



"I am quite sure that the best way to promote union is to promote truth. It will not do for us to be all united together by yielding to one another's mistakes."  
—Charles H. Spurgeon

**23-Aug-02**

## **Everything Is Political**

Perhaps the most recognizable and lasting feature of the Clinton administration was its daily use of polls, focus groups, and other finger-in-the-wind means of gauging public opinion to position its policy. From "It's the economy, stupid!" through Whitewater and impeachment to the lame-duck months leading to Bush's inauguration, Clinton never dared to stray too far in front of the electorate. The one time he tried—remember his and his wife's attempt to nationalize health care?—he suffered a stinging rebuke.

It has always been part of a politician's makeup to politicize everything. Every shake of a hand or smooch on a baby's cheek is a political act designed to aid his election or reelection. Whether the matter is crossing gates at railroad tracks, trash collection, or allocating land for a public building or park, a politician's first instinct is to ascertain how his opinion on the matter will play with the voters. Backing something unpopular but good and necessary would be suicide!

Books, television, and movies frequently caricature politicians this way. Nothing is done out of sincerity or principle or self-sacrifice; the hard-

hearted politician just wants the power and prestige that comes with elected government office. Usually, the story ends with him standing shocked and aghast, wiping egg off his face.

But this is just make-believe. In reality, these kinds of people win far too often. Let us not forget that the quintessence of such politicians sat in the Oval Office for eight years!

"Political" derives from the Greek word *polites*, meaning "citizen." It describes matters relating to government, that is, the official business of the citizenry. In a democracy, what a majority of the people decide to be law becomes governmental policy. Here in America, under our representative republic, what a majority of our representatives in Congress decide becomes law. Thus, it begets this problem of career politicians doing whatever will ensure reelection rather than what is best for the country.

The greater problem is that this politicization of everything has trickled down first to the media and then to the common citizen. Few anymore stand above the fray. To declare oneself apolitical guarantees a stunned response to the effect that one is also unpatriotic, un-American, and inhuman to boot! This must be true because Aristotle said, "Man is by nature a political animal," and we seem to believe everything the great philosophers said.

Groups and individuals do many things now for political reasons. Many boycott Disney and all its manifestations because of its pro-homosexual decisions. Blacks will not spend tourist money in some Southern states because of the Confederate flag issue. And—watch for it!—some group will not shop at Kmart because of Martha Stewart's financial boondoggle.

This politicization is doing nothing but tearing the country into shreds. Each shred has its political agenda, and none of them is really working for the good of the whole nation. They often speak platitudes about unity and wholeness, but at the end of the day, they want what they want. If they do not get it, they will whine, yell, cajole, incite, and fight to get it, heedless of the harm their cause is doing to the country.

Sadly, America has ceased being a melting pot. Because of this politicization, among other factors, it is now a tossed salad, and the tomatoes

want nothing to do with the lettuce, while the peppers and celery are threatening to jump out of the bowl to form their own dish if their demands are not met.

[Jesus](#) says in [Matthew 12:25](#): "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand." Unless Americans can once again find some common ground upon which to work for the nation's good, Jesus' words will come to pass before our eyes.

His solution? "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad." In a word, "Your Kingdom come!"

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## **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.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Pride, Contention, and Unity](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The sin of pride underlies many of our other sins, and it is often the reason for the contentions we get into as brethren. John Ritenbaugh looks at the origins of pride and shows how it manifests itself in us.

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