



Minnesota Family Council

“Why Vote If You Are Disillusioned?”

By John Helmberger, CEO
Minnesota Family Council

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That headline is the title of an article written by Dr. John Piper, Senior Pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, just before the November 2004 presidential election. But with the widespread disappointment and frustration expressed regarding the presidential choices taking shape for the 2008 election, it could just as well have been written today.

We winced when our good friend Dr. James Dobson, of Focus on the Family, said in February that his disappointment about the choices for president this year might cause him not to cast a ballot for president for the first time in his life. We winced, I say, because we’re convinced that would be absolutely the worst thing Christian voters could do in this or any election, and we were afraid that many who look to Dr. Dobson for guidance would follow his lead.

It was a relief, therefore, to hear that Dr. Dobson had backed away from his earlier statement, telling Sean Hannity on Hannity’s America (Fox News Channel) that, “I think we have a God-given responsibility to vote, and there are all of the candidates and the issues down the ballot that we have an obligation to weigh in on and let our voices be heard.”

Why is this such a big deal to us? Because to ride out the election, on the grounds that the candidates are all flawed, would be to hide our light under a bushel and thus rob our state and nation of the biblical influence it desperately needs in the political arena – today more than ever.

Dr. Dobson got it right when he told Sean Hannity that we have a “God-given responsibility to vote.” And that’s very close to the answer given by Dr. Piper to his own question:

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“Now, if you are dissatisfied today the way I am, why vote? The answer is that if you don’t, you are guilty of the very oversimplification you condemn [in the candidates]. There is no escape from responsibility by pointing out the imperfections of leaders. That is the only kind of leaders there will ever be. Our calling in this world is not to wait for the arrival of the perfect, but to pick our way through the thicket of flaws. We would be arrogant to put ourselves above this fray and say, “A curse on both your houses.”

“The Lord Jesus does not give us this luxury of disengagement. He says, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21). Caesar – even pagan Caesar – has his claim on our lives. Why? Because God Almighty, whom we serve above all men, made human governments his way of running the world. “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). In a democratic republic like ours that means at least: VOTE.

“God has commanded us (as aliens and exiles on the earth): “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jeremiah 29:7). We are citizens of two kingdoms: the kingdom of God, our ultimate allegiance, and the kingdom of this world. The ambiguities are many. The complexities are great. The possibility of political miscalculation is real. But Christ came into the world to save sinners. Therefore we do not panic at the possibility of error. It is worse to run than to risk. Only a fool replaces the complexity of voting with the simplicity of gloating.” (Why Vote If You Are Disillusioned?” By John Piper. © Desiring God. Website: desiringGod.org)

There’s too much at stake to take this responsibility lightly. Between now and the election in November, watch in these pages and on our website and other communications for practical guidance on just how Christians can apply biblical criteria in their voting decisions, to be “salt and light” at this crucial time for our state and nation, when voters’ choices will profoundly impact the moral and spiritual direction of our culture in years to come.