

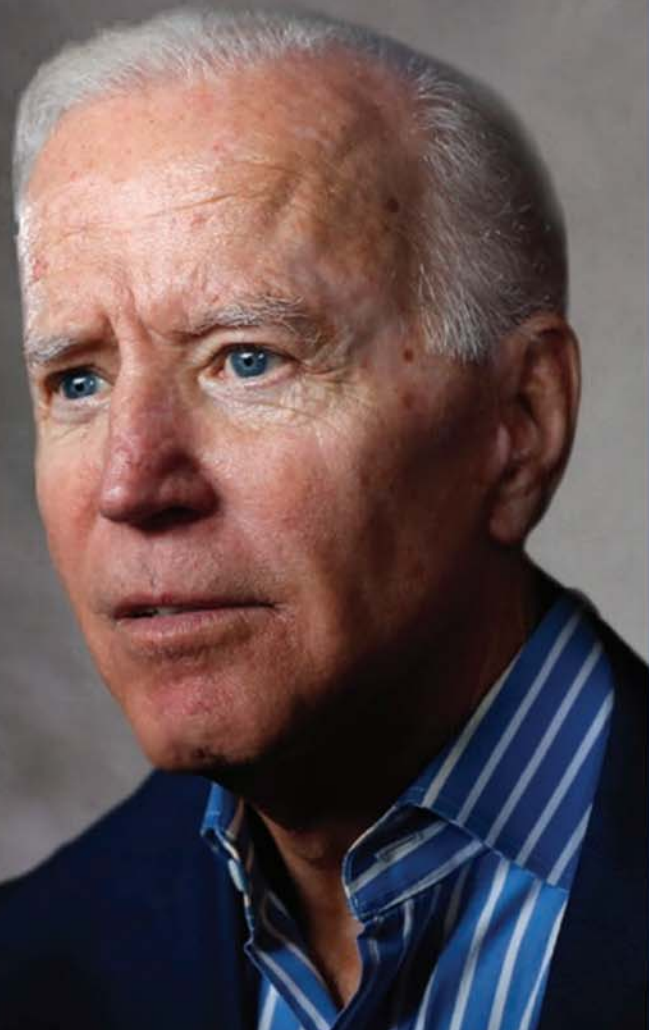
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DECISION

THE EVANGELICAL VOICE FOR TODAY

SPECIAL
ELECTION
GUIDE

OCTOBER 2020



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2020
TWO VISIONS
FOR AMERICA

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‘BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD’

by Franklin Graham

Four years ago, I said that the 2016 presidential contest was the most important election of our lifetime, affording America a window of opportunity to reverse nearly a decade of government hostility toward the Biblical values that undergird our great nation.

Thankfully, under the current administration, our religious liberties have been protected and preserved through a number of executive orders and the appointment of conservative judges and justices. Through executive actions, the right to life for the unborn and the freedom for Christian organizations and professionals to practice according to their sincerely held religious beliefs have been advanced and upheld.

However, as the 2020 election draws near, I have a dire warning for Christians: This wonderful season of progress for the cause of religious freedom and the moral and Biblical values we hold dear could be quickly—and perhaps even permanently—reversed.

Voters are choosing between two polar-opposite visions for America—one that threatens to send our country spiraling down the dangerous road of socialism, and one that promises to uphold the constitutional freedoms our nation is built upon while making America the envy of the world.

Look what is happening in the

streets of our cities—in Oregon, Washington, Illinois, Wisconsin, New York. Lawlessness, anarchy, violence and arson are rampant. Rioters are bent on mayhem and destruction. Police precincts have been torched, stores looted and businesses ruined. Incredibly, the authorities in some of these places have simply let it unfold without any repercussions for

the perpetrators.

The progressive leftists who are driving the socialist agenda want more power to be vested in the federal government so they will have more authority to control those who disagree with them. It’s all about power and control, and preying on the weak and vulnerable. Make no mistake—socialism is the precursor to communism, where the state has absolute control over the people. We’ve seen this play out miserably in places like Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Cuba and Venezuela.

That same agenda is driving the ridiculous call to defund the police. Can you imagine what our cities and our nation would look like if we suddenly crippled those who are called to serve and protect—so they could not respond to those in danger or need? It would be disastrous. I love what South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said: “There is no mother in this country that wants to raise her children on the streets of Portland or Seattle.” She’s absolutely right.

History teaches us that if the progressive, socialist left can seize power, Christians especially will be targeted. Believers will always refuse to bow to the power of the state if

“If we truly want the blessings of the Lord on our country, then we must come humbly before Him, seek His face in prayer and fasting and repentance, and ask if He might by His grace and mercy bring healing to our troubled nation.”

it asks us to disobey Scripture, and the left believes they can force us to betray our beliefs. It has been the church of the Lord Jesus Christ that has stood in the gap against abortion for more than six decades, held firm to the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman and led the movements to abolish slavery and establish civil rights. True Christians



will never render unto Caesar the things that are God's. They will never bend their knee to the idol of the state. That's why communist countries do all they can to suppress and silence the church, which they regard as the enemy of the state.

This special election guide lays out the position of both the Democratic and Republican parties on the key moral and Biblical issues that face our nation—abortion, religious liberty, family, national defense and more. The contrast between the platforms of the two parties is striking. I encourage you to read each article carefully and realize the enormous consequences at stake this November.

I want to encourage you to pray for our nation, remembering that only God can transform hearts and heal our land. Then get out and vote on Nov. 3. It is our civic responsibility as Christians, and we must do all we can to support candidates on the federal, state and local level who most strongly support Biblical principles. The evangelical vote was crucial in the 2016 election, and it will be even more so in the 2020 election. I hope Christians across the nation realize the grave dangers that are poised to

strike at the heart of the religious liberties we have fought so hard to protect.

One thing I am sure of: We must put all of our hope in Almighty God above all else. He alone has the power to transform lives, hearts and minds. As the Prophet Jeremiah warned, "Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me'" (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

My hope has never been and never will be in either the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. I don't trust in the counsel and wisdom of men, but in the sovereign, saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

"The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:10-12).


If we truly want the blessings of the Lord on our country, then we must come humbly before Him, seek His

face in prayer and repentance, and ask if He might by His grace and mercy bring healing to our troubled nation (see 2 Chronicles 7:14).

As I write this, we are preparing to hold a Prayer March on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. On Saturday, Sept. 26, we will meet at noon at the Lincoln Memorial and make our way up the National Mall to the U.S. Capitol, praying as we go. We will stop at key locations to ask God to heal the divisions in our nation, guide our leaders, protect our religious freedoms and pour out His Spirit on America. Tens of thousands of prayer warriors have signed up to come from around the United States to ask the Lord for His divine help and wisdom.

These are unprecedented times in which we live. The COVID-19 crisis has left our nation reeling. It has taken a huge toll on our economy, which may take years to recover. Unemployment soared to the highest rate since World War II. Tens of thousands of businesses have closed, some never to reopen. Suicides, drug use and mental health issues have soared. People are still frightened about what the future may hold. On so many fronts, I sense growing despair and hopelessness.

As this year's election draws near, with all of its serious consequences, please spend time each day in fervent prayer for our nation. As Charles Spurgeon famously said, "Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscle of [God's] omnipotence."

And put your hope in the only One who holds the future. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).  ©2020 BGEA

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TWO VISIONS FOR AMERICA

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ISSUES, THE PARTIES AND THE CANDIDATES IN AN ELECTION THAT WILL SET THE NATION'S COURSE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

On Nov. 3, American voters will choose between two starkly opposing visions for the nation. The implications for Christians are momentous, affecting religious liberty, the

sanctity of life, the family, the courts, international religious freedom and more. The outcome will affect the ability of churches and Christian organizations to operate according to Biblical teaching and pursue the Great Commission. Will Christians remain free, or will the government impose a godless, immoral social agenda upon them?

WHAT'S AT STAKE IN AMERICA'S 2020 ELECTION

by **R. Albert Mohler Jr.**

Every four years, citizens of this nation face a massive decision and vote to elect a president of the United States. The framers of the Constitution understood that the presidency itself was both revolutionary and unprecedented. The role was outlined in the Constitution, but it was made real in the person of George Washington—the only man the founders could envision as the nation's first chief executive.



R. Albert Mohler Jr.

In war and in peace, in prosperity and in pandemic, Americans have exercised the vote because we understand that this is the most important role we play in deciding the future of the nation, the shape of its laws and the character of its government.

Every four years, we are told that

this election is the most important vote of our lifetime. In a very real sense, it is. The reason is now clear—the issues that loom before this nation and its voters are growing more urgent, and the divides between the two major political parties grow only wider. In 2020, America's Christians must realize that our two political parties represent two radically different visions of the nation and its future, two different understandings of the role of government, two very

different ways of reading the U.S. Constitution and even two different moralities.

So much is at stake, and Christian voters must think clearly, carefully and Biblically about the choice before us. Just consider some of the issues directly involved in this election.





ABORTION AND THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

Abortion is a great moral scar on the modern age, and it is to the great shame of the United States. Since the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, more than 61 million human lives have been extinguished in American wombs. This is only possible because of the subversion of human dignity and the denial of the sanctity of human life. Biblically minded Christians understand that all human life is sacred because God makes every single human being in His image.

Protecting and respecting human life is the baseline responsibility of any government, but our two parties represent two diametrically opposed worldviews when it comes to human life and abortion. One party is committed to respect and defend life in the womb. The other is determined to support and defend abortion as an unconditional right—even to coerce American taxpayers to pay for abortions against their conscience by repealing the Hyde Amendment. The platform of the Democratic Party opposes all restrictions on abortion, effectively supporting it up to the

“Our two political parties represent two radically different visions of the nation and its future, two different understandings of the role of government, two very different ways of reading the U.S. Constitution and even two different moralities.”

and the family, which existed *before* the government. This means respecting marriage as the union of a man and a woman and respecting parents as those who are entrusted with the raising of their children. This nation is divided between those who honor this limited and respectful role of government and those who see the state—the government and its regime of “experts”—as the ultimate authority, even in matters God has delegated to the family.

Every society orders itself by its vision of the family, and we now see what happens when the Biblical understanding of the family is rejected by a society that claims to know better. Just consider the hostility directed toward homeschooling fami-

a revolt against human nature. The LGBTQ revolution is like a tsunami, reshaping the entire society. Marriage has been redefined, morality has been revolutionized and the ordering of human relations has been turned upside down. The most radical front of this revolution—the transgender movement—has now demanded the rejection of the “gender binary” and the embrace of a totally fluid concept of human gender and personal identity. We are becoming a society of total confusion about what it means to be human, male and female.

The movement to deny biology and human nature is progressing with unbelievable speed. A society that, for example, allows biological males claiming to be female to compete in athletics against biological women is a society that is embracing a confusion that would be fatal to any human society. We all know that the revolutionaries are demanding much more than boys competing in girls’ athletics. One side in our political divide is enthusiastic about pushing this revolution and using the coercive power of government to advance it. The other side will resist it. This divide is at stake in this election.

“Every vote is a decision about the future of our society. Each election serves to define us as a people.”

moment of birth. In truth, we are a nation confronting the reality of legal infanticide. The logic denying human dignity at the beginning of life will lead to the undermining of dignity at every stage of life. The sanctity of human life is at stake in this election.

THE FAMILY

The natural family—starting with the husband and wife and their children—is the most basic unit of human society. The responsibility of government is to respect marriage

lies and parents who resist in any way the demands of the cultural elites. One side in our great divide resists this hostility toward the family. The other side wants to “liberate” humanity from the constraints of the natural family. From tax policy to educational regulations to challenges to parental rights, the future of the family is at stake in this election.

HUMAN SEXUALITY AND GENDER

We are witnessing a revolution in morality that is nothing less than

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The dangers to religious liberty we see today would shock the framers of our Constitution. We now see an ardent and aggressive hostility to religious freedom and any substantial religious belief. A rapidly secularizing culture presents entirely new challenges to religious liberty.

*When the righteous increase, the people rejoice,
but when the wicked rule, the people groan.*

—PROVERBS 29:2, ESV

Will Christian schools have the right to operate on Christian principles? Must a Christian wedding photographer, cake designer or florist be compelled to celebrate same-sex marriage? Will the Christian Gospel



Joe Biden's running mate, Sen. Kamala Harris, has a more liberal record than Biden.

and the preaching of the Bible be classified as hate speech?

These are not hypothetical questions. Every one of these issues has been in the headlines in recent years. The political divide in the nation extends to these headlines. By its own acknowledgment, the Democratic Party has drawn the support of more secular Americans. The Republican Party has drawn great support from America's evangelical Christians. Given the leftward shift in the larger culture, this pattern will grow more acute election by election. America's cherished First Freedom is at stake in this election.

THE COURTS

This nation's founders would be shocked beyond belief to be told that the federal courts have become a major issue at stake in a national election. Alexander Hamilton



Vice President Mike Pence has championed religious liberty and the sanctity of human life.

famously described the courts as “the least dangerous branch” of government. No longer. For the last several decades, the federal courts have usurped the democratic process. Moral and political progressives, frustrated at their inability to win in the legislative process, decided to transform the courts into engines of moral and cultural revolution. Advocates of a “living Constitution” invented new “rights” like abortion and same-sex marriage and facilitated a massive expansion of government. As Americans, we do not elect federal judges, but we do elect a president, who has the sole power of

judicial nomination, all the way to the Supreme Court. State by state, we also elect the United States Senate, which must confirm judicial appointments. Thus, the future of the federal courts is at stake in this election.

Christian voters must understand that every vote matters—all the way from the county commission to the Oval Office. Every vote is a decision about the future of our society. Each election serves to define us as a people. Character matters, personality matters, history matters and issues beyond those considered here matter. National elections involve foreign policy, party politics, economic plans and current developments, like the coronavirus pandemic. But Christians must know that the issues discussed here are genuinely and urgently important. And every one of these issues is at stake in America's election of 2020. Make sure your vote counts.

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Barronelle Stutzman, a florist in Richland, Washington, has been in a seven-year legal battle after she was sued by her state for declining to design custom arrangements for a homosexual wedding. A Joe Biden presidency would give preference to sexual liberty over constitutional religious liberty.

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

by **Kristen K. Waggoner**
and **Jessica Prol Smith**



Kristen K.
Waggoner



Jessica Prol
Smith

Christians have always faced the challenge of living in this world but placing their hope outside of it. Scripture cautions, “Put not your trust in princes ... in whom there is no salvation” (Psalm 146:3, ESV). While we cannot put our ultimate trust in any government official or political party, as American Christians we still have the unique privilege of selecting our own “princes.” The 2020 elections offer the challenge and opportunity to elect leaders

who will promote the common good and foster virtue and ordered liberty—including religious liberty.

Religious freedom protects the right of Americans to speak and live consistent with their convictions. It also serves to restrain government and allows competing claims about truth in the marketplace. Democracy thrives with robust debate. In fact, countries that vigorously protect religious freedom are more stable, democratic, prosperous and less violent. In the United States, religion contributes greatly to a healthy society and economy. And finally, civil liberties travel together. The loss of religious freedom signals the loss of other freedoms. History confirms this time and again.

As a national legal organization advocating for religious freedom, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) has a frontline view of the legal and regulatory landscape. Whom we elect to every public office—from the school board to Congress—matters immensely. Yet there is no higher-stakes race than the one for the presidency. No elected officeholder approaches the authority given our chief executive, which makes it the most important race of all. Thus, Christians must educate themselves on the issues, then prayerfully and wisely vote.

On the issue of religious freedom, the Trump administration has very deliberately tried to establish a favorable record. Since President Trump took office, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has actively intervened in a number of cases involving religious discrimination. And at the U.S. Supreme Court, the DOJ argued alongside ADF in two critical religious freedom victories protecting faithful citizens from being coerced to express themselves in conflict with their religious beliefs.

The DOJ has also filed many briefs in the lower courts supporting First Amendment rights, including cases in which churches have been singled out for special restrictions during the



“Whoever wins this year will greatly impact Americans’ religious freedom.”

COVID-19 pandemic.

Former Vice President Joe Biden has expressed some support for religious freedom as well. His website affirms that “America was built on a foundation of religious freedom and tolerance” and his “Plan for Safeguarding America’s Faith-Based Communities” promises resources to enhance security for religious gatherings and increasing prosecution for those who commit violence against religious groups. Supporters also emphasize his Catholic upbringing and the Biblical phrases he uses in describing his liberal policies.

Where the two candidates differ most significantly is when religious values conflict with the values of sexual orientation and gender identity. America’s culture and its courts are divided on what it means to be male and female. These differences have major implications for religious freedom.

One significant example: Biden’s promise to make the misleadingly named Equality Act a top priority in his first 100 days. This federal legislation would make sexual orientation and gender identity protected civil rights classes, with no protections for religious organizations or people of faith who hold orthodox beliefs on sexuality as taught by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It would also gut the landmark Religious Freedom Restoration Act passed by a near-unanimous Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton.


Functionally, the Equality Act would treat churches, businesses, adoption agencies and medical professionals as discriminators if they operate based on the belief that humans are created male and female or that male and female are created

for each other. Biden has dismissed exemptions that protect those who hold such beliefs as being “overly broad” and seeking a “license to discrimination.” He promises to apply this view across his administration by reversing many related Trump administration actions.

The two candidates also differ on abortion. President Trump has consistently supported the conscience objections of nuns to paying for abortion drug coverage. Biden opposes such exemptions, even for faith groups. And while Trump has vowed to appoint judges who will overturn *Roe v. Wade*, Biden has promised to appoint those who will defend it.

The differences between the candidates on the religious freedom issue is clear when we weigh Trump-Pence’s

first term against Obama-Biden’s. While a president is never able to achieve all his goals, both the Obama and Trump administrations in their first terms plainly made their marks on religious liberty. Whoever wins this year will greatly impact Americans’ religious freedom.

Finally, we end where we began. There are many reasons why Americans should protect religious freedom, but to do so, we must have the courage to not only defend the right to speak about our convictions, but to openly share the reason for them—the truth about our faith and how it contributes to human flourishing. It is by understanding and sharing our faith that we can shine the light of Christ through the dark clouds of the secular world.  ©2020 KRISTEN K. WAGGONER AND JESSICA PROL SMITH

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KRISTEN K. WAGGONER IS GENERAL COUNSEL AND JESSICA PROL SMITH IS SENIOR NEWS WRITER AND EDITOR WITH ALLIANCE DEFENDING FREEDOM.

So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.

—ACTS 24:16, ESV

WHERE THEY STAND

Joe Biden	Donald Trump
Prioritize LGBTQ Rights	Prioritize Religious Liberty
“Religious freedom is a fundamental American value. But states have inappropriately used broad exemptions to allow businesses, medical providers, social service agencies, state and local government officials and others to discriminate against LGBTQ+ people.”	“Our founders understood that no right is more fundamental to a peaceful, prosperous and virtuous society than the right to follow one’s religious convictions.”

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR THE COURTS

by Kelly Shackelford

For I the Lord love justice.

—ISAIAH 61:8, ESV



Kelly Shackelford

Thanks in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 presidential election will be one unlike any other. However, one issue that proved to be a deciding factor for many voters in 2016 will remain as important, if not more, during this cycle: judicial appointments.

Prior to the 2016 presidential election, Justice Antonin Scalia's death turned the nation's attention to who the next president would nominate to fill the vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court. Then-candidate Donald Trump made the bold move of going beyond the usual platitudes about the judicial philosophy to which his nominee(s) would adhere and instead published a list of names of potential nominees for the American people to see for themselves. Like much of Trump's campaign, it was unconventional, and it worked.

This year, with rumors of potential retirements and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's continued health issues, the Supreme Court is back at

the center of the political stage. Like any candidate running for reelection, President Trump now has a record on this issue that voters can consider. As vice president, Joe Biden praised President Obama's appointments to the Supreme Court—Justices Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor—two of the high court's liberal justices. The progressive left expects more of the same from a possible President Biden.

For Biden and the left, the judicial branch is viewed as a super-legislature—another avenue to accomplish their policy goals if the democratic process “fails.” President Trump and conservatives have traditionally viewed the judicial branch as one that should not be influenced by political considerations but act as a neutral guardian of constitutional principles and arbiter of disputes between legislative and executive branches.

The Founding Fathers of our nation explained the purpose of dividing power among three separate and coequal branches of government. With each branch zealously guarding its own influence, an overreach by one would be met by resistance from the other two, thus preventing any part of

the government from accumulating too much power. Over time, however, the legislative and executive branches have ceded much power to the judicial—and the judiciary has taken full advantage.

Federal judges are appointed for life, theoretically to shield them from the political process so they can resist arbitrary rulings influenced by the fleeting political whims of the electorate. Their role is to declare what the law is, not what they think it should be. Likewise, when assessing the constitutionality of a law or executive action, judges are expected to let the Constitution guide them. Their proper role is to evaluate in light of what the Constitution says, not the desired policy outcome or the political popularity of the matter in question.

But when the judiciary wanders into the realm of policymaking—as it has for the past several decades by judges who believe the Constitution is a “living document”—the politics of judicial nominations become more significant and rancorous.

Beginning with the nomination and eventual rejection of Robert Bork in 1987, Supreme Court nominees whom the left see as threatening to their political goals have seen their careers and good names attacked personally and viciously to beat them into defeat. Bork's defeat broke new and dangerous ground—so much so that his name is now used as a verb in political circles to describe using one's personal beliefs as a proxy for opposition.

If the courts weren't making the policy decisions on some of the most controversial issues of the day, would any of these inquisition-style hearings be happening?

Regardless, the politics of judicial appointments has become one of the most important issues of elections because the decisions of the courts reverberate through culture. For conservative voters, the Supreme Court's record in recent years is




WHERE THEY STAND

Joe Biden	Donald Trump
Appoint Liberal/Activist Judges	Appoint Originalist Judges
<p>“I’m going to make sure that we start by reversing the damage Donald Trump has done to the federal bench. ... We have to win back the Senate, the single most consequential thing we can do beyond getting Donald Trump out of office, and we can do it with your help.”</p>	<p>“From the beginning of my campaign, I promised to appoint judges who will adhere to the true and original meaning of our Constitution.”</p> <p>“While I’m your president, we will continue to nominate highly qualified judges who truly love our Constitution.”</p>

Constitution. Now, any judge who is nominated to the Supreme Court, or any federal court for that matter, must have an unambiguous record in their legal opinions and other writings of actually believing and defending constitutional principles, or they simply won’t get support from conservatives.

Over the next four years, there will be many more vacancies to be filled on the U.S. District Courts, the Courts of Appeals and, potentially, the Supreme Court. Few can argue against the notion that we need men and women in the judiciary with the humility to refrain from making policy and the integrity to uphold the Constitution as written, regardless of the direction the cultural winds may be blowing. Although we don’t get to vote on the judges, we do get to decide who appoints them. It is an awesome responsibility and one that may well determine what kind of country we leave to our children and grandchildren.

The Supreme Court, with a very slight 5-4 conservative makeup, is currently on the precipice and could go either way, depending on the next president. For liberal voters, another justice or two will allow them to reach the political goals they could not accomplish through the normal democratic process. For conservative voters in 2020, it is a chance to solidify the high court for decades to come in protecting founding freedoms, like life and religious freedom, and a judiciary returning to the original language of the Constitution. The future of America and the courts will be significantly determined by the election that is only weeks away. 

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KELLY SHACKELFORD IS PRESIDENT, CEO AND CHIEF COUNSEL FOR FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE, A NONPROFIT LAW FIRM AND THINK TANK EXCLUSIVELY DEDICATED TO DEFENDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR ALL AMERICANS. READ MORE AT FIRSTLIBERTY.ORG.

mixed. On the positive side, in just the past two terms, the court in several decisions has protected religious liberty. Last year, it upheld the constitutionality of religious symbols in the public square in its landmark *The American Legion v. American Humanist Association* opinion, protecting the Bladensburg Peace Cross.

This term, it protected religious schools in their freedom to make employment decisions without government interference and ruled against government discrimination of faith-based schools and organizations. In its next term, the Supreme Court will again make crucial decisions, including a case that could decide the

future of faith-based child placement and adoption organizations.

At the same time, the conservative voters are very upset about recent judicial decisions that struck down pro-life laws and redefined the term *sex* in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include terms like *sexual orientation* and *transgender*.

As a result, conservative voters insist that future Supreme Court nominees be unquestionably solid in their commitment to the Constitution, instead of their own predilections. There are a large number of lower court judges, many nominated by President Trump, who have solid, public records on religious liberty, judicial philosophy and the

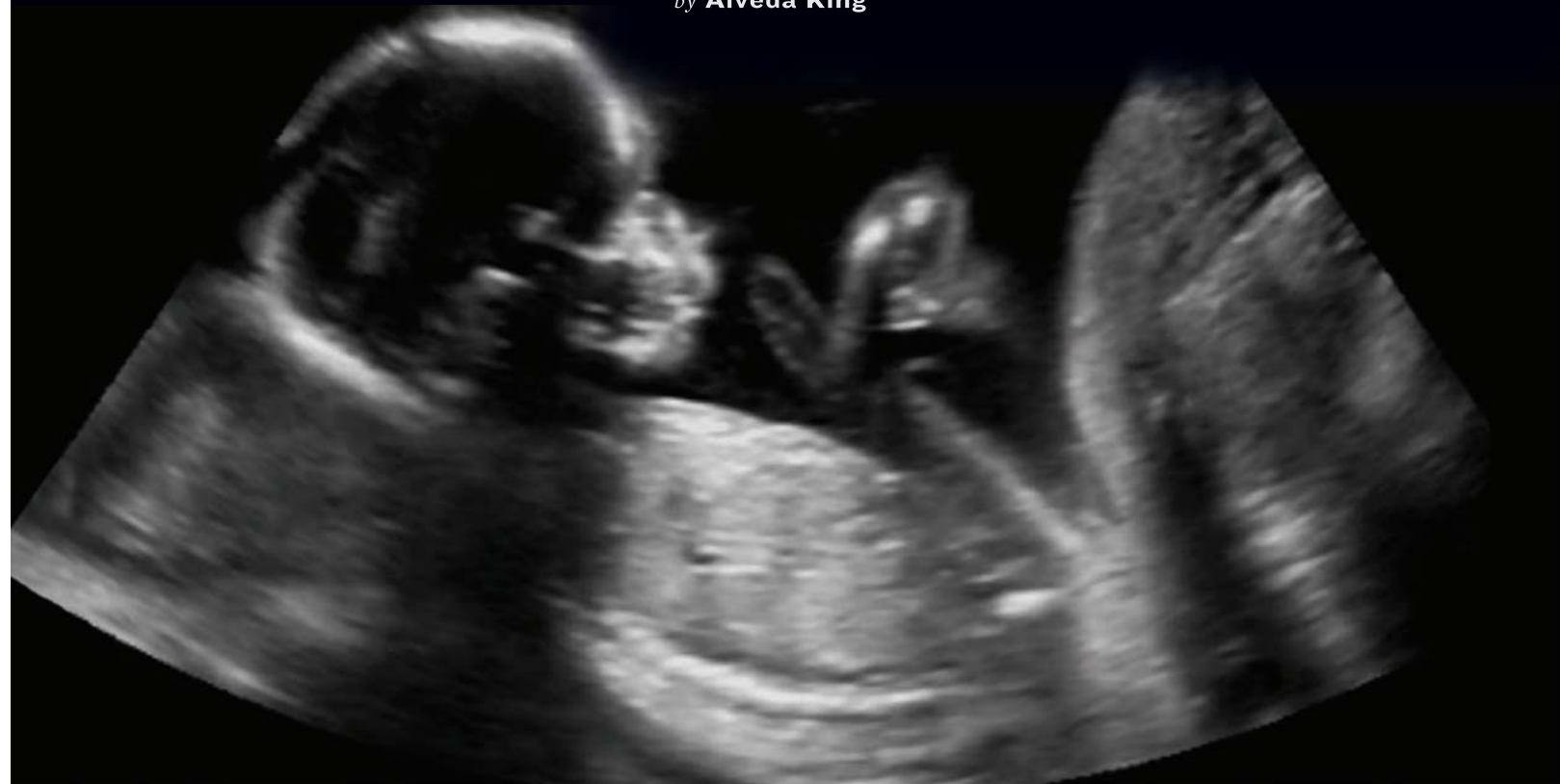
Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.

—JEREMIAH 1:5, NKJV

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR THE UNBORN

WILL THE GOVERNMENT FORCE ABORTION AT ALL COSTS?

by Alveda King





Alveda King

Abortion is a civil wrong; life is a civil right! From the womb to the tomb, we as human beings are one blood, one race. The

two major candidates in this year’s presidential election—and the parties they represent—have starkly differing views on this issue, and as Christians prepare to vote, they must be aware of the future that each side hopes to deliver.

In his first term as president of the United States, Donald Trump has made the nation safer for the unborn, as well as for people whose religious and moral convictions make it impossible for them to have anything to do with the slaughter of the innocents that is legal abortion.

The president has stripped the abortion industry of millions in federal funding by formalizing the Protect Life Rule under the Title X program, which mandates the financial and physical separation of an abortion business from a clinic that provides birth control to patients. Those working in the family planning clinic cannot refer their patients for abortion.

Because of this rule, Planned Parenthood, the nation’s leading abortion business, decided to leave Title X rather than give up or relocate its lucrative trade in child killing. While it was not a full defunding of Planned Parenthood, it did take away \$60 million in taxpayer money. The bulk of the organization’s federal money comes from Medicaid reimbursements.

The president also vowed to

WHERE THEY STAND

Joe Biden	Donald Trump
Pro-Abortion	Pro-Life
<p>“I support a woman’s right to choose. I support ‘it’s a constitutional right.’ I’ve supported it and I will continue to support it, and I will, in fact, move as president to see to it that the Congress legislates that that is [the law] as well.”</p>	<p>“Every life brings love into this world. Every child brings joy to a family. Every person is worth protecting. And above all, we know that ... every human life—born and unborn—is made in the holy image of Almighty God.”</p>

veto any pro-abortion legislation that reaches his desk. That has not happened this term because neither party has full control of Congress. But that vow could come into play if he is elected to a second term.

The president and his administration protected Priests for Life (the ministry for which I work) and other pro-life organizations from having to cover early abortions in the health insurance plans we offer our employees. That is exactly what the Obama-Biden HHS mandate was attempting to do. Under an exemption that President Trump expanded, Priests for Life, the Little Sisters of the Poor and every employer with a sincere religious or moral objection to providing drugs and devices that cause very early abortion is now protected from the deadly mandate.

Priests for Life would never have complied, but the fines the Obama administration was hoping to levy would have been ruinous.

Our nation’s regrettable role as abortion provider to the world also ended under President Trump. In

1984, President Ronald Reagan enacted the Mexico City Policy, prohibiting U.S. dollars from being funneled to overseas organizations that perform or promote abortion.

The Mexico City Policy has long been a sort of political seesaw, with Democrat presidents overturning it and Republicans reinstating it. But President Trump went further than any of his pro-life predecessors by expanding the rules to apply beyond just family planning organizations to all aid groups, preventing some \$8.8 billion from going to abortion services or advocacy.

In March 2019, the president cut funding to the Organization of American States and prohibited the use of U.S. tax dollars to lobby for or against abortion rights.

“We will enforce a strict prohibition on backdoor funding schemes and end runs around our policy,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said at the time.

Perhaps the most enduring thing President Trump has done for the unborn and those who advocate for them is to fulfill his vow to nominate originalist judges. The president has nominated, and the U.S. Senate has confirmed, more than 200 judges for the federal district courts and the courts of appeal. He has placed two pro-life justices on the U.S. Supreme

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.

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“In the White House right now, we have the most pro-life president in our history.

With four more years, President Trump may have the opportunity to nominate one or even two or more Supreme Court justices.”

Court. Most of these jurists are young people whose lifetime appointments will offer protection from the Democrat-appointed activist judges who have perverted our Constitution for decades.

These accomplishments, and many more, came about because in the White House right now, we have the most pro-life president in our history. With four more years, President Trump may have the opportunity to nominate one or even two or more Supreme Court justices. A solid pro-life majority, even without the vote of Chief Justice John Roberts, would be able to uphold laws put in place to protect the unborn and the health and safety of their mothers.

Based on public statements and the party platform, there is reason to believe that many of these gains will vanish if Joe Biden—or any Democrat—is elected president. Supreme Court nominees will be as extreme in their abortion beliefs as the president who nominates them. Pro-life laws will fall.

If the Democrats retain the House and reclaim the Senate, the unborn will be in a more vulnerable position than they ever have been, because the “safe, legal and rare” of the Clinton years—no matter how disingenuous that may have been—has given way to “abortion on demand and without apology.”

Let’s look at what a pro-abortion president could accomplish.

The Mexico City Policy could be reversed and the U.S. could again export its poisonous ideology along with its foreign aid.

The Protect Life Rule could be

killed with the stroke of a pen, restoring hundreds of millions of Title X dollars to the abortion industry. Planned Parenthood not only could reap a harvest of \$60 million but, many believe, could become a cabinet-level department in a Democrat administration.

By this move, Planned Parenthood could make an end run around two constant battles: that of funding or defunding the mega-abortion business, and that of having access to the public schools. Planned Parenthood—likely with a new, family friendly name—could take over school health departments, and sex education programs could aim (as most do already) for every student to become sexually active as early as possible.

Biden has already vowed to put the HHS mandate, discussed earlier, back in place, and thus reignite the battle between religious groups and the government. And a year ago, he flipped on his long support for keeping the Hyde

Amendment in place. That amendment—which has to be renewed yearly—keeps the hard-earned money of pro-life citizens from funding abortions. Biden and the Democrat platform have committed to eliminate it. If Biden had a Democrat House and Senate, the Hyde Amendment would be history.

A Democrat trifecta also would ensure that *Roe v. Wade* was codified, making legal abortion the law of the land, even if the Supreme Court voted to overturn *Roe*. Every law aimed at protecting the unborn in every state that has passed one would be nullified. Teenagers would no longer need parental consent or even notification to get an abortion anywhere in the nation; ultrasound laws, mandated waiting periods and conscience protections for health care workers would be gone; pain-capable bills that protect babies from the brutality of a late-term abortion would be overridden. The fight to pass a born-alive law would be lost.





ABOVE:

Franklin Graham and Cissie Graham Lynch participate in this year's March for Life in January in Washington, D.C.

“The president also vowed to veto any pro-abortion legislation that reaches his desk. That has not happened this term because neither party has full control of Congress.


But that vow could come into play if he is elected to a second term.”

The born-alive law isn't even about abortion; it merely mandates life-saving care for a newborn infant who survives abortion. But as we know from the radio interview where Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam accidentally told the truth, pro-abortion fanatics don't believe these tiny survivors are entitled to anything but to be made comfortable while they die.

If President Trump, America's most pro-life president ever, returns to the White House, things will not be this dire, even if the Democrats control the House and Senate. His vow to veto any pro-abortion law could still stand, thus offering vital protection to the unborn no matter what evil Congress cooked up.

Christians have a lot to think about this election, with so many issues of importance to so many hanging in

the balance. I understand that often we pro-lifers are chastised for being single-issue voters, but I agree wholeheartedly with Father Frank Pavone, the national director of Priests for Life, that while there are many issues, it is the right to life that makes anything an issue to begin with. It is the foundation of every other right; without life, we don't have anything.

Life is an inalienable right promised to us in our Declaration of Independence. Life reaches beyond politics, beyond religion. If you want to vote with a clear conscience, the best vote is a vote for life.  ©2020

ALVEDA KING

ALVEDA KING, THE NIECE OF THE REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., IS THE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL RIGHTS FOR THE UNBORN, A MINISTRY OF PRIESTS FOR LIFE.



Johnnie Moore

In his memoir, “Just As I Am,” Billy Graham summarized the importance of international religious freedom to the fulfillment of the Great Commission while reflecting upon his first trip to Moscow.

“I left Moscow in 1959,” Mr. Graham wrote, “with a dream, a hope and a prayer that someday I, along

difference around the world.

Just look at what happened on April 30, 2018, when President Donald Trump stood next to the visiting Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari in a Rose Garden at full bloom.

You might not remember the day, but Buhari will likely never forget it.

It was the day when the leader of the world’s most affluent and powerful country, the president of the United States, dispensed of all diplomatic niceties and confronted

For those Americans who’ve paid any attention to the slow march to genocide against Christians in northern and central Nigeria, the comment by the president might have felt like something obvious and even expected.

But it wasn’t what Buhari, or many other leaders around the world, had become accustomed to from previous administrations.

That’s because religious freedom has often been *part* of American

WHAT’S AT STAKE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

by **Johnnie Moore**



A man stands in a church that was destroyed by Muslim extremists in Niger, Africa.

with many others, might proclaim the Gospel throughout that vast country.”

Eventually his dream would come true.

In 1992, less than one year after the fall of the Soviet Union, Mr. Graham held a Crusade in Moscow that drew more than 100,000 people to the country’s Olympic Stadium—a miracle made possible by freedom.

A world where freedom of religion exists is a world where the Gospel can advance easily. Unfortunately, we are living in a world where freedom of religion is under attack. Christians and other religious communities are being persecuted on an incomprehensible scale.

When religious freedom is prioritized in the foreign policy of the United States, it makes a major

the Nigerian president on live video in front of the entire world about the one subject he wasn’t interested in speaking about.

“We’re deeply concerned by religious violence in Nigeria,” President Trump said as he addressed Buhari

foreign policy but rarely at the very *heart* of our foreign policy as it has been in the Trump administration.

President Trump, for instance, hosted the first-ever event dedicated to religious freedom at the United Nations General Assembly. At the

“When religious freedom is prioritized in the foreign policy of the United States, it makes a major difference around the world.”

directly, “including the burning of churches, and the killing and persecution of Christians.”

Then, he demanded that Buhari’s government do “everything in [its] power to immediately secure ... [and] protect innocent civilians of all faiths.”

event he said, “Today, with one clear voice, the United States of America calls upon the nations of the world to end religious persecution.”

This is why the president has twice assembled foreign ministers from around the world for an annual ministerial on religious freedom. Those



events were the largest human rights events of any kind ever convened by any administration.

This is why President Trump fought for the release of Pastor Andrew Brunson, and even sanctioned Turkey, a NATO member, until its economy nearly crashed, in order to achieve Brunson's release.

He has sanctioned countless leaders, and countries, for religious freedom violations (like China, Iran, Cuba and Venezuela), and he has funded at least a half-billion dollars of special humanitarian assistance through USAID to promote religious freedom. He has also required religious freedom training for every single State Department employee.

Religious freedom was on the administration's mind when U.S. Armed Forces tracked and killed the head of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. That operation was named after Kayla Mueller, a young Christian aid worker whom al-Baghdadi had personally held captive and killed.

The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 made it the policy of the U.S. government not only to condemn violations of religious freedom but to also promote and assist other governments in the promotion of the fundamental right to freedom of religion. But some administrations have chosen to turn a blind eye to certain religious liberty violations for the sake of political correctness.

Take, for instance, the Obama-Biden administration. They appointed an ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom and a special envoy to combat anti-Semitism. But, when it came to Nigeria, they were reticent to shine too bright a light on the religious conflict in the country because they were exceptionally cautious about offending President Buhari, who is Muslim. Despite the fact that the terrorists raiding villages were chanting "Allahu akbar," a common Arabic phrase meaning "God is great," the administration insisted the conflict was just between

farmers and herders, not Muslims and Christians.

Promoting religious freedom, of course, demands that countries address the insecurity of threatened religious communities. It requires talk about *religion*.

Similarly, administrations sometimes opt for the "carrot" over the "stick" as the previous administration did with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of China—countries that are among the world's

both houses of Congress to persuade the Obama-Biden administration to finally acknowledge there was an actual genocide by ISIS at work in their caliphate.

Thankfully, we still live in a country where religious freedom will be some component of foreign policy, no matter who is in power or what political party dominates the executive, judicial and legislative branches.

Every American administration has given attention to the fundamen-

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

—MATTHEW 28:19, NKJV

WHERE THEY STAND

Joe Biden	Donald Trump
Conditionally Supports	Unconditionally Supports
"We defend religious liberty ... against violent extremists" [but] "never use it as a cover for discrimination." [Rather], "we will restore ... leadership on LGBTQ+ issues" [and] "amplify the voices of LGBTQ+ persons around the world."	"America's first freedom is a moral and national security imperative. Religious freedom for all people worldwide is a foreign policy priority ... and the United States will respect and vigorously promote this freedom."

foremost persecutors of Christians and other religious communities (including the millions of Muslim Uyghurs in China enduring torture in concentration camps). Rather than dealing with the problem of religious persecution as a top policy priority, it was relegated to a secondary list for consideration.

Iran, for instance, wasn't required to release all its religious prisoners of conscience or to stop shouting "death to Israel" and "death to the United States" as a prerequisite for the failed Iran nuclear deal. And when ISIS was decimating Christian and Yazidi communities in northern Iraq, it took unanimous resolutions in

tal human right of religious freedom, but not every administration has made it a top priority in its foreign policy—like the Trump administration. ©2020 JOHNNIE MOORE

JOHNNIE MOORE IS PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND A COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. HE IS ALSO THE AUTHOR OF A NEWLY RELEASED BOOK: "THE NEXT JIHAD: STOP THE CHRISTIAN GENOCIDE IN AFRICA." VIEWS ARE HIS OWN.

Where The Parties Stand

PARTY PLATFORMS AND STANCES

Compiled by *Decision* staff



Every four years, as delegates from both major American political parties gather to officially nominate a presidential candidate and running mate, the party platforms are finalized and adopted, and policy positions are set for at least the next four years.

In August, with the coronavirus altering how the conventions conducted their business, the Republican Party met in Charlotte, North Carolina, streamlining its official proceedings and relying on its 2016 platform to stake out a consensus of who it is and what it believes. The Democratic Party, meeting in Milwaukee, chose to adopt a new party platform. What follows is a comparison—drawn from those platforms, the Democratic and Republican party websites, and public statements—on where the two major parties stand on key issues for evangelical voters.








“I think it’s the duty of every individual Christian at election time to study the issues, study the candidates, then go to the polls and vote.” —BILLY GRAHAM, 1952

ISSUE	DEMOCRATIC	REPUBLICAN
 <p>Abortion on Demand & Federal Funding</p>	<p>Democrats say they will “restore funding for Planned Parenthood” and will oppose and “fight to overturn federal and state laws that create barriers to women’s reproductive health and rights. We will repeal the Hyde Amendment, and protect and codify <i>Roe v. Wade</i>.” Congressional Democrats have repeatedly defeated “born-alive” protection bills and supported increased funding for abortion domestically and internationally.</p>	<p>In keeping with the belief that “the family is the bedrock of our nation,” the GOP platform affirms, “The unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed.” The GOP supports a Human Life Amendment and state laws requiring informed consent, parental consent, waiting periods and clinic regulation. The GOP has broadly supported President Trump’s ending of funds for international abortions and partial defunding of Planned Parenthood.</p>
 <p>Religious Liberty & Conscience Rights</p>	<p>Although the party states: “Democrats celebrate America’s history of religious pluralism and tolerance,” the platform says they will “reject the Trump administration’s use of broad exemptions to allow businesses, medical providers, social service agencies and others to discriminate,” meaning policies would aim to give preference to LGBTQ rights in cases in which religious exercise and rights of conscience conflict with liberalized interpretations of sexuality.</p>	<p>Republicans affirm that religious freedom in the Bill of Rights protects the right of the people to practice their faith in their everyday lives. The platform endorses the First Amendment Defense Act, which would protect faith-based institutions and individuals from government discrimination. Additionally, the Trump administration has instructed federal agencies to accommodate rights of conscience for government employees, reversing Obama-era policies.</p>

ISSUE	DEMOCRATIC	REPUBLICAN
 <p data-bbox="180 636 402 753">Human Rights & Global Religious Freedom</p>	<p data-bbox="483 338 948 800">Democrats laud religious freedom as a “fundamental human right,” but will never “use it as a cover for discrimination.” The platform vows support for Iraq’s Christians and Yazidis, China’s persecuted Uyghurs and other religious minorities. Also: “We will restore the United States’ position of leadership on LGBTQ+ issues” in diplomacy and foreign policy, advancing the GLOBE Act and making LGBTQ issues a priority at the State Department, USAID and the National Security Council.</p>	<p data-bbox="985 338 1458 768">The GOP favors integrating human rights issues into every level of diplomatic relations. Beginning in 2018, the U.S. has hosted an annual Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, drawing an international coalition to defend and promote global religious freedom. “Religious freedom for all people worldwide is a foreign policy priority of the United States, and the United States will respect and vigorously promote this freedom,” President Trump wrote on June 2.</p>
 <p data-bbox="188 1167 394 1205">Federal Judges</p>	<p data-bbox="483 888 938 1318">The Democratic platform says: “Our courts should reflect our country. Democrats will appoint people to the bench who are committed to seeing justice be served, and treating each case on its merits. We will nominate and confirm federal judges who have diverse backgrounds and experiences, including as public defenders, legal aid attorneys and civil rights lawyers.” Candidate Biden has vowed to seek judges who “respect” the <i>Roe v. Wade</i> abortion ruling.</p>	<p data-bbox="985 888 1458 1283">The GOP platform states: “A critical threat to our country’s constitutional order is an activist judiciary that usurps powers properly reserved to the people through other branches of government.” The party supports the appointment of justices and judges who respect the constitutional limits on their power and respect the authority of the states. President Trump has promised to continue working to appoint conservative federal judges.</p>
 <p data-bbox="126 1755 456 1835">Economic Empowerment & Poverty</p>	<p data-bbox="483 1444 959 1808">The platform says: “Americans deserve an economy that works for everyone ... it is a moral and an economic imperative that we support working families by rebuilding the American middle class.” The party supports raising the minimum wage to \$15/hr., helping make home ownership more attainable, eradicating homelessness, “ending poverty and enabling all Americans to live up to their God-given potential.”</p>	<p data-bbox="985 1444 1442 1808">The GOP supports eradicating welfare dependence by proposing “the dynamic compassion of work requirements in a growing economy, where opportunity takes the place of a handout, where true self-esteem can grow from the satisfaction of a job well done.” The Trump administration included Opportunity Zones in the 2017 tax reform law to spur economic opportunity in poor areas.</p>



ISSUE	DEMOCRATIC	REPUBLICAN
 <p data-bbox="180 632 410 667">National Defense</p>	<p data-bbox="488 338 961 800">The platform says the U.S. military “must be the most effective fighting force in the world.” To keep it that way, Democrats “will bring forever wars to a responsible end,” rationalize the defense budget, invest in future technologies, repair civil-military relations, and strengthen the covenant with service members, veterans and military families. They vow to reverse the Trump administration’s transgender ban and rebuild trust in the VA while improving mental health outcomes for veterans.</p>	<p data-bbox="990 338 1463 768">The Republican platform favors building and maintaining a strong military as the path to peace and security. The party’s Principles for American Renewal says: “Keeping America safe and strong requires a strong military, growing the economy, energy independence and secure borders.” The party platform seeks to restore the nation’s military might and to rebuild troop numbers. Military pay has risen more than 2% each year since 2017, after six years of raises below 2%.</p>
 <p data-bbox="159 1150 431 1314">The ‘Equality Act’ & Sexual Orientation Gender Identity (SOGI) Laws</p>	<p data-bbox="488 888 961 1350">Candidate Biden has vowed to fast-track the Equality Act, which would federalize sexual orientation and gender identity in laws across the nation with detrimental outcomes for public education, domestic religious liberty and many other arenas. The Democratic Party has not taken a position on SOGI laws <i>per se</i>, but the party platform and party position statements, as well as legislative actions, have strongly supported “LGBTQ+” rights when they have conflicted with the religious beliefs of faith groups.</p>	<p data-bbox="990 888 1463 1350">President Trump has continued to signal opposition to the Equality Act—a bill that would create legal chaos as sexual rights collide with the religious beliefs and practices of millions of Americans. The GOP platform doesn’t mention SOGI laws, but it includes strong statements in support of “traditional marriage and family” as “the foundation for a free society, and has for millennia been entrusted with rearing children and instilling cultural values.” It laments the Supreme Court ruling legalizing national gay marriage.</p>
 <p data-bbox="175 1780 415 1816">Israel & Jerusalem</p>	<p data-bbox="488 1503 961 1892">“Democrats believe a strong, secure, and democratic Israel is vital to the interests of the United States. Our commitment to Israel’s security, ... its right to defend itself, and the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding is ironclad.” Democrats support Jerusalem as the capital and oppose efforts to “unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel.” They oppose settlement expansion and any steps that “undermine prospects for two states.”</p>	<p data-bbox="990 1503 1463 1892">Republicans express “unequivocal support for Israel,” pointing out that it is the only Middle Eastern country with freedom of speech and freedom of religion. The GOP recognizes “Jerusalem as the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jewish state.” The party opposes the U.N.’s treatment of Israel as a “pariah state.” In 2018, President Trump moved the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, fulfilling a campaign promise.</p>

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR THE FAMILY

The American family is not only in crisis but also under attack

by Samuel Rodriguez



My favorite part of the day is when I get to sit down and eat a meal with my family. As we partake of the food we are blessed with, we talk. We laugh. We cry. We express frustration. Sometimes, we are silent. My wife, my children, my grandchildren and I are all very different people, but the



Samuel Rodriguez



table is what brings us together.

When I think about the family table, I think about Jesus and how much of His ministry was done over meals, around a shared table. He revealed Himself in the breaking of bread. Men and women were changed because as they sat and ate with Him, their eyes were opened and their hearts healed.

According to Dr. Anne K. Fishel, co-founder of Harvard University’s The Family Dinner Project: “Sharing a family meal is good for the spirit, the brain and the health of all family members. Recent studies link regular family dinners with many behaviors that parents pray for: lower rates of substance abuse, teen pregnancy and depression, as well as higher grade-point averages and self-esteem.”

Additionally, Fishel writes, “Studies also indicate that for young children, dinner conversation is a more potent vocabulary-booster than reading, and the stories told around the kitchen table help our children build resilience.”

Sadly, while families like mine are sharing a meal and enjoying the fellowship founded on Christ, many more American families are fractured by divorce, drug and alcohol abuse, infidelity, debt, online addictions or all-consuming jobs that keep parents and children apart.

The policies that elected government leaders put in place can make keeping families together easier or more difficult. And it’s clear that today the American family is not only in crisis but also under attack.

The statistics are heartbreaking. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Child Welfare Information Gateway indicates that in September 2017, there were more

“The Lamb’s agenda calls us to submit to the government out of reverence for God but be willing to speak up when there is a clear violation of Biblical values. The Lamb’s agenda leads us to reject socialistic and communistic ideals that threaten personal freedoms and to speak Biblical truth to our culture and our leaders.”

WHERE THEY STAND

Joe Biden	Donald Trump
Progressive	Conservative
<p>“On his first day in office, Biden will reinstate the Obama-Biden guidance revoked by the Trump-Pence administration, which will restore transgender students’ access to sports, bathrooms and locker rooms in accordance with their gender identity. ... Biden will ensure that LGBTQ+ individuals have full access to all appropriate health care treatments and resources. This includes covering care related to transitioning.”</p> <p>—Biden campaign website</p>	<p>“The happiest people I know are those people who have great families and real values. I’ve seen it. I know it. People who have a loving spouse and have children they really love are happy people. Religion also plays a very large factor in happiness. People who have God in their lives receive a tremendous amount of joy and satisfaction from their faith.”</p> <p>—Donald Trump, in <i>Great Again: How to Fix our Crippled America</i></p>

than 440,000 children in the foster care system.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics also reports that in 2019 parents with a child under the age of 18 at home spent an average of just 1.36 hours per day total “caring for and helping household children” as their main activity (this total included activities such as physical care, reading, playing and education—meals were not included in this count).

And the National Fatherhood

Initiative estimates that nearly 20 million children in America “live without a father in the home.” In black and Latino families, the statistics paint an even more dire picture: One in four Hispanic children and nearly half of all black children live with their mother only.

If you were to take a look at America’s family photo album, about one out of every four pictures would be missing a father figure.

Our culture tells us that gender



is fluid, marriage is not the sacred union of a man and a woman and that a fetus in the womb is simply a mass of cells. Our nation celebrates the polarization of our society with identity politics and jeers at those who try to unite us.

Unfortunately, in this



moment of crisis, many followers

of Jesus have started trusting in the political agendas of the Donkey or the Elephant for deliverance. We have forgotten that we are called to follow a higher set of principles—the agenda of the Lamb.

From Scripture, we understand that life begins in the womb and that God’s design for the nuclear family centers around a father and mother in marriage. Yet, we live in a fallen world where laws and government policies defy God’s design for the family, rendering many homes as merely a shelter instead of the refuge of peace, protection, purpose and promise that God intends them to be.

In Ephesians 3:14-15, the Apostle Paul acknowledges that God defines the family when he writes: “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.”

So, as we think about what the family is and why we must protect it, we need to carefully discern whether or not the political platforms of the Donkey and the Elephant reflect the Kingdom priorities of the Lamb of God.

When I consider the life of Jesus, I see that He has an agenda for His Kingdom that is not of this world (John 18:36). And I also see Him pray for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven (Matthew 6:10).

We are called by God to care for His family: children—born and unborn—orphans, single parents, immigrants, refugees, the elderly, the incarcerated, the homeless, those with different abilities, human trafficking survivors and abuse survivors. This is by no means an exhaustive list. To be pro-life is to be pro-all life.

Being pro-life means standing

against domestic violence and child abuse in all of its forms, including the growing use of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones on children who suffer from gender dysphoria. It means supporting those struggling with addictions and mental health issues, aiding those facing poverty, and pursuing justice for the oppressed.

Those who follow the agenda of the Lamb must fight for religious liberty for all, as this First Amendment right is foundational to our society and to human flourishing.

The Lamb’s agenda calls us to submit to the government out of reverence for God but be willing to speak up when there is a clear violation of Biblical values. The Lamb’s agenda leads us to reject socialistic and communistic ideals that threaten personal freedoms and to speak Biblical

truth to our culture and our leaders.

If we claim to follow Jesus, then we must pursue His agenda as we gather around His table together and as we live out His mission in the public square.

How do we bring the agenda of the Lamb to the voting booth?

Our policies need to be informed by Scripture, not the other way around. This is of paramount importance as the election for our next president—an election that could have generational consequences for our nation—is only a month away.

To say that America is more divided than ever is a vast understatement. A recent Pew Research survey indicates how far apart our two primary political parties are on just about every issue, which is why we need to focus on policies rather than personalities and politics.

For instance, our country is in desperate need of immigration and criminal justice reforms. Our children need to be protected from perverse and pornographic sexual education and gender-transition affirming curricula that schools are pushing on them at a young age. Racism, classism and sexism continue to cause suffering and harm.

There is no perfect presidential candidate. We cannot look to one man or one woman to save us from ourselves. Only Jesus can do that. Rather, we need to take a prayerful look at the





“We must pray and think Biblically as we exercise our right and responsibility to vote in local, state and national elections.”

issues and then take a thoughtful look at policies that are being set forth. Which are most aligned with the Lamb’s agenda? We must pray and think Biblically as we exercise our right and responsibility to vote in local, state and national elections.

Yet, while the issues surrounding the upcoming presidential election certainly merit our attention, we need to look beyond 2020. We need to think about the family table. And as we do, we ought to ask ourselves this question: Who was at Jesus’ table?

The men and women Jesus invited to follow Him could not have been more different. They were fishermen, tax collectors, political zealots and rebels, religious leaders, criminals, Samaritans, Romans, people who suffered physical and mental illnesses, young, old, rich, poor—“sinners.” I imagine Jesus’ followers often got

into arguments with one another; (see Luke 22:24-30). They often had little in common socially except their relationship with Him.

But as they shared meals together with Him, their differences melted away as they embraced the agenda of the Lamb.

So, what does this mean for those of us who follow Jesus?

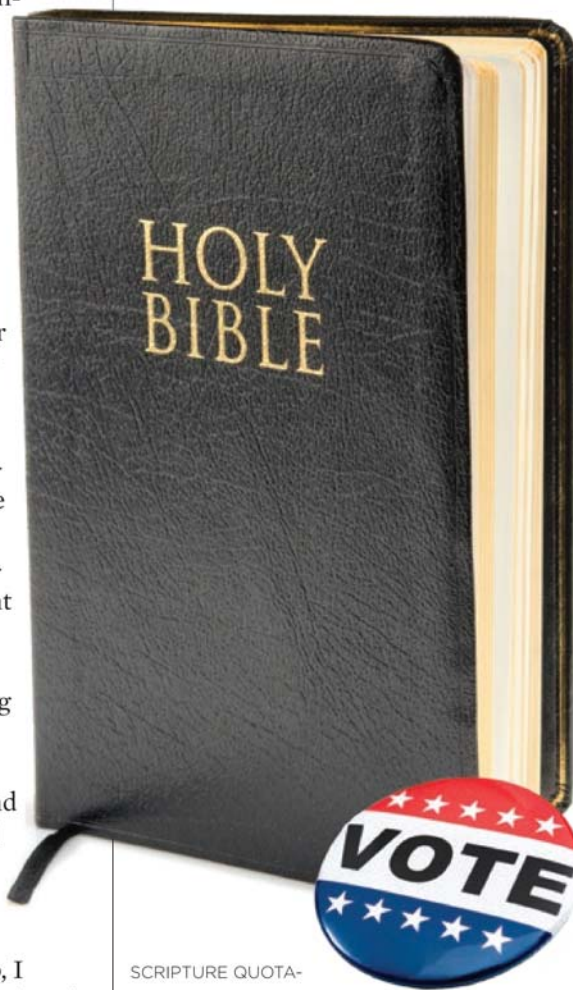
Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work closely with three administrations. Under President George W. Bush, I worked toward improving our nation’s educational system. Under President Barack Obama, I worked on addressing our nation’s fatherlessness crisis by serving on The President’s Advisory

Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Under President Donald Trump, I have worked on immigration reform and protections for DACA recipients.

I have been heard because I advocate for others from the Lamb’s agenda, not from a certain political agenda.

Our Christian witness demands that we listen to each other, respect each other, learn from each other and work with each other, regardless of where we may fall on the political spectrum. Jesus told His followers in Luke 13:29, “And people will come from east and west, and from north

and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.” The table still represents our opportunity to nurture hearts and communicate truth while restoring God’s Biblical blueprint for the family. **D** ©2020 SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ



SCRIPTURE QUOTATIONS ARE TAKEN FROM THE HOLY BIBLE, ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION.

SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ IS PASTOR OF NEW SEASON WORSHIP CENTER IN SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE. HIS LATEST BOOK, “FROM SURVIVE TO THRIVE,” IS SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE ON OCT. 6.



POLITICS: HOW INVOLVED SHOULD CHRISTIANS BE?

The Biblical foundation for proper political engagement

by David Closson



David Closson

Do Christians have a moral or Biblical obligation to participate in government? Is there a distinctively Christian way to engage in the political process? Do Christians have a duty to vote, and if so, what principles should inform them as they cast their ballots?

Some say that Christians ought to be wary of associating too closely

with elected officials or political parties because it risks conflating the responsibility of the church with that of the state. They ask: If God is sovereign and controls the heart of the king (Proverbs 21:1), why risk compromising our Gospel witness by getting involved in something so divisive? Others maintain that Christians ought to be heavily involved with politicians and partisan politics. They say that because politics are so important, it is worth investing significant resources to

educate and mobilize the congregation for political activity.

The Gospel applies to all areas of life, and the Bible instructs us about government and political authority. Scripture advocates neither total withdrawal from the political process nor overinvestment in it. Thus, we need a third approach, a model in which actively engaged Christians faithfully apply Biblical principles to the current political challenges. But what does this model look like? What are the principles that can



view suggest that Christians should exclusively focus on sharing the Good News and discipling others in the faith because Jesus' final command was to make disciples (Matthew 28:16-20). In other words, because political engagement does not lead someone to faith in Christ, it is not considered a top priority.

However, upon closer examination of Scripture, this objection fails to account for a broader perspective of politics, one that incorporates how people order their lives and affairs and the reality that the Christian worldview has much to say about civic responsibility. Moreover, the objection does not consider the responsibility Christians have to steward the blessings and opportunities entrusted to them. Because voting is a matter of stewardship, Christians living in a constitutional republic

should care about the political process. Government was God's idea, and Christians should engage with it in a way that is consistent with its God-ordained purpose.

A second reason Christians should care about politics is that the Bible contains numerous examples of God's people engaging in politics as part of a holistic approach to ministry that meets both spiritual and temporal needs.

In the Old Testament, for example, Joseph and Daniel served in foreign administrations and used their influence to implement policies that benefited society. In the case of Joseph, during a devastating famine (Genesis 45:9-12), God used his position in the Egyptian government to protect and provide for his extended family (which would become the nation of Israel).

“By voting, Christians are entrusting their ‘sword-bearing’ responsibility to officials who will govern on their behalf. Seen from this perspective, voting is a matter of stewardship; failure to vote is a failure to exercise God-given authority.”

help us navigate our divisive political landscape?

WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT POLITICS?

There seems to be an assumption in some circles that politics is inherently defiled, and that political involvement is inappropriate for those serious about the Gospel. This view fits into what theologian Wayne Grudem calls the “Do Evangelism, Not Politics” approach to civic engagement. Adherents of this

should seek to vote in a way that honors God and advances the well-being of their neighbor.

In Romans 13:1-7, Paul describes the governing authorities as “ministers of God” and says they are responsible for administering civil justice. Although God is sovereign, He chooses to use human governments to carry out His will in the civil sphere. A Biblical basis for government is also found in Genesis 9, where God provides general authorization for action against murderers (Genesis 9:5-6). This passage implies that communities must form or support governments capable of administering justice.

Thus, the important role of government is one reason why Christians

Queen Esther used her influence in the Persian government to save the Jewish people from a state-sanctioned genocide (Esther 8). The Prophet Jeremiah instructed the exiles in Babylon to seek the welfare of their new city. He also commanded them to pray for the city, “for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jeremiah 29:7). A thriving society would benefit God's people as well as the city's other inhabitants.

Because government and its laws are an inextricable part of our lives, there is no way to avoid some level of involvement. This is true for Christians, who, though “sojourners and exiles” (1 Peter 2:11) in this world, are nevertheless citizens of the “City of Man” as well as the

“City of God.” Christians ought to endeavor to be good citizens of both cities and leverage their influence for the advancement of laws, policies and practices that contribute to the flourishing of our neighbors.

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS ENGAGE IN POLITICS?

We should never equate the church’s mission with the platform of a political party. But should Christians, and especially pastors, do more than call for cordial discourse and preach on a few moral issues? What Biblical principles should guide us when we vote?

In a republic like the United States, the locus of power is the citizenry; the government derives its authority from the people. Unlike billions of people around the world, Americans, through the ballot box, control their political future. Indeed, we are stewards of it, as we are stewards of everything else God has given us.

For Christian citizens, the implications of America’s form of government are even more significant when considered alongside Paul’s teaching on the purpose of government in Romans 13. According to Paul, government is ordained by God to promote good and restrain evil. God authorizes the government to wield the sword for the administration of justice.

Because power resides with the people in our republic, when Christians vote, they are delegating their ruling authority to others. In other words, by voting, Christians are entrusting their “sword-bearing” responsibility to officials who will govern on their behalf. Seen from this perspective, voting is a matter of stewardship; failure to vote is a failure to exercise God-given authority.

Further, given the United States’ far-reaching influence in the world, how can American Christians love the people of the nations well without having a vested interest in how our government approaches the issue of religious liberty and human rights

worldwide? Will America’s ambassadors be stalwart defenders of religious freedom overseas? Christians who support missionaries should care about the state of international religious freedom, an area of advocacy in which the U.S. exerts significant influence. Will abortion, under the euphemism of “family planning,” be funded overseas by American taxpayers, or will U.S. foreign policy value the life of the unborn? Again, American believers, by exercising their right to vote, have a direct say in these matters.

In light of these considerations, pastors should exhort their members to be involved in the political process and to vote. But voting is not enough. Pastors should also help educate and equip their members to think Biblically about moral issues, candidates and party platforms.

Although neither political party perfectly represents Christians, party platforms allow us to make thoughtful judgments regarding who we will support at election time. These platforms, which serve as proposed governing philosophies, allow Christians to see if and how the political parties prioritize issues on which the Bible clearly speaks.

Compelled by love for our

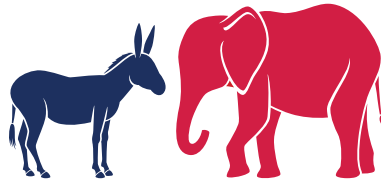
neighbors and a desire to steward our God-given responsibilities, we must, as Christians, engage in the political process. But we must engage Biblically. This requires that we be prepared to grapple with the moral issues of our day, the reality of our two-party system, and follow our Christian convictions to their logical end by voting for candidates and parties that support clear Biblical values. **D** ©2020 FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL

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SCRIPTURE QUOTATIONS ARE TAKEN FROM THE HOLY BIBLE, ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION.





WHAT'S AT STAKE

CONGRESS AND THE STATES

Compiled by *Decision* staff

The question of who becomes president has far-reaching global implications, many of which are detailed on the pages of this magazine. But thanks to the foresight of the nation's founders to establish a government with a balance of power among its three branches, no president has unchecked authority.

Thus, the choice voters make for the legislative branch of government—the United States Senate and House of Representatives—matters immensely. Without the House and Senate, no law can ever make it to the Oval Office to

be signed or vetoed. What's more, no federal judges, from the district courts to the Supreme Court, are confirmed without the Senate's approval. And there are dozens of government agencies that, without congressional oversight, could abuse their power.

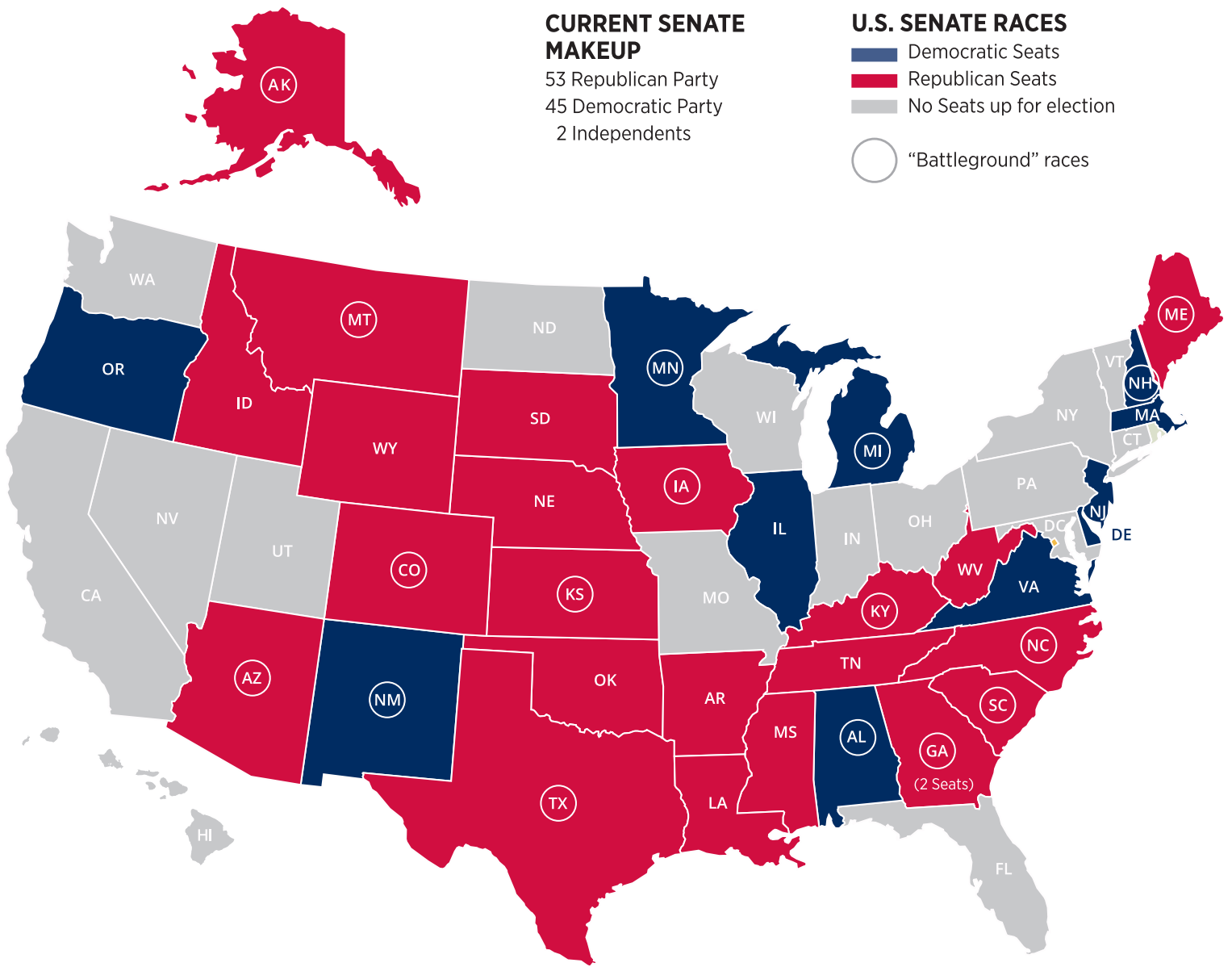
Closer to home, voters will choose governors, state legislators, mayors, city councils and school boards in races that have bearing on the everyday lives of citizens, either for good or evil. For the youngest kindergarten student to the elderly, elections have consequences.

In 2020:

- **35 Senate races are up for grabs**
- **435 House seats are open—the entire chamber**
- **11 states will choose governors**
- **86 state legislative chambers will hold elections**

THE U.S. SENATE

The political website Ballotpedia.org says 18 of the 35 seats up for grabs in the Senate this year are “battle-ground” races, meaning the races are competitive and the result could be significant for the balance of power



among the political parties.

In the 100-member Senate—which confirms or rejects key presidential nominees, including all federal judges—the Republican Party holds a slight edge, with 53 seats to the Democratic Party’s 45, and two independents. Democrats are seeking to turn the Senate in their favor. Since 2017, the GOP-led Senate has confirmed more than 200 of President Trump’s judicial nominees.

THE U.S. HOUSE

With all 435 seats up in the

general election, Democrats currently hold 232 to Republicans’ 198, with one Libertarian and four vacant seats. The House GOP has submitted 80 unanimous consent requests this year in order to move the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act to the floor for a vote, yet House Democrats have blocked it each time. Additionally, a discharge petition by the GOP, which would force a vote, has thus far fallen short, garnering only three Democrats (of 232) willing to sign it and about 15 signatures shy of succeeding.

REDISTRICTING EFFORTS

At the state level, redistricting for state and federal offices will take place after the 2020 elections. Except in a few cases, the state legislatures will decide how districts for state and federal offices will be divided. This is typically a highly partisan endeavor, with each party seeking an advantage in how a given district is drawn up. Whichever party controls redistricting often has an advantage in elections and, ultimately, which party controls Capitol Hill. ©2020 BGEA

HOW THE LEFT SEEKS TO MARGINALIZE CHRISTIANS

by Michael Brown



Michael Brown

For the last decade, I have said that the unspoken mantra of LGBTQ activists is, “We will intimidate and we will manipulate until you capitulate.” Today, those on

the radical left have upped the ante considerably, as their goal is not just capitulation but cancellation.

Their tactics are more extreme as well. They will pressurize, marginalize and brutalize—and I mean that quite literally. Physical violence has come into play.

When it comes to the November elections, which party is more likely to protect our religious freedoms? Which presidential candidate is more likely to push back against the marginalizing tactics of the radical left?

An Aug. 17 article at the *Daily Wire* reported that, “A professor of English at Iowa State University issued a syllabus for her class asserting that any student who opposes the pro-choice perspective or the Black Lives Matter movement will have created ‘grounds for dismissal from the classroom.’”

“Thou shalt not dissent!” is the prevailing campus slogan. Opposing views will not be tolerated. And if you try to bring an opposing view, you will be resisted—even physically.

Just ask conservatives like Ben Shapiro, an orthodox Jew, what happens when you try to give talks

A sign protesting the Samaritan’s Purse Emergency Field Hospital in Central Park in New York City on April 14.



Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.

—MATTHEW 10:26-27, NKJV

at schools like the University of California, Berkeley, where in 2017 more than 1,000 demonstrators had to be restrained by police as Shapiro gave a speech in a nearby campus building.

Add Jesus in the mix and things become even more intense. The vast majority of campuses won’t even consider bringing you in to speak if you are a Bible-believing Christian conservative. In fact, as far back as

2011, when my book “A Queer Thing Happened to America” was published, leaders of Christian campus ministries made clear to me that there was no possible way they would host me at their college or university.

In their minds, the potential negative consequences—in particular, the fear of being kicked off their campuses—outweighed the potential positive results. They dared not rock the boat.

This is why it was no surprise



when the *Harvard Crimson* reported in March that conservatives make up just over 1% of Harvard University's faculty.

Can you even imagine the level of marginalizing that produces, among both faculty and students? Can you imagine how difficult it is to speak out? And what happens when the bully pulpit of the White House is against you as well?

And to what extent do our kids, from kindergarten to graduation, experience undue pressure and marginalizing in our schools? School districts are under increasing pressure to teach elementary-aged children that they can choose what gender they wish to be.

Under the Obama administration, "gender identity" was included in the category of "sex," so a 15-year-old boy who identified as a girl could play on the girls' sports teams and share their locker rooms and bathrooms.

More than 20 states sued the administration over this ruling since the Obama administration had threatened to withhold federal school funding for any state that would not comply.

Under the Trump administration, that policy was reversed. But Democratic candidate Joe Biden has already pledged to reinstate the policy should he be elected.

The votes we cast in November will have very real implications.

Last year, New York City decided to ban all so-called "conversion therapy" for people of all ages. In other words, if you were a 40-year-old man, married to a woman but struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions, it would be illegal for you to receive professional counseling to help deal with those attractions. Should a counselor dare to meet with you, he or she would be subject to a fine of \$10,000 per incident.

Not only was this a slap in the face of individual liberties and a direct assault on patient-therapist privilege, but it also sought to marginalize and

cancel all ex-gays. "Such people do not exist!" they claim.

An Orthodox Jewish therapist challenged the ruling with the help of Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), and as a result the city reversed itself, removing the ban.

The city made this ruling before the case ever went to court. Why? As reported by *Reuters*, "Advocates fear the legal challenge by the ADF could make its way through the increasingly conservative federal courts to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"President Donald Trump has made scores of conservative judicial appointments, including two Supreme Court justices.

"If successful, advocates fear, the ADF case could give the conservative courts an opportunity to set legal precedents that could have broad negative implications for LGBT+ rights."

Biden-Harris?

Consider also the unequal treatment of churches during the COVID-19 crisis, as Democratic mayors and governors have declared that abortion clinics and liquor stores provide "essential services" while saying that churches do not.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has given the OK to BLM-related protests while forbidding Christians to sing in their (already limited) church services. He even banned Christians from meeting at homes for Bible studies. And in Nevada, Gov. Steve Sisolak has allowed casinos to operate at 50% capacity while a church building that can seat 2,000 people is limited to an attendance of 50. He even fined a casino for allowing a congregation to meet in its building.

With consistency, Attorney General William Barr, on behalf of the Trump administration, has pushed

"When it comes to the November elections, which party is more likely to protect our religious freedoms?"


Which presidential candidate is more likely to push back against the marginalizing tactics of the radical left?"

The Trump appointees have turned the courts in a more conservative direction, one that would push back against LGBTQ overreach, thereby fighting for those who are being marginalized.

The victory was so complete that New York City agreed to pay \$100,000 in legal fees and damages to the Orthodox Jewish counselor. But, if not for the presence of these conservative justices, the city would probably have not backed down, and "progressive" judges would likely have backed the legal discrimination of those with unwanted same-sex attractions and gender identity confusion.

Who will appoint federal judges in the next four years, Trump-Pence or

back against this discriminatory and marginalizing treatment of Christians, living up to Trump's campaign pledge to fight for religious liberties.

To repeat, the votes we cast in November will have very real implications.  ©2020 MICHAEL L. BROWN

MICHAEL L. BROWN IS THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF FIRE SCHOOL OF MINISTRY IN CONCORD, NORTH CAROLINA, AND HOST OF THE DAILY SYNDICATED RADIO SHOW "THE LINE OF FIRE."

AMERICA *at the* Crossroads

by **Billy Graham**

One day as I was praying and meditating about America's place in world affairs, our vain efforts to bring order out of chaos and our dilemmas in the face of overwhelming problems, I ran across a passage of Scripture that I believe has a message for the American people today.

"So the Lord said to Joshua: 'Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff'" (Joshua 7:10-11).

In this passage God is speaking to Joshua. A few days earlier, Joshua had led the victorious armies of Israel against the mighty city of Jericho. With the help of God, the city had fallen, and there had been nights and days of celebrating the mighty triumph.

Then followed an attack on the

little village of Ai, which was considered a pushover. Instead of trusting God to give them the victory, they were trusting their own physical prowess. And God had allowed them to suffer a humiliating defeat.

Not only were the people of Israel guilty of pride, but another act of disobedience against God had taken place. Before they had attacked Jericho, God had commanded that no one should take any spoils of silver or gold. They were not to fight for material gain but for spiritual principles; and if anyone were to take of the spoils, he and all of Israel would be judged. God called the material substance of Jericho "the accursed things."

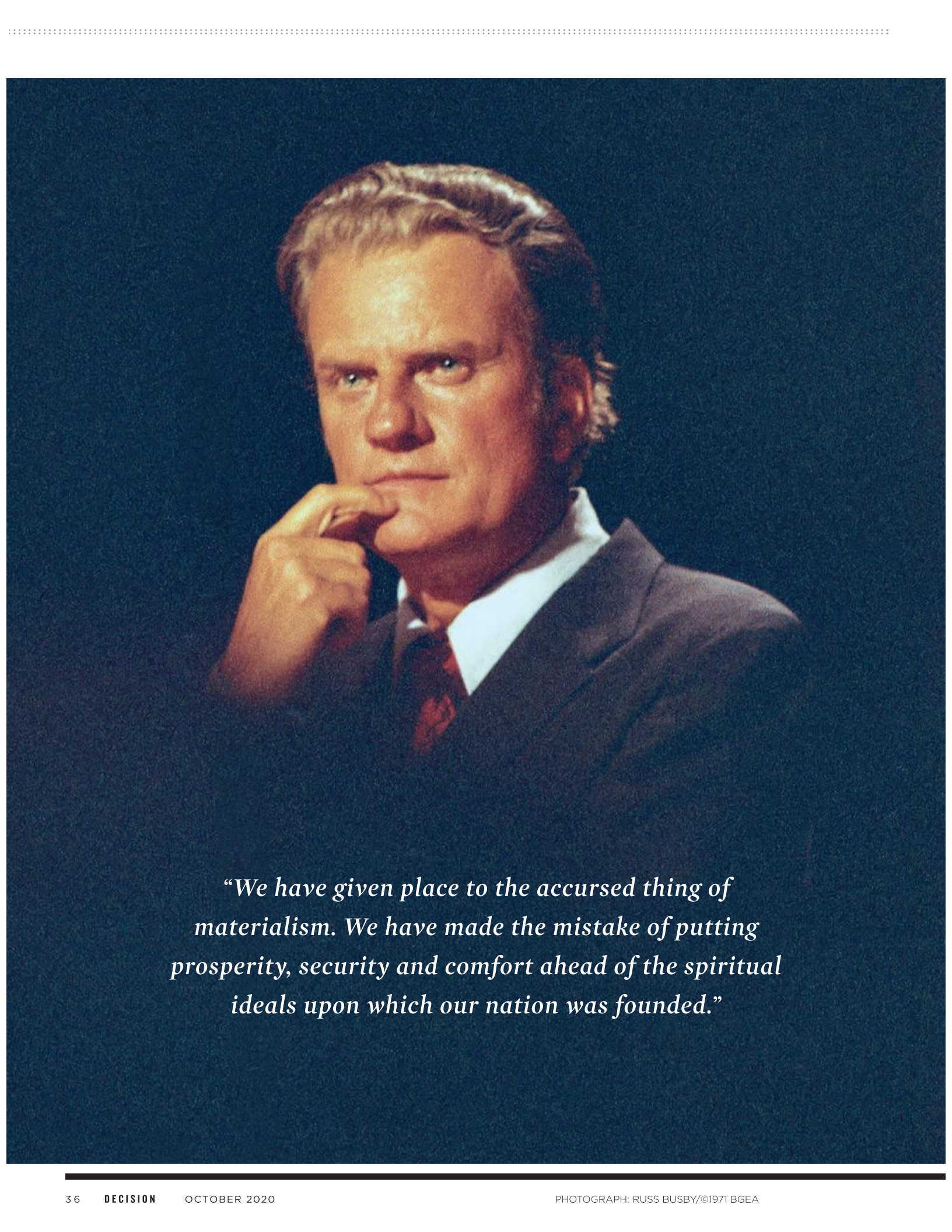
But a soldier named Achan could not resist the temptation, so he stole gold and silver from the enemy camp and hid it in his tent. When he was found out, he was thrown from the camp and executed, because he had broken a solemn covenant of God and had caused the death of many Israelites in the battle. He had yielded

to the secular rather than the spiritual. He had declared his love for gold over the love for God, and by that act of greed he had jeopardized the safety of the whole nation of Israel.

Today, thousands of Americans have shifted their loyalties from God to gold and from the spiritual to the secular. As a nation once dedicated to the worship of God and the pursuit of the Christian life, we have lost the respect of the world because we have forsaken the principles on which our nation was founded.

We cannot believe that a person can be happy without a refrigerator or a television. We cannot believe that there are moral and spiritual principles more important than even a plate of food.

The rest of the world reads about our mad scramble for material things, our preoccupation with pleasure and our obsession with sex. They read about our crime rate and racial tensions. They do not think of us as a nation that acts on the basis

A portrait of a man with light brown hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie. He is looking slightly to the left with a thoughtful expression, his right hand resting on his chin. The background is dark and textured.

“We have given place to the accursed thing of materialism. We have made the mistake of putting prosperity, security and comfort ahead of the spiritual ideals upon which our nation was founded.”

of moral principle, but rather on expediency. They think of our military bases around the world as a plan to save our own skin rather than to protect that which is morally right.

We have given place to the accursed thing of materialism. We have made the mistake of putting prosperity, security and comfort ahead of the spiritual ideals upon which our nation was founded.

In the late 1700s, Edward Gibbon wrote “The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.” Rome was a nation that held a striking parallel

First, *the rapid increase of divorce*. A nation never falls until it starts to decay at the center, and the home is the very center of our society. When the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of society, is threatened, the whole structure is destined to fall.

Today in this country our morals would put Sodom and Gomorrah to shame. We make jokes about the moral defection of men and women, and we call anyone a prude who raises his voice against our obsession with sex.

This has become our attitude toward the sanctity of the home. It

for Rome’s collapse.

Third, Gibbon listed *the mad craze for pleasure*. When a nation spends far more for pleasure than it does for religious and welfare benevolences, it is on shaky foundations. Billions of dollars are squandered every year on nonessentials while the church and benevolent organizations often have difficulty meeting their expenses. We Americans have become obsessed with pleasure and entertainment.

Rome in its decline demanded more artificial stimulants and more exciting and brutal sports. On week-

“Christianity to many people today has faded into mere form, lost its relevance to life and holds no central allegiance in our lives. When a nation loses its faith, it loses its character. When it loses its character, it loses its purpose for living. And when it loses its purpose for living, it loses its will to survive.”

to America today. Once the leader in world affairs, her leadership was eventually threatened. She was rich and prosperous, with an economy that defied collapse. Her armies were respected by the nations, and her sprawling interests covered vast areas of the world. But Rome fell! Proud, vaunted, clever, sophisticated and shrewd, Rome fell to a barbarian horde that had far fewer material things than Rome had.

Those vandals from the north were a dedicated, disciplined, hard, atheistic people. The Romans used to laugh at their ignorance, superstition and lack of military equipment. Gibbon showed in his book that Rome did not fall because of the military power of the barbarians but rather because of decadence within the Roman culture. He gave five reasons why Rome fell, and I would like to give them to you today because these same five things are apparent in American life.

seems that the star who can have the most husbands or wives is the biggest box office attraction. This is a sad commentary on the American people. Our children are paying the price for their parents’ folly.

Second, Gibbon said Rome fell because of *higher and higher taxes*, and the spending of public monies for free bread and circuses for the populace. The average American is now so used to deficit spending that he cannot possibly realize that we are on the broad road that leads to the destruction of our national economy.

Many of our leading economists have warned that it is only a question of time before our deficit financing will reach the end of its rope. It will lead to higher and higher taxes. This was one of the basic reasons that our forefathers left the old country—they wanted to escape the high taxes of Europe. The historian Gibbon listed mounting taxes as one of the reasons

ends the arenas were jammed with revelers who found their greatest pleasure in drinking, gluttony and the sadistic thrills of the gladiator contest.

Fourth, Gibbon listed *the building of gigantic armaments* as a contribution to the fall of Rome. As Rome’s international influence became less and less, she had to arm more and more. As her enemies increased and her prestige fell to an all-time low, she had to find her security in armed might.

As American prestige around the world has come to a new low, we spend more and more on armaments. We no longer trust in God as a nation to spare us, help us and save us as we have trusted in the past. We are now trusting in our bombs and missiles. I tell you, this is not enough! I think most Americans would agree that we must have military power, but to depend on it alone for our protection is a folly that historians of the future will wonder at.

Last, Gibbon listed *the decay of religion*. Today, we are like Voltaire, the agnostic who tipped his hat when a religious parade went by. “Have you found God?” asked his companion. “Oh, no,” said Voltaire, “we salute, but we don’t speak.”

As in the last days of Rome, Christianity to many people today has faded into mere form, lost its relevance to life and holds no central allegiance in our lives. When a nation loses its faith, it loses its character. When it loses its character, it loses its purpose for living. And when it loses its purpose for living, it loses its will to survive.

I am convinced that America stands at the crossroads of her national destiny. One road leads to destruction, and the other leads to prosperity and security. Most are going down the broad road that leads to destruction. We are going the way of Rome rather than the way of the cross.

Many will blame the Republicans or the Democrats. But it is the American people as individuals that should take the blame. We backslide as individuals before we begin to decay as a nation. Fortunately, there is time to repair the breach. We are still on this side of judgment, though time is quickly passing by. God is sounding

the warning: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 3:15). “Now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’” (Revelation 22:17). “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3).

Rome’s fate need not be ours if we repent and turn to God. Give your life and your heart to Jesus Christ today.

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SCRIPTURE QUOTATIONS ARE TAKEN FROM THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW KING JAMES VERSION.

Choose the Narrow Road

Like most people, you may have been on the road that leads to destruction. God calls you to the narrow road that leads to life—to follow Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. If you have never put your faith in Him, turn away from your sin and come to Jesus Christ by faith today. God promises to give you a new beginning and an abundant life that never ends. Right now, wherever you are, you can begin a relationship with God, and He promises to make you a brand-new person.

START BY SIMPLY TALKING TO GOD. **You can pray a prayer like this:**

“Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I’m sorry for my sin. I want to turn from my sin. Please forgive me. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son; I believe He died on the cross for my sin and You raised Him to life. I want Him to come into my heart and take control of my life. I want to trust Jesus as my Savior and follow Him as my Lord from this day forward. In Jesus’ Name, amen.”

DO IT RIGHT NOW.

Then contact us, and we will send information to help you.

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Tell us about your decision or ask more questions at PeaceWithGod.net. For Spanish, visit PazConDios.net.

Sign up for a free weekly email devotional at billygraham.org/subscriptions. Find a personal discipleship coach at KnowJesus.net and ConociendoaJesús.net.

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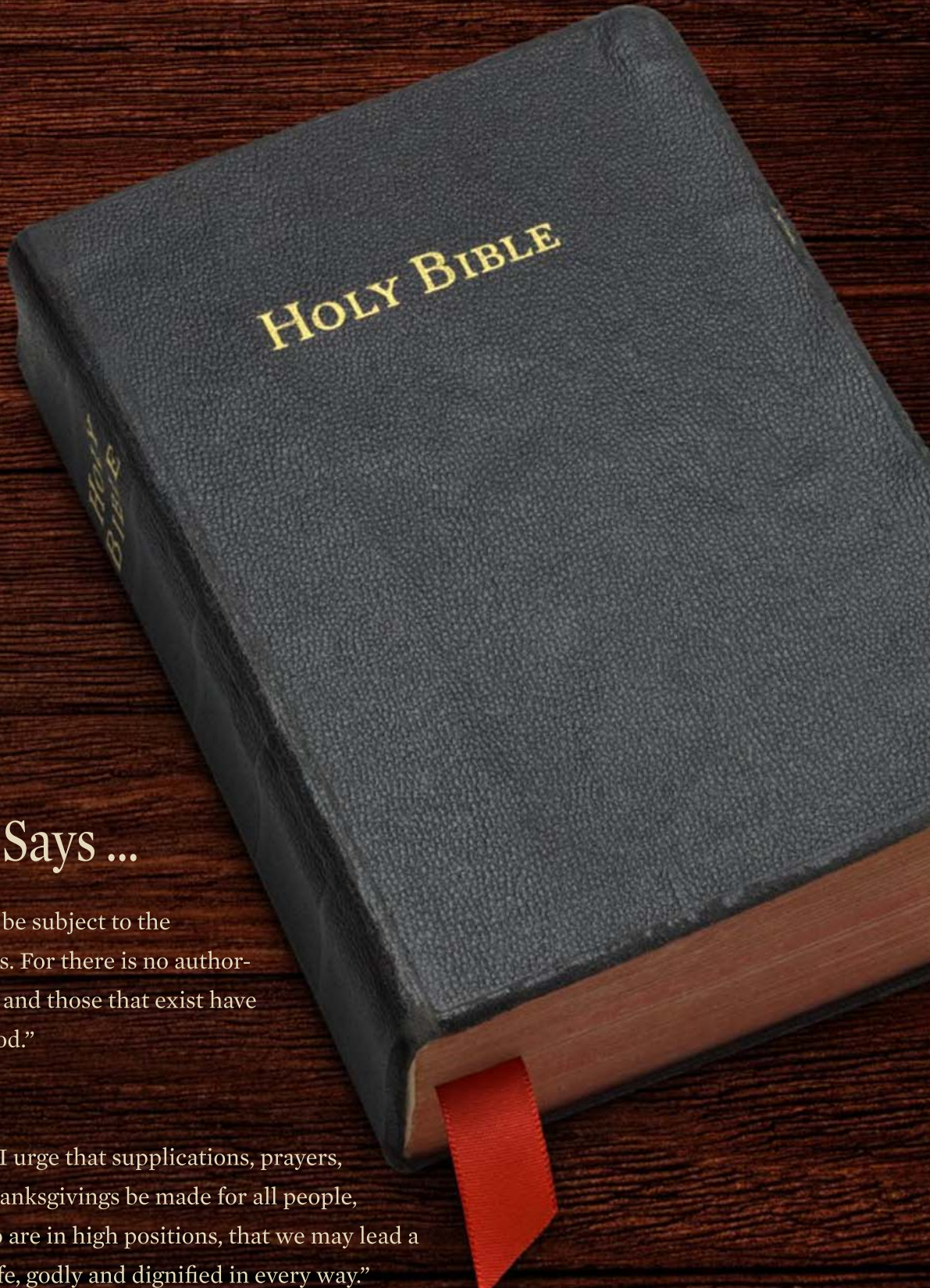
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HOLY BIBLE

The Bible Says ...

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”

—Romans 13:1

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”

—1 Timothy 2:1-2



AMERICA IS IN TROUBLE

“We are divided, we have witnessed injustice. Anger and despair have flowed into the streets. Our communities are hurting, and there’s fear and uncertainty all around us. This coming election is so important—it might be the most critical election of our lifetime.

I encourage every person to pray before you vote and ask God to give you wisdom because the future of our country, our children and our grandchildren is at stake.”

—FRANKLIN GRAHAM