

## Liberty Commentary November 10, 2008

As the elections have now come and gone and the political pundits make their assessments as to why Barack Obama won and John McCain lost, in the final analysis the American people have spoken and Barack Obama will become the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.

As with all political campaigns, the promise is made for better economic times, better education and a more secure and prosperous nation. However, we just never seem to rise to the levels promised by the politicians during each election cycle. In 2001 President Bush and co-sponsor senator Ted Kennedy, introduced the No Child Left Behind Act that President Bush signed into law in 2002. The legislation was aimed at improving the performance of primary and secondary schools with an increased focus on reading and standards of accountability for states and school districts. The funding for reading quadrupled from \$286 million to \$1.2 billion. A 2008 study by the Department of Education concluded that the reading first program of the No Child Left Behind legislation had proven “ineffective”. President-elect Obama has vowed to fix “the broken promises of No Child Left Behind” after taking office. This is exactly what the last president-elect promised and signed legislation sponsored by both political parties and yet after 7 years and billions of dollars later the next president-elect is going to once again right the ship. That means spending yet more money.

In the 1960's President Johnson signed into legislation the “Great Society” legislation that promised to eliminate poverty and racial injustice. Billions upon billions of dollars have been spent to eradicate poverty in the United States, yet today there are as many people living below the poverty line, as there was when the legislation was signed in 1965 and certainly we have not eliminated social injustice.

Senator Obama recently sponsored legislation called the Global Poverty Act that would “develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to further the U.S. foreign policy objective of promoting the reduction of global poverty”. This bill calls for the President of the United States to plan a comprehensive policy to cut global poverty in half by 2015. The cost to implement this plan could reach nearly 1 trillion dollars.

All of these political and legislative objectives no doubt were implemented with very good intentions. Most all of us are for the elimination of poverty and social injustice. Most all of us are in favor of better schools and higher achievement scores. However, the solutions to these problems are not political, else we would be the utopia of the world with all the legislation and resources that have been invested over the years to solve these problems. The underlying problem is spiritual. You cannot through legislation and government programs change the heart and soul of a person. You cannot through legislation force people to love their neighbor as themselves. You cannot through legislation require parents to take time to read to their children and be involved in their children’s education. You cannot legislate out of a person’s heart prejudice, bigotry and social injustice. To a great extent the government cannot even legislate personal responsibility.

Alexis de Tocqueville, a French statesman, has been credited for making the following observation many years ago about America. “I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers - and it was not there . . . in her fertile fields and boundless forests and it was not there . . . in her rich mines and her vast world commerce - and it was not there . . . in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution - and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power.

America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great”.

Solomon, a man thought to be one of the wisest to have ever lived penned these words of the Bible in Proverbs 14:34, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people”.

The answers to our problems lie not in what our country can do for us and the world through our monetary hand outs, but rather what can we as a people do to exhibit Christ centered values of honesty, personal responsibility, helping our neighbor in time of crises and need, exhibiting a work ethic, taking responsibility for our own children’s education and welfare, loving our neighbor as ourselves and spending our time and resources wisely in a manner that is Christ honoring.

Our economic and social problems will not be solved by politicians who are merely concerned about the next election, but rather by statesmen and citizens who are most concerned about the next generation.

Lets pray that God raises up some statesmen from this past election who will lead with integrity, honesty and personal responsibility.

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