

God and Politics

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The old adage that polite conversation should avoid politics and religion to maintain friendly relationships has never proven to be truer than during this election season. Rather than civil discourse about the issues of the day and better approaches to addressing them, the election has become a mudslinging contest over which candidate has the most baggage and would be most disastrous in office.

Worse yet, anybody who speaks on behalf of, or against, one of the candidates is branded a bigot, a misogynist, a hog at the public trough, un-American, a fool, atheistic, even satanic by guilt through association. Friends and relatives easily get caught up in the fray and even religious communities, Unificationism included, have become deeply divided.

As tempting as it is to base a decision on who has the better character in this election, no candidate rises to the level of a Washington, Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt or Reagan. At this crossroads in the American narrative, this crucial moment of decision, it behooves us to look at contemporary issues in a very broad historical context — that is, a providential context, past, present and future. The theme of the ever progressing nature of God's providence is expressed in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (KJV):

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven...
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;...
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

The political pendulum swings back and forth.



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Government grew, during the Great Depression and World War II, for example. And it receded, during the 1990s under the Republican Congress. Often, the economy grew together with government expansion. Automobile and airplane manufacturers exploded in the aftermath of the military buildup of the Second World War.

Although government grew after the Depression and during the war, *so did private industry*.

ARAPNET, a networking system begun in 1969 to allow computers in different locations to communicate with each other, was developed by the military to protect information from enemy attack. It was the forerunner of the Internet. The G.I. Bill (1944) is considered by many economists to be the best investment the nation ever made in the growth of the economy.

Unfettered government leads to excess, however. I supervised a contract for the Army Corps of Engineers to replace the bottom of a 110 foot barge — that didn't need it. We cut out good steel plate and replaced it with good steel. For the record, I contacted the Corps of Engineers and told them I gauged the bottom and there was nothing wrong with it. They said to cut it out anyway. I found out later that they spent the money they had left in their budget so they'd get it re-appropriated for the following year.

Instances of waste and abuse are rampant. In human services, the field in which I currently work, some agencies keep clients in their caseloads billing hours for services they no longer need. Fiscal conservatives spoke up. The period from the 1980s to 2000 was one of cutting back government programs.

Foreign and defense policies have also shifted according to the times. Tremendous military might was raised to defeat Germany and Japan in World War II. But the Cold War was fought on different terms. Military actions in Korea and Vietnam were not as successful as fighting German and Japanese nationalism.

Our founder explained the fight against communism was an ideological battle that took on the character of a religious battle between atheistic resentment versus truth and reconciliation centered on God. He didn't deny that the use of force was necessary for defensive purposes, and he was a strong advocate for supporting the military in the U.S. and freedom fighters around the globe. But he also knew that unlike fascism, which is motivated by a culture of arrogant superiority, communism appealed to the oppressed and bred resentment.

Through CAUSA, he reached out to the underclass and to authoritarian leaders in countries where there was no middle class to negotiate reconciliation and avoid violent revolution. He fought a psychological battle with communist leaders undermining their authority by publicizing American technological superiority — this while sympathizing with the oppressed, offering them hope. *The Washington Times* and ICUS played significant roles at that time as educational and propaganda outlets.

And so that brings us to the questions: What are the new occasions of our time? What are the appropriate policies? What administration (not just the individual) is best suited to perform new duties?

The most pressing international issue of the day is Islamic terrorism. Islamic extremists aim to spread their ideology to create a regional, and eventually, global caliphate — a theocracy led by clerics who interpret and enforce the laws. But these radicals represent a small minority of Muslims, as evidenced by the numbers streaming out of Muslim nations. The majority share a vision that resonates with all faiths.

Some believe the correct response to Islamic extremism and refugee immigration is American nationalism and isolationism.

Is this in sync with the founder's philosophy? We just celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Washington Monument rally. The founder taught that Godism is universal, that barriers of race, nationality and religion would break down. "America is a model of the ideal world," he said. When he fought communism through CAUSA, he taught that shared ideals, cooperation and mutual prosperity are correct. But the means, when through violence, are wrong.

Through the Middle East Peace Initiative, we found many allies in that region who share the same values we do, people who reject violence, who live in accordance with the laws of the lands in which they dwell. But, they also envision one world under Allah that will eventually be achieved through peaceful means. So how is that any different than the Unification view that God will restore His sovereignty over the world and man-made boundaries will disappear?

God is a globalist. This was made very clear to us by our founder through his efforts to reform the UN. He envisioned a higher, deliberative body comprised of representatives of the world's religions who have a global perspective, beyond national boundaries. The agenda he envisioned included building an international highway. That would be the largest construction project ever attempted, and would involve the cooperation of nations requiring sacrifices for the sake of a global purpose.

The founders also have said that we are entering the era of women. This suggests the national and global culture will become more feminine. Maternal concerns lean more toward care and nurturing.

There has been a great deal of criticism toward human services in this country. People receiving benefits have sometimes been characterized as pigs at the public trough. I'm particularly sensitive to that because I work for an agency that provides services to those with disabilities. My wife suffers from Parkinson's and receives help with her Activities of Daily Living (self-care) and her medications from Medicaid. We also took in a single mother with two kids, one on the autism spectrum, who works a low-paying job 40-60 hours per week.

People with disabilities make up 19% of the population. Sixty-five percent are unemployed, most because they can't compete in the workforce. I'm a job developer and my role, paid for by the U.S. Department of Labor, is to work with businesses to get people with disabilities jobs and to support them once they are placed.

In addition to people with disabilities, many capable people are between jobs. Government services have evolved over the years. Welfare is now called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and the time limit that a family may remain on TANF is five years. Most families receive TANF for a year or less.

The rising costs of education and healthcare are also pressing issues. If the G.I. Bill was one of the best investments in the American economy, would government investment in making education affordable make sense today?

I'm convinced we are in a period of ethical evolution where God is expecting humanity to be more inclusive and embrace people unconditionally.

In the field of human services, there is a "Person First" culture. That means you accept everyone as they are, as an individual person first. Isn't that the way a parent looks at his or her child? Perhaps it is more characteristic of women to be inclusive, where men historically have been more judgmental. To put it in Divine Principle terms, think of the vertical axis as being more in line with God's standards and principles, holding people to a standard of how we ought to be. And think of the horizontal axis as being more in tune with humanity, accepting of people as they are.

One difference I've observed between men and women is when men greet each other, we tend to ask what the other *is doing*. We discuss our occupations, our position or jobs. Our achievements play a big role in defining our identities. Of course, our kids and grandkids are also big topics of conversation, but even then it tends to be about achievements. But my wife is more concerned about "what they may be going through." This expresses concern about their health, emotional well-being and their relationships. The "planet of Venus" tends not to look so much at a person's ideology, doctrine, ethnic background, or occupation. The tendency is more about health, growth, relationships, and family. Of course these are not absolute or exclusive qualities.

If we accept these general distinctions, while acknowledging they exist to greater or lesser degrees in every person, there are important implications for public policy. This is especially true as women are rising to the same levels of power and influence as men in the political, economic and cultural fields. Sharp distinctions based on ethnicity, religious doctrine, and socio-economic strata may be curbed by cultural shifts toward inclusivity, extended family connections, and collective concern for education, health and welfare. Competition between nations may give way to cooperation and mutual prosperity. Religion may evolve from doctrine-based to the practice of unconditional love.

Doctrine and ideology took center stage during the Cold War. I propose that new occasions teach new duties. Today it's time to put away doctrinal and national differences. It's time to be concerned about our families here in America, but to be *equally* concerned about families abroad. Being successful and self-reliant are important values, but must be weighed against the values of social responsibility and unconditional love.

These considerations, above character assassination, are the things that must be considered as we choose an administration to handle the reigns while America struggles to fulfill its destiny.

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