

Saturday "Sermon"

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"How to Pick a President"

With Election 2008 only days away, how will you decide—or how have you decided—for whom to vote? I don't claim any special inspiration, but several principles occur to me.

While the character of the candidate(s) is certainly important, it has always seemed to me that in order to become a party's nominee, quite a lot of obvious and less visible deals have to be made. To whom, then, does it seem that each candidate is beholden?

Although every candidate makes promises that sound good but, given the complex balances of power between the Executive and Legislative branches of our government, have very little likelihood of achievement, it's still important to discern what the candidates consider important to attempt. And since the Congress is likely to be more driven by party platform than is the President, what are the issues that each party platform considers important to address?

There is genius in our two-party system, but it seems to me that such times as these make strict party loyalty less than desirable. With God as our Helper, we need to think more deeply than simply supporting what the Democrats or the Republicans say they'll do.

It seems to me that our best questions might be, not "What's good for me and my house?" but "What's obedient to God's Word," and "What's best for our nation as a whole?" no matter how such answers might affect us personally. I recognize that we're likely to experience a good bit of disagreement on the answers to those questions, but I think those are the questions we should be asking.

Along this line, I read an intriguing article in the June issue of *Christianity Today* with the title, "Why Virtue Trumps Policy." Here are a few thoughts from that essay:

"Chief among the many reasons [why virtue trumps policy] is that many crucial political decisions of the future will revolve around unpredictable events and issues. No candidate's 'policy' on terrorism foresaw or was adequate for 9/11. . . . We should vote for a person whom we believe has the qualities—the virtues, the character—to decide wisely in situations where policies, positions, and ideologies will be of little help."

"Voting for Obama's health plan . . . or McCain's immigration policy is virtual-reality voting, positing an intriguing alternate world, but having little to do with this one. When it comes to picking a President, Gandhi had it right: 'The obligation of accepting a position of power is to be, above all else, a good human being.'"

Let's continue to pray for the candidates and then vote as God leads.