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Speak these things

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.
--2 Timothy 4:2

Although our *Voters' Guide* reached tens-of-thousands of voters in hundreds of churches around the state again this election season, it is understandable that some pastors are less inured than others regarding our efforts to inform "values voters." Following are comments [edited for space] that a supporter received from his pastor concerning *Christian Coalition* voters' guides:

"We are trying to sort out whether actually placing this voter guide into the bulletin will help voters under 35, or whether it makes them 'bolt' from authority. You might be surprised to know that when we mention election issues, we get feelings expressed (sometimes pretty passionate) from both ends of the spectrum. As shepherds, we do not choose to disregard the perspectives of any of the flock—merely because we disagree with their politics. It would cancel out all future opportunity we have to care for and lead them..."

The long and short of the topic is this: The CC [Christian Coalition] voter guides are very helpful, I use them. But younger people can see them as one sided. Even if they agree on all the issues we test, they view the guide itself as an intrusive attempt to manipulate their vote...I wish the CC would learn how to communicate effectively with the upcoming generation of voters. The Obama campaign has figured this out. It is amazing how many young people are going to vote for Obama, only because of his communications skills and style—without regard to; what he stands for, what he will do if elected, or his personal righteousness. This is worse than unfortunate..."

A HYPOTHETICAL RESPONSE

Dear Pastor: We hear what you are saying. Each week you climb in the ring with world-class heavy weights. Your Goliaths are Hollywood, the internet, cell phones, iPods and 12 or-more years of secular-humanist public education. Sometimes your younger members are listening, and sometimes not. We know that. But we also know that tackling tough issues is not above your pay-grade. So before you dismiss this important election as not worth risking relationships, perhaps you would consider the thoughts of a fellow pastor who helps his congregants make wise choices in selecting their rulers? (2Sam 23:3)

Reverend John Piper, senior pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, admits that he is one of those dreaded "one issue voters." The "life" issue is a deal-maker or breaker for him. Using marriage as an analogy, Piper acknowledges that no one quality makes a good wife or husband, but some qualities would make a person unacceptable.

Thinking back to his bachelorette 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.”¹

So why focus on abortion rather than Aids, global warming or the economy? The late Dr. D. James Kennedy noted that before Jesus came in the flesh, the value of human life in the ancient world was held in low esteem. In his book, What if Jesus Had Never Been Born, he writes:

“It was a dangerous thing for a baby to be conceived in classical Rome or Greece, just as it is becoming dangerous once more under the influence of the modern pagan. In those days abortion was rampant. Abandonment was commonplace: It was common for infirm babies or unwanted little ones to be taken out into the forest ... to be consumed by wild animals or to starve...

“To make matters worse, those children who outlived infancy ... were the property of their father; he could kill them at his whim ... Infanticide was not only legal; it was applauded. Killing a Roman was murder...killing one’s own children could be an act of beauty ...”

Church historians remind us that Christians have waged war against abortion and infanticide twice before—during the early days of the Church and again during the dark ages.

Saints of the early Church were decidedly “life” oriented as recorded in a second-century “Letter to Diognetus” where the writer observed that Christians “marry ... they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring.”² Further, early Christians were committed to the rescue of abandoned babies. Loving homes were found for the “unwanted” so they could be raised in the faith. Their unflagging efforts and influence eventually brought many pro-life legal reforms under Emperors Constantine and Justinian.

During the sixth-century reign of the latter, infanticide and abortion were explicitly banned. Part of what is now known as “the Justinian Code,” reads; *Those who expose children, possibly hoping they would die and those who use the potions of the abortionist, are subject to the full penalty of the law—both civil and ecclesiastical—for murder. Should exposure occur, the finder of the child is to see that he is baptized and that he is treated with Christian care and compassion. They may be then adopted . . . even as we ourselves have been adopted into the kingdom of grace.*³

Although the Justinian Code has been widely observed for centuries in most civilized societies (and understood even by those 35 and under), it is under attack in post-modern America.

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 destroying innocent human life!

The matter became even clearer while Piper 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...” He recalls thinking, why is it legal to “maim, mutilate and kill” a pain-sensitive unborn human being but not an animal?

“These reflections,” says Piper, “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.”

The young are hungry for TRUTH, Pastor. Be encouraged that church leaders are to... *Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.* (Titus 2:15). Amen?

Rick Forcier

¹ Piper, John, Single-issue politics, *WORLD Magazine*, November 4, 2000

² Wirt, Sherwood Eliot, The Social Conscience of the Evangelical, Harper and Row, New York, 1968, pg.30

³ Grand, Geo., Third Time Around: A History of the Pro-Life Movement, 1991, Legacy, Franklin, TN, pg.38