



"Whoever shall introduce into public affairs the principles of primitive Christianity will change the face of the world."
—Benjamin Franklin

10-Nov-06

What If ... ?

Over the past year I have read three books by science fiction author Harry Turtledove. He is well known in science fiction circles as the current master of the alternate history novel. For example, in one book, *Gunpowder Empire*, he tells the story, set in our modern world, of life under a Roman Empire that never declined and fell. In another, *Ruled Britannia*, he sets out a scenario for Elizabethan England conquered by the Spanish Armada. In a third, *The Guns of the South*, he ponders just what might have happened if the Confederacy had been victorious in the Civil War. They make for interesting, if not escapist, reading.

As we watch historic events take place, it is easy to fall into the habit of wondering, "What if. . . ?" What if the Soviet Union had invaded Western Europe after Berlin fell during World War II? What if Douglas MacArthur had gotten his way in Korea? What if John F. Kennedy had not been struck down by an assassin's bullet? What if Richard Nixon had played things square and fair? What if American forces had won in Vietnam? What if Jimmy Carter's botched rescue attempt during the Iranian Hostage Crisis had instead been successful? What if Ronald Reagan had been killed by John Hinckley? What if Gorbachev had not torn down the Berlin Wall? What if

Bill Clinton had responded with force to the 1993 bombing of [the World Trade Center](#)? What if Al Gore's chads had given him the presidency in 2000? What if Iraq's Republican Guard had put up a real fight against the Coalition of the Willing? What if, what if, what if!

The mainstream media is portraying the 2006 midterm elections as a historical event of like proportions to those just mentioned. They are treating it as a world-changing event, the likes of which we have never experienced in our lifetimes. It is the second American Revolution! It means sweeping change for America! The Iraq quagmire will be solved! The world will [love](#) the United States again!

Does it mean these things? Hardly. Let's not be oversold. But what if the Republicans had not lost?

Most of us have heard the expression, "There's not a dime's worth of difference between the parties." This is not really true. There is a great deal of difference between the parties, as one covers the vast expanse of the far-left to the center of the political spectrum, while the other holds the equally vast far-right to the center. In other words, the parties are two very large tents, within which are wide-ranging differences in ideology and approach. For instance, the Republican tent includes not just anti-sodomy evangelicals, but also Log Cabin Republicans, a group of homosexuals who support the party's fiscal policies. In the same way, the Democrat party houses both patriotic American soldiers and anti-war zealots. Looked at this way, it is a too general statement to say that Democrats are liberal and Republicans are conservative.

However, each party has a solid base, and it is here that the labels "liberal" and "conservative" can be applied to Democrats and Republicans respectively. On the Democrat side, the liberal base supplies the party with its bread-and-butter issues: minority rights, entitlements, increasing taxes, multiculturalism, cutting military spending, and the like. For Republicans, the conservative base calls for a strong military, reining in federal spending, smaller government, reducing taxes, privatization of Social Security and health care, strong foreign policy, etc. These general aims bob to the surface in just about every election.

One would think that, all things being equal, if a politician would support all the major ideals of his party's base, he would garner plenty of votes to win whatever office he desired. The problem is that not all things are equal. Essentially, each party's base matches the other party's base, but the great mass of people on either side of those bases is large enough to swing an election either way. Ergo, a politician will have difficulty winning, especially a national election, by clinging to the principles of his party's base. In other words, he must campaign as a moderate, a centrist, while giving lip-service to his base. This strategy has worked splendidly for every winning Presidential candidate since the 1988 election.

So, what if the Republican party had managed to hold on to both the House and the Senate on Tuesday? From this perspective, *very little would have changed*. Only a few true conservative Congressmen and women were voted out of office, and very few truly liberal ones were voted in. In essence, there was an exchange of moderates in our nation's most august chambers, the only difference being a few more blue jerseys than red ones. At least one pundit at a major news organization has speculated that in order to win, Democrats had to run more conservative candidates to beat sitting Republicans, thus Congress may actually be *more* conservative now than before! However, the Congressional leadership is almost entirely liberal, so the legislation that will come up before both Houses will likely reflect liberal ideology.

In effect, the American people voted for the status quo but with a liberal lean, whereas before it was canted conservatively. Unless a major crisis ensues, this should not produce too great of an effect on American culture and morality over the next two years due to the almost certain gridlock that will overcome Washington under a narrow Democratic majority and lame duck George W. Bush.

The real prize, the 2008 Presidential election, will more clearly indicate America's course. We can expect the winning candidate to run as a moderate, castigating his or her opponent for extreme ideas that will spell the ruin of this great nation. The electorate will vote for the candidate who promises them more of the center of the road - in other words, not a leader but a placeholder after what they consider to have been a reckless, controversial "cowboy" regime. While that may seem to be the safe way to go, they will

not consider that a person sitting in the middle of the road is in danger of being hit from either or both sides.

Bible prophecy, of course, says nothing specific about American political events. However, it does say that, as the day of the Lord looms, "the remnant of Joseph" ([Amos 5:15](#)) has a terrible problem with seeking false religion, injustice, corruption, over-taxation, and "mighty sins." God's advice is, "Seek the LORD and live" (verse 6), a call to return to godliness and truth. He does not say, "Vote Republican!" or "Vote Democrat!" but "Repair your relationship with Me!" Elections mean nothing but decline and ruin if the people of this land neglect their obligations to the One who made them and rules them from heaven.

What if Americans actually took God's advice . . . ?

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Politics and Christ's Return](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

In the church, we are not politically liberal, conservative, or moderate—we are "God-ists." The world considers us liberals because we are not bound by its religious orthodoxy. Conversely, we are conservative when following God's constitutional code, His holy standards, living by the spirit of the law rather than just by the letter. Ultimately, religion and politics do not mix at all because in weak men, political expediency trumps righteousness every time. Because we are set apart by God, we are not to become involved in the world's political, judicial, or military systems. Our term in office has not yet begun.

From the Archives: Featured Article

Globalism (Part Four): Israel Pushes the Nations

by Charles Whitaker

America was not always internationalist in perspective. No, the United States was once quite removed from world affairs. Charles Whitaker shows from the terms of several presidents how the change from isolationism to globalism occurred. Also contains the inset article, "Great Men and God's Sovereignty."

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