

October 2000

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## Strike the Ground

National tracking polls indicate the likelihood of low voter turnout for the coming general election. Some are even predicting that the percentage of eligible voters going to the polls on Election Day could be the lowest ever for a presidential election.

In the recent September primary in our state, 60 percent of registered voters didn't bother to vote. Who were the 40 percent who did? When viewing the results on a county-by-county basis, it appears our more liberal brethren came in droves. Six of the ten lowest ranked counties in terms of turnout - are in Republican-rich Eastern Washington. And seven of those same ten counties are widely regarded as very conservative. Scenic Klickitat County mustered less than one voter in three (30.9 percent) at the polls.

This means we have much work to do in the next two weeks. While we are still receiving good reports of your efforts to register new voters by October 23<sup>rd</sup>, we must now shift our focus to insure that our voters actually vote!

Election 2000 voter guides are being distributed in churches and Christian businesses throughout Washington State this week and next, to coincide with the arrival of vote-by-mail ballots. Voter guides are nonpartisan voter education materials which adhere to IRS and Federal Election Commission rules for use by churches and other 501(c)(3) charitable organizations.

This year, the *Christian Coalition* voter guide consists of two parts: *Federal guides*, which are published by the national Christian Coalition in Washington DC, and *State guides*, which are produced here in Washington State.

**Federal guides** are printed on a half sheet featuring the two leading presidential candidates on one side and our US Senate and congressional races on the other. More than a half million of these guides have been shipped to key locations around the state for quick distribution. *Please review the enclosed list for the voter guide location nearest you so that you can pick up ample quantities for churches in your area.*

**State guides**, on the other hand, contain key legislative races on one side and five selected statewide races on the reverse. The full sheet guide accompanies the federal guide and can be folded in half for inserting in church bulletins.

Following the 1998 general election, I asked our members to let us know whether or not guides had been available in their home churches. Quite a few responded they were not. This year, to increase our distribution, we are asking each of you to take responsibility for your own church. It is not a good idea to assume that someone else is looking out for your congregation - or community, for that matter.

A master edition of the state guide, suitable for producing additional copies for your church or business, is enclosed.

Most churches can reproduce the needed copies for you in a matter of minutes. (You might consider supplying the paper which can be purchased for as little as five dollars per ream).

If you plan to distribute voter guides to other Christian organizations and businesses such as Christian bookstores, a number of discount copy centers can also do the work very quickly for you. In my area, Office Depot charges 3.5 cents each for a thousand double-sided copies.

If you live in a rural area - too far from your church to bring the master copy in during the week, let your pastor know that the state guide is posted on the web and can be easily downloaded and reproduced on site. Please go to [www.christiancoalition.us](http://www.christiancoalition.us)

I know it seems peculiar that the federal guides are available by the hundreds of thousands while the state guides are not. This is because the national Christian Coalition has the financial resources to print millions of guides and we do not. The Christian Coalition of Washington receives no funding from the national organization and depends solely on the generosity of local supporters like you. So, while I wish things were a lot more convenient for you, our ground troops, I believe together, we can deal with it and get the job done. Amen?

One more thing. We expect to have voter guides in more churches during the next few days than ever before. The Lord has blessed us in unusual ways this year and has opened many doors that were previously shut. But this we have learned. Your pastor is the sovereign in your church. If he is not open to the voter guides - let it pass. Maybe after the elections, you, me, and your pastor can go out to lunch. Many pastors and churches who were not on board with us two years ago, are now enthusiastically supporting our efforts. Perhaps it is because we prayed and wooed rather than pushed or threatened.

We need to "knock and seek" while refraining from throwing up our hands when others do not appear as anxious about this important election as we are. But I do know from years of experience that where one church is hesitant, there are three that are not. And we must pursue them.

*Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped. The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times."*  
(2 Kings 13:18-19)

Friends, there are important battles before us. Let us strike the ground and keep on striking.

*Rick Forcier*

Executive Director