

# Christian Action Ministry Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

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By  
Bob Garvey

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**W**ould you be surprised to discover that close to 50% of Christians are not registered to vote?

In a Democratic Republic (which we are), where no Vermonter has a chance to vote on any issue except through their elected Representative, it is absolutely necessary for the good of the public to elect people of strong moral character to represent them. This can't be done legally here unless you exercise your right to vote by first registering to vote. This becomes the act of a responsible Christian.

Our founding fathers had strong beliefs on what constituted good government... "When the importance of religion is diminished, so is the effectiveness of government." If Christians choose not to become involved in "politics",

where will the "Godly influence" among the Legislators come from?

Vermont needs moral leaders in our Legislature, who are willing to fearlessly declare their love for the triune God and admit of His influence on their lives and decisions. Just imagine the impact on the

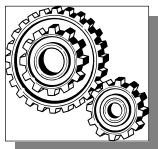


other issue requiring a moral decision is presented it would certainly be comforting to know there are Christians who would be promoting a moral view instead of just a "secular" view, as occurs with many legislators today. We need to keep the good and replace the "bad" legislators.

What's the **first step** for a person who may have never participated in "politics" before? First thing, **register to vote**; because Vermont election law states, "At the time and place set for the town caucus, the **voters of the party** residing in the town shall meet in caucus and proceed to elect a town committee."

The town committee members present then elect delegates to serve on the county committee. The county committee delegates then elect state committee delegates who influence which candidates will be

moral climate of our State if over 50% of both bodies of our Legislature were believing, and openly practicing Christians. When issues such as abortion, assisted suicide, cloning, parental rights, children's education in the Public Schools, gay marriage, homosexual discrimination, or any



### In the Works

### Voter Registration Religious Expression in Schools

Are you interested in becoming involved? CAM is looking for interested and active people to act as liaisons to their church, helping to keep the Christian community informed. Contact CAM at 288-9173.



**"In all that the people can individually do as well for themselves, government ought not to interfere." - Abraham Lincoln**

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strongly supported or not. Each town can elect at least two delegates. How many more can be elected is determined by the number of **votes cast** (by voters) for the party's candidate for governor in the last election.

What's the **second step**? A political party? Yes!...Which one? I would want to check out where the party stands on moral issues such as those mentioned earlier. Each party should have a document called a "Party Platform" which details the beliefs, goals and objectives of the party. Call the Party Headquarters and ask them for a copy of their Party Platform, in writing. After a

review of the Platforms, ask to talk to the party chairman or the executive director and ask them whether the party adheres to its platform. Then make a decision on what party you want to be associated with and become salt & light within that party. None of them are perfect, but some come closer than others to the principles that all Christians believe in.

There are currently three recognized political parties in Vermont, which are the Republican, Democratic and Progressive parties, each of which qualified in the last election by receiving at least 5% of the popular vote and have an organized party unit in at least fifteen towns. You can reach

the respective parties by calling the Republican Party at 802-223-3411; the Democratic Party at 802 229-1783 and the Progressive Party at 800-439-8683.

**Caucuses**, which are held each odd year, hold their meetings between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup> of the month of September. The **actual** date is selected by each party's State Committee through its chairman. The time and place of each town's meeting is to be selected and communicated to the town or city clerk's offices.

For those of you who are able to visit the local Public Library, you will find all of the rules that govern political par-

ties in Title 17 of the "Vermont Statutes Annotated", Chapter 45, and especially sections #2303, 2304, 2305 and 2306. You'll become an "expert" overnight and well prepared to attend a caucus in September.

If you go to the polls next year without having become associated with a party, you only have one vote which will count but you have no influence on other voters. By belonging to a party you have the opportunity to influence other party members and who they will support in the election. **See you at the caucus!**

*Bob Garvey is a Board Member of Christian Action Ministry and attends St. Mark's Catholic Church*

## "Democracy" vs. "Democratic Republic" / "Constitutional Republic"

By  
Bob Garvey

The form of government entrusted to us by our Founders was a Republic, not a Democracy; The Difference?

A Democracy conducts business by direct majority vote only. When an issue is to be decided, the entire population votes on it and the majority wins and rules. A Republic differs in that the general population conducts business by directly electing representatives who then vote on issues. Although a majority vote of the representatives will determine a policy; in a republic, the minority view will have some influence in the majority decision. The people, by direct vote, select their chief executive and their representatives; for this we are termed a Democratic Republic. Because we have a Constitution, we are also a Constitutional Republic.

This is important when we think of Judicial judgments made by our current "activist" Supreme Court Judges over the past seven years, which have forced their collective five opinions on the balance of Society and on the duly elected representatives in the Legislature. All it takes to change the judicial "climate" in Vermont is to elect enough Christian representatives who understand the balance of powers between the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial arms of government and the difference between a judicial judgment and a judicial **opinion**. **The legislature is free to accept or reject the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution, as it reflects the Framers' intent**, not what a relativistic court thinks should be done. Judgments must be based on unchanging Biblical principles of right and wrong, not based on the Justices' "Supreme" opinions. In the *Baker vs Vermont* decision, the court itself admitted they didn't know any more about what was right or wrong than did the general population. However, Christians in Vermont knew what was right and wrong and knew the court had made a **wrong** decision. Although the Legislature had many good Christians in office, there were not enough to override the votes of the other Legislators. All the more reason to put more practicing Christians in office in the 2004 elections.

**"[God's law] is superior in obligation to any other; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force and all of their authority from this origin... Hence it follows that the first and primary end of human laws is to maintain these absolute [God-given] rights to individuals."**

*Sir William Blackstone*

## Suggested Guidelines for Churches during the “Election Cycle”

By  
Bob Garvey

*We urge you to discuss these guidelines with your Pastor.*

Although it may seem too early to think about elections, the **election cycle** begins around the beginning of July of next year, when the political parties discuss who will run for office with party endorsement, for some statewide political offices, and many more local House or Senate races. The recruitment of new candidates, however, is an on-going endeavor by the various parties.

Can a church endorse and support a candidate for public office? If so, are there any limitations as to the amount of support a church can give a candidate?

Is there more or less restriction on a Pastor as far as supporting a candidate who wants to run for office?

Each **election cycle**, the above questions pop up in

conversations about elections and the candidates who are running. Here are some guidelines being used by one of the larger church denominations in Vermont. We thought that it would be helpful to all to review these guidelines, and perhaps use them as a basis for discussion with your Pastors.



Many churches have conducted voter registration drives after or before services. Most churches have someone in the congregation who is a Notary Public and it only takes two or three to man a registration table once a month for several months.

It takes little but good character and, at last information, a twenty dollar fee for a person to become a Notary Public.

What can Pastors (or their assistants) do without running afoul of the election laws?

1. They can preach on the moral teachings of the church and scripture as they relate to Public Policy issues.
2. They can discuss the positions of candidates on moral matters and on a non-partisan basis at church functions.
3. They may distribute surveys, voting records, and political statements of candidates on a non-partisan basis.
4. They may recognize a political candidate at a church function.
5. They may urge their congregations or parishes to register and vote .
6. They may conduct non-partisan voter

registration tables on the premises.

7. They may invite candidates to speak to Church members , preferably in a church hall or function room, to hear their views on issues of interest to the congregation or Parish members, and to respond to questions from them.

The above are not **hard** and fast rules but **guidelines** and should be treated as such. We hope you find them helpful as a tool to spark discussion with your Pastors.

Just a note to remind our readers that each issue of the CAM Newsletter eventually ends up on our Website for future reference. Our Website address is [Christianaction-ministry.com](http://Christianaction-ministry.com) We are always looking for feedback on our articles. Please feel free to write or e-mail us.

*Bob Garvey is a Board Member of Christian Action Ministry and attends St. Mark's Catholic Church*



**“Government exists to protect us from each other. We can’t afford the government it would take to protect us from ourselves.”**

***Ronald Reagan***

**What can I**



*Faith without works is dead  
James 2:17*

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**One of the greatest freedoms we have as Americans is also one of the gravest responsibilities we have as Christians.**

***“...be sure to appoint over you the king the Lord chooses. He must be from your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite.”  
Deut: 17:15***

**For today this could read, “Don’t elect non-believers to office. Place in authority only those who subscribe to Christian principles.”**

**The Vermont Alliance for Ethical Healthcare is leading the battle in Vermont against physician assisted suicide. They need your prayers for wisdom, courage, and grace. If you can financially assist them, it would be a blessing.**

**To find out more, view their website at [www.vaeh.org](http://www.vaeh.org).**

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**Next Meetings**

*September 8, 7:00 pm  
St. Marks Catholic Church  
Burlington, Vt.  
October 6, 7:00 pm  
Essex Alliance Church  
Essex, Vt.*

**Making A Difference  
in  
Vermont!**



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