction of the Ephesians in 1 Tim 1:5 "...the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." He reminded Timothy in 1 Tim 3:9 to have a "clear conscience" in the way that he lived.
- Paul reminded in 1 Tim 4:2 that some actually "sear" the conscience like a branding iron burns the skin through their hypocritical living. He said in Titus 1:15 that the same type of people can defile their conscience through their unbelief.
- Peter reminds the Christians that it is at the point of baptism that their conscience was cleansed by the resurrection of Christ. The Hebrew writer adds in 9:14 that our walk is in direct relationship to this "cleansed" conscience.

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I bring this up to you because no matter what we do in this life, no matter where we go, we cannot outrun our conscience. It is always going to be there convicting or condemning us. This includes our decisions in marriage, parenting, employment, friendships and yes, even VOTING. I am firmly persuaded that it is in the best conscience of the Christian to Biblically educate and vote his or her conscience.

The aim of this series is not to convince you of a candidate and not to tell you what you need to think, but to allow you to pick the best candidate as a result of Biblically thinking in your decision. We as Christians are to allow the Bible to weigh in our spiritual, emotional, physical, financial, marital and parental decisions. Is it not reasonable to apply the same to the selection of our leaders? This was the intent of the Founding Fathers when the nation you so dearly love was set up in the first place.

The Founding Fathers saw the need to elect men of faith.

- John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, a co-author of the Federalist Papers and one of the nations Founding Fathers clearly stated *"Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers."*
- Ben Franklin: *"History will also afford frequent opportunities of showing the necessity of a public religion... and the excellency of the Christian religion above all others, ancient or modern."*
- JOHN QUINCY ADAMS -6th President of the United States *"The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected, in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."*
- Patrick Henry: *"This nation was not founded by religionist, but by Christians. It was not founded by religion, but by the gospel of Jesus Christ."*

The Founding Fathers were men of faith.

- George Washington:
 - Inaugural Address: 1788 "The smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which heaven itself ordain."
 - Inaugural Address: 1788 "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."
 - Farewell Address: 1797 "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are inseparable supports, indispensable. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in the exclusion of religious principle."
- John Adams -2nd President of the United States *"It is religion and morality alone which can establish upon which freedom can securely stand. A patriot must be a religious man."*
- Thomas Jefferson - 3rd President of the United States, writer of the Declaration of Independence *"Christianity is best friend to government because it is the only religion in the world that deals with the heart."*

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- James Madison -4th President of the United States “We have staked the whole future of our American civilization, not on the power of government, but far from that, but on the capacity of each and every one of us to govern ourselves by the Ten Commandments.”
- James Monroe -5th President of the United States "The liberty, prosperity, and the happiness of our country will always be the object of my most fervent prayers to the Supreme Author of All Good."
- John Witherspoon -signed the Declaration of Independence and served on over 100 congressional committees, American clergyman, educator, and statesman, born near Edinburgh, and educated at the University of Edinburgh.... member of the Continental Congress (1776-79, 1780-82), he signed the Declaration of Independence. He was also a delegate to the New Jersey convention of 1787 that ratified the U.S. Constitution. (Encarta Electronic Encyclopedia) “*The best friend of liberty is the one most sincere in promoting religion. Whoever is an avowed enemy of God I don’t hesitate to call him an enemy of America.*”

The Early Laws reflected this.

- Massachusetts Constitution- Any person chosen governor, or lieutenant-governor, counselor, senator, or representative, and accepting the trust, shall before proceed to execute the duties of his place or office, take, make and subscribe the following declaration, viz. “I, _____, do declare, that I believe the Christian religion, and have a firm persuasion to its truth.” (Constitution of Massachusetts Bay. pg 44. Chapter 6, Article 1)
- Delaware Constitution - “I, _____, do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed forever; and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.” (Constitutions. 1785. pgs 99-100. Delaware. 1776. Article 22)
- Article I and III of the Northwest Ordinance, the standard for acceptance of a territory into the union:
 - Article I states: “*No person, demeaning himself in a peaceable and orderly manner, shall ever be molested on account of his mode of worship or religious sentiments, in said territory*”.
 - Article III states: “*Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.*”

There are countless quotes and historical records that could be quoted concerning this, but I think you get the point. We must understand that with this freedom of being able to choose our leaders comes the responsibility and privilege to select the BEST choice before us. With that in mind, we are going to cover a number of issues that should be important in the Christian as they vote. I am not going to discuss a single politician and what they stand on, but I will be discussing what the Bible says concerning issues that we are face as a Christian in our nation on a daily basis. These topics are 1) Abortion, 2) Education, 3) Marriage, 4) Fiscal Responsibility, 5) Religion and 6) Personal Life.

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Before actually entering these topics of Biblical discussion, it is necessary to have part one of this series... *“Simple Understandings of the Voting Christian”*.

Simple Understandings of the Voting Christian

A. We are privileged to live in a country that we can choose our leaders.

There are many places in the world that do not allow their people to choose their leaders.

- Even though the Iraqi people voted in elections for years, did you think it odd that Saddam Hussein won 100% of the vote year after year? Of course that was a rigged election.
- In China, the most populated country in the world, do you think they would want to be able to choose their leaders in a democracy like ours? Do you think the average person would opt for communism?
- What about all the shariah law countries of the Middle-East that housed the Taliban, oil-princes and dictators? Do you think they would love to have a say in their government leaders? Of course they would, but they do not.
- I know that our country has problems, but how would you like to have your power of electoral voice taken away? How would you have liked to been in the Soviet Union as Stalin closed the churches, shipped the religious people to the Siberian prison camps and killed millions of objectors to communism?
- We as Christians can unite in this auditorium this morning over the joy in our hearts that God has allowed us to be in this country. While much of the world really does not have a say in the selection of their leaders, you do! While much of the world could end up in prison or dead for desiring a say in their government, we have a freedom afforded to us that we often are not appreciative for here.
- We should be thrilled at this, not saddened by it. The Founding Fathers were happy about this situation for it is engraved on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia *Lev 25:10 “...proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof...” (KJV)*

B. We are not always going to agree when there is choice.

- One of the great privileges in Christianity is that fact that we have so many choices within spelled-out parameters.
 - We can eat what we wish just so as we are not gluttonous nor a stumbling-block to others.
 - We can work where we want as long as it is not illegal and harmful to society, soul or self.
 - We can live where we want as long as we can afford it, tolerate it and appreciate it.
 - We have so many choices that add to the variety of life that God has put before us. All He asks is that we put Him first when making these decisions.

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- We also select the leader of our choice. If we desire to vote for one candidate over another, that is our right and God has given it to us as citizens of this country.
- We may think we are in complete control in a democracy, but it is God in reality. *Rom 13:1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.*
- If the people choose poorly, it is because they are about to choose their own punishment. If they choose wisely, it is for their blessing. God allows in a democratic government for the people to either choose their punishment or blessing. *Deut 30:19 "...I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,* Our system has in it the natural consequences.
- We should not be critical of anyone that carries out this right for that would call into question the very One that gives this right.

C. We are to always allow our church family to enter the politics.

- We were told by Jesus in Matt 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty {again} It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 "Nor do {men} light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.
- He said in Matt 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the
- We are told that Acts 8:4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.
- The apostles shared this gospel with everybody from the cripples, the widows and orphans to the governors, the leaders and even the Jewish Supreme Court.
- Paul, who was not ashamed of the gospel (Rom 1:16), led jailors to Christ while imprisoned, led observers to Christ while rioters rebelled and convinced Jews who eagerly sought for the Messiah to turn to Christ. Even while chained up under house arrest, he influenced Caesar's hand-selected Praetorian Guards that watched over him. *Phil 1:13 so that my imprisonment in {the cause of} Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else..."* He would close that letter to the Philippians saying in 4:22 *All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.* Paul was an equal opportunity influencer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, from the beggar in the street all the way to the Emperor's palace.
- The church was designed to go into all areas of the world and all areas of life and influence all souls with the one gospel of Jesus Christ. Politics is no difference when we step into the voting booth. We need to vote in a

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way that reflects the values of Jesus. The church family should always be allowed to enter the politics.

D. We are to never allow politics to enter the church family.

- We must never allow our politics to come into the church family no matter how strong we feel about it. This is one of the many issues that I am thrilled about with concerning the Churches of Christ. We traditionally keep the politics out of our assemblies.
- A while back, I was in a Bible study and there was an individual from a denominational group in attendance. She liked our teachings and our people, but was reluctant to start attending our congregation. When I asked her about this, she stated that it was because she was a democrat and Church of Christ members had to be Republicans. She said that switching parties was not an option for her.
- I was in shock when she said that because nothing could be further from the truth. I told her that was not true and I do not know where she concluded this. I told her that the churches of Christ take great strides to keep politics out of the church family. I reminded her that while many in the denominational world are inviting politicians into their pulpit the campaign, our congregation would never let that happen, for they have no place winning hearts and souls over to a candidate. I am absolutely confident that if Barack Obama or John McCain requested permission to come and speak to our congregation, they would both get a thumbs-down by our eldership and nearly everyone else.
- When we are here as a church family, we are here to draw closer to God through our worship, our fellowship and
- We cannot nor should not nor will not allow politics to enter into our church family.

E. We are all in agreement that Jesus Christ is first in our lives.

- Though we are privileged to have a hand in our election, though we won't always agree, though we influence the politics and resist the politics from influencing back, WE ARE TO ALL BE IN AGREEMENT THAT JESUS IS FIRST IN OUR LIVES.
- We are in agreement about the most important issue of all, that Jesus Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of Lords!
- We are the people that come to the aid of one another, pray for one another, encourage one another, help one another and would be willing to lay down our lives for each other!
- It does not matter if you enter the voting booth selecting a Republican ticket, Independent ticket or Democratic ticket, but if you have entered the waters of baptism and voted Christocrat! We are the people that voted for Jesus Christ to be Lord of our life, the Savior of our soul and hope to come! We are the Christocrats and that is exciting!