

September 2002

Pastor-Advisory Board

Rev. Earl Bradley
Capital Region Ministries, Olympia

Rev. Randy Burtis
Luis Palau Crusades

Rev. Mike Fogaras
Gateway Christian Center, Olympia

Rev. Jon Hagebusch
Word of Life, Lynden

Dr. Stephen Hammond
Cornerstone Bible Church, Enumclaw

Rev. Ted Hanson
Abundant Life Fellowship, Bellingham

Rev. Keith Lamm
Yakima Evangelical Church

Dr. Jim Modlish
Faith Baptist, Chehalis

Rev. Scott Montagne
Bayside Community Church, Kingston

Rev. Jon Oletske
Stone Church, Yakima

Rev. Ken Parsley
Church on the Move, Yakima

Rev. Jim Ripley
Neighborhood Christian Cntr, Tumwater

Rev. Reuben Sapien
The Sanctuary Church, Lynnwood

Rev. Dan Secrist
Faith Assembly of Lacey

Dr. Ken Squires
Marysville First Assembly

Rev. Dwain Wolfe
New Horizons Christian Center, Fife

Board of Directors

Paul Middleton
Chairman, Olympia

Dennis DeFries
Secretary, Olympia

Jim Winterstein
Treasurer, Olympia

Scott Blanton
Vancouver

Dorsey Holt
Shelton

Jere Irwin
Yakima

Peggy Kirk
Montesano

Dick Raport
Camano Island

Jim Robinson
Spokane

Fred Weiss
Bellevue

Rick Forcier
Executive Director

Staff

Sharon Crain
Administrative Assistant

Beth Davis
Accounting

Julie Gallagher
Prayer Coordinator

Rusty Howell
Field Director

Steve Matthews
Field Director

Unqualified for Office

Voter guide surveys would be simplified if one question were asked; Is Jesus your Lord? Not that an answer in the affirmative would prove qualification for public office or indicate the respondent's position on issues ranging from education to transportation. But it would suggest one's world view and possibly offer a predictor of how a candidate might address the significant socio-moral issues of our day.

A similar question was put forth by a companion organization in Idaho several election cycles ago. The uproar in the media was something to behold. While many of us in neighboring states thought the question was cutting-edge, none cared to go there.

But, is such a question that unreasonable in light of other personal tidbits candidates are expected to reveal these days? We know where they went to school (even see grade reports); we have access to campaign and business records, income tax returns, medical history, driving and arrest records—even reports of marital infidelity and offspring who drink underage or are lesbian. But ask about Jesus?

In another era, things were different. As delegates headed home from Philadelphia after declaring independence from Great Britain, they were not returning to the crown colonies from whence they had come. The task before them was to create new political entities (states) and declare them in writing (constitutions). When the documents were completed, they were strikingly similar in at least one aspect—the establishment of qualifications for public officials. Each was much like the Delaware State Constitution, which read in part:

“Every person, who shall be chosen a member of either house, or appointed to any office or place of trust . . . shall . . . make and subscribe the following declaration, to wit: ‘I do profess faith in God the father, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, and in the Holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.’”¹

In that day, one issue was central to the qualification for office. All others were ancillary for the simple reason that if a man loved God with all his heart, his soul, his mind and his strength—then he would most certainly love his neighbor as himself. If elected, that person could be expected to listen to God, consult Scripture for TRUTH, and act in the best interest of his country, his neighbors, and those he represented.

Unfortunately, there is a low threshold of tolerance this side of post-modernity for public professions of faith. Even candidates who seem very devout often resent simple questions about their faith (trust me on this one), forcing “religious conservatives” to look to another area that might reveal character or moral turpitude.

Reverend John Piper, senior pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, believes that abortion is that other area. Although admitting he is one of those dreaded “one issue voters,” he quickly volunteers that being pro-life does not necessarily make a person a good mayor or governor. Using marriage as an analogy, Piper reasons that no one quality makes a good wife or husband, but some qualities would make a person unacceptable.

Thinking back to his bachelor days when he was entering seminary and considering marriage, Piper says that not liking cats would not have disqualified a woman to be his wife, but not liking people would. Drinking coffee would not be a disqualifier, but drinking whiskey would. And kissing dogs wouldn't be a problem, but kissing the mailman would.

"Being a single-issue fiancé," says Piper, "does not mean that only one issue matters. It means that some issues may matter enough to break off the relationship. . . In politics, you have to decide what those issues are for you."²

Pastor Piper points out that a candidate who endorses bribery as a form of fiscal efficiency would be rejected by voters regardless of his other platforms. And, while he agrees bribery should be a disqualifier—how much more so—support for child-killing!

Although many Christians do indeed view support for abortion as a disqualifier, some organizations see it as the sole QUALIFIER for elective office. Among these groups are; The National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), The National Organization of Women (NOW), Emily's List, and of course, Planned Parenthood.

But even in California, where the pro-abortion Democrats rule both the legislature and governor's office, mere approval of abortion is not enough to satisfy the desires of these organizations. With each new session, NARAL raises the bar of qualification for its coveted political funds and endorsements. Recipients must crank out er'more radical measures just to be status quo.

One radical bill currently making its way through various committees, would force medical students considering an OB-GYN specialty to receive abortion training. Yet, the same proponents do not want to require expectant mothers who might be considering an abortion to view an ultrasound picture of their babies. They have killed such a proposal.

Another measure which has already passed the California Senate, would allow people who are not licensed physicians to conduct "non-surgical abortions" by chemical means such as RU-486. The bill also forbids a future state ban on abortions in the event Roe v. Wade is ever overturned.

Abortion groups also have their long talons deeply embedded in the Evergreen State and are quite cozy with the *Mainstream Republican Committee of Washington* (COALITION NEWSLETTER – 8/02). Even so, only Democrats, save for one, are endorsed in state legislative races this season. Rep. Fred Jarrett (Mercer Island) is the only Republican NARAL calls absolutely "100 % pro-choice."

So why focus on abortion rather than some other hot social issue? For our friend, Pastor Piper, the matter became very clear while he was purchasing a puppy at his local Humane Society. He picked up a brochure on the laws of Minnesota concerning animals which said; "No person shall . . . unjustifiably injure, maim, mutilate or kill any animal..." Piper recalls thinking, why is it legal to "maim, mutilate and kill" a pain-sensitive unborn human being but not an animal?

The pastor concluded, "These reflections have confirmed my conviction never to vote for a person who endorses such an evil—even if he could balance the budget tomorrow and end all taxation."³

Rick Forcier

Executive Director

¹ Barton, David, Keys to Good Government, 1994, WallBuilders, Aledo, TX, pg.5

² WORLD Magazine, Nov 4, 2000, Single-issue politics

³ Ibid