



"We have staked the future of all our political constitutions upon the capacity of each of ourselves to govern ourselves according to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments."
—James Madison

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A Polluted National Landscape

Midterm elections will take place across America next Tuesday. Democrats are licking their chops, confident that they will win back the House of Representatives (most analysts are saying they will win twenty seats from Republicans) and perhaps the Senate (it will probably be close). History shows us that the party in power often loses midterm elections in a sitting president's second term. Only Franklin Roosevelt held serve, yet that event occurred when Democrats dominated the Senate, holding more than eighty seats.

Church of the Great [God](#) is strictly apolitical. We do not endorse any party or any candidates, and we teach that those whom God has called do not have authority to vote. Christians, whom the Bible describes as "the called" or "the elect," have their citizenship in heaven ([Philippians 3:20](#)), so they are strangers and foreigners even in the land of their birth. Just as illegal aliens have no right to vote in U.S. elections, so are true Christians banned from casting a ballot. "No one," says our Lord and Savior, "can serve two masters" ([Matthew 6:24](#)). It is a matter of loyalty.

Nevertheless, our apolitical stance does not restrict us from commenting on the political scene, especially when the government and its representatives cross the lines of morality and justice. Unfortunately, these lines are crossed all the time, giving us plenty of fodder for crying aloud and sparing not ([Isaiah 58:1](#)), a responsibility of God's ministers. Like the prophets of old, it is part of the duty of the ministry to point out where this nation has left the true path and offer godly suggestions for restoring Christian values to public and private life.

The scene today, just days before the nation goes to the polls, contains a plethora of targets for criticism. From mistakes in handling the war in Iraq to foot-dragging on solving the illegal immigrant crisis, from sex scandals to campaign finance violations, from poorly worded "jokes" to biting negative campaign ads, the national political landscape is strewn with controversy, immorality, and foolishness. We can blame these black marks on politicians, who indeed carry a large part of the blame, but that is missing the point. The political landscape is marred because our society at large is sick, from top to bottom, or as Isaiah puts it so much more eloquently: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and putrefying sores" ([Isaiah 1:5-6](#)).

Isaiah is not speaking, of course, of physical bruises and disease but of spiritual and thus of cultural decay at work. He sees the nation as a body made up of many individuals (much as Paul describes Christ's body, the church, in I Corinthians 12), but because so many of the individuals are spiritually weak and sick, the nation itself is diseased throughout. The head, which he describes as "sick," represents the leadership, while the heart represents the patriots, those who work for the good of the country—and even it is "faint" or weak and faltering. Beyond these two critical areas, every part of the body from sole to pate is unsound. The prophet describes a sorry, almost hopeless condition.

So the old adage is true: "People get the leaders they deserve." While the politicians may be constantly in the public eye, and their indiscretions thus become front page news, they are not altogether unlike their constituents. Can we claim that no voter has ever had a homosexual tryst? Is it possible that no voter ever took some money under the table to smooth the way for a deal? Certainly, no voter has ever hired an illegal alien to sweeten his bottom

line! Or evaded paying his taxes. Or smoked pot or snorted cocaine. Or voiced an ethnic slur. Or dumped some engine oil down the sewer, etc. No, even beyond the all-important issues, politicians reflect those who back them.

The liberals are fond of another saying: "Think globally. Act locally." It is a common mantra of environmentalists, who urge individuals to clean up their own acts, their own properties, as the best place to start to reform the whole world. The saying contains a true principle: A person can only change himself, and if we desire a large-scale transformation of behavior for the better, many individuals will have to resolve to change. Right now, the momentum of societal behavior runs steeply downhill toward degeneration and immorality. To shift that momentum back toward morality and Christian values will take a massive effort, one that may be beyond America's ability to achieve.

But it will certainly never even get started if Christians themselves do not live for all their worth according to God's standards ([Matthew 19:17](#)). We cannot rely on being joined by thousands of fellow citizens, let alone millions of conservative Americans, in a counter-cultural revolution. We cannot expect media pundits and political leaders to lead the charge back up the hill toward decency and civility. We cannot hope that the fight to return justice, honor, and true freedom to the American character will be swift and easy—in fact, it may well be hopeless. Yet, despite the lack of expectation for society in general, the effort itself is noble and worthwhile to each individual who undertakes it because of the personal transformation it effects ([Romans 12:2](#); [II Corinthians 3:18](#)).

Politics is dirty, and because it involves the quest for temporal power, it has always been a nasty business. A moral society can keep this distasteful institution in check by sheer weight of influence, but when society itself is rolling in the gutter, politics has free rein to run roughshod over anyone and anything in its way. As Solomon says, "By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked" ([Proverbs 11:11](#)). The next few years will prove whether the upright or the wicked will prevail.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Why We Do Not Vote](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Events indicate that this nation is rapidly deteriorating because of unrighteousness and vile, pernicious liberalism. As tempting as the prospect appears, voting by Christians does not fall into the category of righteous judgment. We have been called out of this world with its political institutions, having no meeting of the minds with those not having God's Holy Spirit. Our citizenship in the Kingdom of God makes us pilgrims in the physical country in which we live. Like ambassadors of a foreign government, we cannot participate in the politics of another country, which would distract us from our spiritual duties.

From the Archives: Featured Article

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by David F. Maas

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