

HOW WOULD JESUS VOTE?

...Or Would He Even Bother?

BY GREG ALBRECHT

Politics has always mysteriously attracted me. Soaring pre-election rhetoric can transform me from a calm, rational person into a quivering jello-like blob of emotion. National elections have a similar effect on me as *bug zappers* do with bugs on hot summer nights. The bugs dance around, flirting with the electronic device, until their death wish is realized.

Every time we have a general election, like the one looming on the horizon, this political fatal attraction attempts to suck

National elections have a similar effect on me as bug zappers do with bugs on hot summer nights... Every time we have a general election... this political fatal attraction attempts to suck me into its black hole of negative partisanship again.

suck me into its black hole of negative partisanship again.

I don't mean to infer that it's wrong for a Christian to be politically involved—some Christians believe

that they should not only vote but be politically active. I recognize that perspective and respect those who hold it, but I still have reservations about jumping into bed with the *bug zapper*.

As you probably know, it's still difficult to convince some within American Christendom that it's okay to vote for anyone or any cause that is not Republican. For many Christians God is a Republican (or, I wonder, do some actually think that the Republican party is God?).

Absolute affiliation and allegiance with any political party is out of character with our citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3:20). I believe that uncritical devotion to any political interest can be a fatal attraction that leads us away from Jesus into the clutches of the state.

You may recall one of the moral lessons taught by the movie *Fatal*

Attraction—those who may have interpreted your behavior in such a way as to assume they own you may wind up stewing your pet rabbit. The lesson is clear:

Politicians who convince you that they will take care of your pet interests may wind up turning your pet bunny into rabbit stew.

I've been asked many times over the past few months how I'm going to vote. For the record, we (Plain Truth Ministries in general and *Plain Truth* magazine specifically) do not endorse political parties or political candidates. I don't believe it's our job to tell you how to vote or even whether to vote. Beyond that, I don't think pastors, priests or ministry leaders should get involved in using their platforms to urge people about who or what they should vote for—or even whether they ought to, or ought not, vote in the first place. Know this—there is no New Testament teaching that directs Christians to attempt to influence or change political institutions.

Church and State

I am thankful that I live in a country where a separation between church and state exists. After all, *the church needs to be protected from the state*. Some Christians will hear me say that and nod their approval. But then, if they let me keep talking, I almost always add that this safeguard goes both ways.

The other side of that safeguard is that *the civil government needs to be protected from the church*. Religious fundamentalism and extremism in our world today presents a contemporary, compelling and chilling example of what can happen when such checks and balances do not exist. I believe the church—the body of Christ—best functions in its culture as a believing minority, rather than a moral majority. Christians are described within the pages of the New Testament as pilgrims, strangers, resident aliens and ambassadors, rather than wheeling and dealing political power brokers.

Just as I believe that Christians may attend a variety of Christ-centered, grace-based churches—or choose not to attend any institutionalized church at all—I believe Christians may be brothers and sisters in Christ and cast their ballots in completely different ways. Beyond that I believe that Christians may determine for perfectly valid reasons not to vote at all.

As a Christian, I have no duty to force the culture in which I reside to live as a Christian society. On the other hand, I do have a calling to live out the life of Jesus in such a way that his love for all mankind is known in and through my life. This is in marked contrast to the reality pre-

sent within some of Christendom—where abrasiveness and in-your-face political dogmatism is seen as a litmus test of church membership. My liberty in Christ means that I afford liberty to others when their

Absolute affiliation and allegiance with any political party is out of character with our citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3:20). I believe that uncritical devotion to any political interest can be a fatal attraction that leads us away from Jesus into the clutches of the state.

political opinions and convictions conflict with mine.

I don't belong to a political party. I am an independent voter. When I vote I vote for the cause or the person, not the party with which they are affiliated. If I vote I vote for issues and individuals in spite of their connection with a political organization.

Democrat or Republican?

As a Christian, I am not a Democrat because...

- I don't agree with many of the moral issues they support and endorse.
- It seems to me that many Democrats tend to value sex over marriage and career over family.
- I don't think we need more government, I don't think we need to spend more money—I think we need to use the money we have more wisely (but then the Republican party doesn't seem to do such a great job in this area either).
- I am opposed to the self-righteous pomposity of some Democrats who give me the impression that I should vote for a candidate simply because of their

...it's still difficult to convince some within American Christendom that it's okay to vote for anyone or any cause that is not Republican. For many Christians God is a Republican...



gender or race, regardless of their beliefs and convictions.

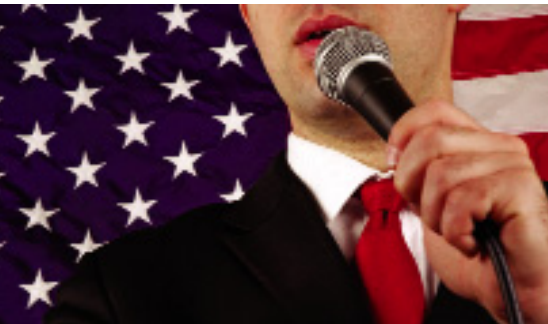
As a Christian, I admire the Democratic party for its...

- Historic decisions to support civil rights, in particular to champion the cause of ending tacit government support of racism.

- Looking out for the underdog and the little guy, the working man and woman, the parentless and the poor.

Unless I completely miss what Jesus is all about, these are core, Christ-centered issues (although, let's be honest, these issues are not usually supported by the Democratic party for Christ-centered reasons).

I saved my critique of the Republican party until last thinking that some readers won't read this far and I won't get quite as much hate mail! I



Thank God that there are still people around this world who are given the right to think for themselves. Avoid those who would manipulate you (even from pulpits).

can see the mail now: "How could you, as a Christian, say anything bad about the Republican party?"

As a Christian, I am not a Republican because...

- Republicans seem to love the fetus but that same zeal and love for life "terminates" at birth—what about Republican commitment to the little ones who actually have been born and are in desperate straits? The fervent sup-



The moral lesson from the movie *Fatal Attraction*: Politicians who convince you that they will take care of your pet interests may wind up turning your pet bunny into rabbit stew.

port of this party for the unborn seems to evaporate once the baby leaves the birth canal.

- Republicans seem to bang the drum about certain moral value issues but remain strangely silent about others. I do wonder if certain legislation is the price this party will pay to attract the "Christian vote" while having no commitment to other Christ-centered issues.

- Republicans seem to favor policies that help the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Compassion is not a word that immediately springs to mind when I hear the word "Republican"—but again, this critique generally applies to politics at large.

- I am concerned that Republican policies seem to care little about the environment. My mother taught me to clean up after myself and leave places I visited or used in as good or better condition than I had found them. I believe God would have us feel much the same about the creation he has allowed us to use. I absolutely reject the idea that "having dominion" (KJV) or "rule" (NIV) over the earth (Genesis 1:26) means that we are justified in torching and scorching it, with little thought for the generation that follows us; or, for that matter, for the ultimate Landlord who graciously shares his creation with us. It's his good earth, not ours.

As a Christian, I admire the Republican party for its ...

- Support of the family and

home, and many of the biblical values in which I as a Christian believe. However, that fact alone doesn't turn me into a flag waving, drum beating Republican. I do not believe that Christian moral values are produced by political parties—Christian moral values are produced by Jesus. Atheists can be extremely moral people. The fact that good, moral atheists exist doesn't mean I automatically support atheists and their platforms.

- Strong and unrelenting stand against crime and aggression, foreign and domestic.

Jesus and the Bug Zappers

How would Jesus vote? I don't know. Would he vote? I don't know.

If he determined to vote, I believe that by God's grace I have a better sense of how he would vote than I did years ago (after all, since I have now reached the age when I can take advantage of some senior citizens discounts, I have to console myself that I must have gained some wisdom and insight along the way!).

Notwithstanding my geezer-wisdom, I would never dream of telling you to vote just like me because I am convicted Jesus doesn't want you to be just like me! Thank God for that.

Treasure your freedom and choice to decide whether to vote, and, if you vote, exactly what decisions you will make.

Thank God that there are still people around this world who are given the right to think for themselves.

Avoid those who would manipulate you (even from pulpits). If you decide to vote, pray about the votes you intend to cast. And give others, even and especially within the body of Christ, respect as a fellow child of God when they differ with you.

And finally, if you do vote, remember to watch out for *bug zappers* and keep your pet bunny rabbit under lock and key. ☐