



Storming Fortresses

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh,
but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4

Vol. 20; No.8

©Copyright, 2001

August, 2001

Editors Note:

With this article we start a new series which deals with the Christian and politics. In part one we mainly raise questions in order to provoke the Christian populace to think about this issue. Part two examines the impact of "pluralism" on the Church. Particularly, we look at whether the Bible teaches that there are two rival kingdoms; one good the other evil. Part three seeks an answer to the question, Does God only rule His people? Part four, seeks an answer to the question, Is God concerned with the nations? Part five examines the Biblical criteria for leadership and draws the study to a close.

To save space, we have eliminated introductory comments on the subsequent parts.

Of Politics and Politicians:

Or

Do we Vote and For Whom Do We Vote?

By

Murray McLeod-Boyle

Introduction

The year 2001 will, no doubt, be recognised as the year of "The Voter." We have had several state elections, several by-elections and there is a federal election looming on the horizon.

As with every election, the future of our nation hangs in the balance. To many, this may sound like an overstatement. However, we would posit that, for too many Christians, the link between the ballot box and a sound future is often overlooked.

The choices made at the ballot box *will* determine the basics of life for ourselves and for future gener-

ations. When we cast our vote we will be seeking life or death. The choice is that simple.

There is not a single nation that can stand against God (Psalm 2). We will either seek His blessing or we will ignore Him and kindle His wrath. We will actively seek to honour God or we will actively deny Him, or worse, we will simply ignore Him and act as though He is irrelevant. We will seek theocracy or anthropocracy.

Do not be fooled. We cannot continually mock God as a nation by installing governments that constantly thumb their noses at Him. Personal righteous-

ness will not magically atone for hundreds and thousands of disobedient acts perpetrated and condoned by our national government, or any government for that matter.

At this point it is worth remembering the Biblical account of Manasseh and Josiah.

Manasseh was evil. He is described in these terms:

Now the LORD spoke through His servants the prophets, saying, "Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, having done wickedly more than all the Amorites did who *were* before him, and has also made Judah sin with

STORMING FORTRESSES is published monthly by REFORMATION MINISTRIES, a non-denominational organisation committed to maintaining and implementing Biblical truth as reasserted by the Reformers.

Subscriptions run from July 1 to June 30. Pro rata rates apply at other times. Current rates are as follows:

- \$40.00 Australia and New Zealand, (GST. Incl.)
- \$75.00 United States of America,
- \$ 60.00 All Other Countries.

Amounts payable in Australian currency. Cheques made payable to:

REFORMATION MINISTRIES,
PO Box 1656,
THURINGOWA CENTRAL,
QLD 4817

Donations gratefully accepted. Free 3 month trial subscription upon request. As a ministry, we also seek to make stock items available to those undergoing hardship. Enquiries most welcome.

©Copyright, 2010. All material published in STORMING FORTRESSES remains the property of its author.

Permission to reprint material from STORMING FORTRESSES in any format, apart from short quotations for review purposes, must be obtained from the copyright owner.

his idols; therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am bringing *such* calamity on Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears shall tingle. 'And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. 'And I will abandon the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies, and they shall become as plunder and spoil to all their enemies; because they have done evil in My sight, and have been provoking Me to anger, since the day their fathers came from Egypt, even to this day.'" Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; besides his sin with which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.¹

Of Josiah we read:

Moreover, Josiah removed the mediums and the spiritists and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. And **before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.**²

God raised up the child-king Josiah. God provided for the rediscovery of the Law. On reading this Law the young king devoted himself to the LORD. He brought about great reforms. He caused the people to worship properly. For the first time in many years Yahweh was honoured. All seemed to be going well. Reform had come. Surely God would now relent from His promised destruction? Surely there would be mercy? Surely forgiveness would be full and free? The new king was a good king. He walked in the ways of his father David. Surely, God must now turn away His wrath?

This conclusion seems warranted to the modern, emotional, renaissance man who has managed to connect with his feminine side. However, this narrative is not a fairy tale where every story ends *ipso facto* "happily ever after." This is a historical event. It is an event involving leaders of people, continued gross sin, the repentance of one king, and the Holy and Righteous God, Yah-

weh. If Yahweh forgives, then so be it. If He judges, then praise His name. What a man must never do is presume that God will, or is bound to, overlook sin.³

To concluded this account, we read:

However, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, **because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.** And the LORD said, "I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"⁴

This narrative should serve as a stark warning to our modern society. Reform may come. However, it may come too late to turn back the kindled anger of God. Therefore, we should be working to bring that reform as quickly as possible and thereby nullify any possibility of incurring God's wrath.

We must form and execute a present plan in order to bring about a future for ourselves and the generations that follow. This plan must, of course, be firmly rooted in God's word. It must seek to bring about righteousness—words, thoughts, and deeds that glorify God and evoke His blessing—in order that the future will be secure in the best possible way.

The choice for us in the year 2001 is very important. First, we must make a decision in regard to our existence. Either the rapture mongers were wrong and the end of the world did not happen as it was meant to in

1. *The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977. All Scripture quotations are from this source unless otherwise noted. 2 Kings 21:10-16.

2. 2 Kings 23:24-25. Bold Added.

3. God cannot overlook any sin. It is a sheer impossibility. Even in salvation God does not simply overlook sin. He accepts the substitutionary atonement of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. The obedience is rendered and the penalty paid, albeit by another.

4. 2 Kings 23:26-27. Bold added.

2000 or the dispensationalists (the raptured) were right and we are the lost (the non-raptured), left alone for a thousand years or so. As there were no driverless cars on the highway or pilotless planes falling from the sky recently, we are leaning toward option 1.

Second, this being the case, it means that, with the nonsense dispelled, we Christians need to become very serious about future plans. *If we are going to shape the future we must take action now.*

This is a principle we live by every day in every area of life, with one notable exception—our Christian life. Allow us to explain. If you seek a comfortable retirement, you will save money now. Each pay period you will invest a small amount of money so that in forty years time, when you are no longer able to work, you will have enough money to live. You do not continue in the blind hope that on the day you retire a millionaire philanthropist will be waiting at the door to give you a six-figure sum of money. No, you seek to shape the future by acting according to a present plan.

Another example. You wish your children to do well in the future. You desire them to hold good jobs, to raise Godly families, to contribute righteously to society and so forth. Do you hope that your child will get out of bed on their twenty-fifth birthday, dress themselves in their best clobber and make their way to the offices of a huge corporation and take their seat as chairman of the board?

How will they achieve this if they are not taught to read and write at an early age? How will this happen if you neglect to teach your child how to act responsibly? How will this happen if you do not teach your child to exercise authority? How will this happen if you do not teach your child about personal hygiene, how to dress, how to live healthily? How will this happen if you neglect arithmetic? How will it happen if you do not teach your child to love the Lord your God with all their heart, mind, and soul? How will it happen if you do not “teach [God’s commands] diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:7). How will you shape the future for your child if you do not have a present plan?

One last example. Consider the family holiday. How will you get to your destination if you have no present plan to fill your car with fuel? How will you find the destination without a map? Where will you stay if you do not consult the accommodation guide?

We have laboured this point in order to show that every day, in some way, we act upon a present plan in order to control and shape future events. However, when it comes to the Church and to the activities of the Christian life this planning is abandoned.

There seems to be a perception that to plan in the Christian sphere of life is wrong and an insult to God’s

providence. Such thinking is itself faulty and wrong. First, there is no Christian *sphere* of life. If you believe this, then you believe in dualism—a tenet you will never find in Scripture. Life is either Christian or it is non-Christian. It is not, nor can it be, divided into little chunks. If you live in a dualistic manner or according to this philosophy, then what you are doing is being obedient in some things and wilfully disobedient in others. You are saying to God that He can only have certain bits of your life. You are rewriting Romans 12 to make it read, “Offer fragments of your life as a living sacrifice.” Maybe it should read, “Be transformed by the renewing of half your mind!” The import here must be grasped. Paul commands us to offer our bodies as *living and holy* sacrifices. How do we fulfil this command when *we are only willing* to present ourselves as partly living and partly holy?⁵

Second, while seeking to shape the future may seem to impinge upon God’s sovereignty, it does so only to those who refuse to believe that God has commanded us, and therefore expects us, to operate in such a manner. God gave the Cultural Mandate in which He commanded man to develop and progress. Now, we must understand that this was not a command given *carte blanche*. Nor was it a command that gave man the right to ignore God as though man had within himself everything necessary to *control* the future.

These aspects have only come to the fore since the fall. Now the prob-

5. Planning is crucial to life. If farmers did not plan for next years crop we would not have food for very long. If you do not plan to go to work then how will you get there? How long will you keep your job if you continually miss your bus because you do not plan to be at the bus stop on time? If you do not make a shopping list, which may be aptly termed a shopping plan, how much fuel will you waste on spontaneous jaunts to the supermarket? What if you do not plan the day, the consequence of which is that you go before pay day, and overdraw the cheque account? Every day in small and large ways we operate to a plan or we make plans. Why then is this concept so foreign to Christians?

We must note also that by plan we are not talking about “hair brain schemes.” Plans take into account data, statistics, knowledge, et cetera. Plans are based upon ideas that have been proven, not upon fantasies. Thus, when we talk about plans, we are speaking of plans based purely on proven data, particularly Biblical data, which shows clearly what God will and will not bless.

lem we face is this. Sinful man is making plans left, right, and centre in an effort to fulfil the Cultural Mandate. All to no avail. Why the failure? Sinful man is trying to fulfil the mandate without reference to God—an impossible task, to say the least. Meanwhile, the Christians, in their erroneous pietism, have decided not to enter the contest. Pietism and a number of other false theologies has given the Church a doormat complex. We no longer perceive the Church to be the new humanity in Christ that will possess the world. Instead, we are the paupers of the world and everybody's whipping boy. We have become totally passive. We have become masters at inventing theologies to justify our lack of action. No instance is more obvious than the case before us.

Thus we encourage Christians to plan. It is right that we plan. Most importantly, it is God honouring when we plan for we are fulfilling our calling.

Now some may feel uncomfortable with this, so we shall make a brief comment. In James 4:13-16 we read:

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, *you ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that." But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

James words are directed at the very issue we face. In examining the text, emphasis must be laid upon the fact that James does not condemn planning. James condemns the attitude of man—an attitude in which man believes he can plan without reference to God. We are "vapours."

Another text calls us "withering grass." With such frail lives it is indeed "arrogance" to plan as though we are the measure of all things.

In contrast, James urges that we humble ourselves and recognise the sovereignty of God. When we plan we say, "If the Lord wills" We recognise our dependence upon Him for all things.

This is the important difference. We make plans to bring about a future reality. God alone controls that reality. Whether it will or will not be, belongs to God. To illustrate, let us return to a previous example. We seek to be in a position to be able to feed ourselves when we stop work. Therefore, we make investments now. We are planning and acting now to affect the future. However, this planning of ours could be devastated by war, economic disaster, or even our own early demise. This we must leave to God as it is His providence alone.

Consequently, we should not withdraw from planning, rather we should plan in the light of God's sovereignty.

With these thoughts in place, let us turn our attention to the political arena.

Political Enquiry

We live at a time when few people trust politicians. This is understandable. What is not so easily understood is the apathetic approach by Christians to the political sphere. Many consider politics dirty or worldly. Others decry the wrongs, but refuse to stand in the breach. Still others, despite the obvious, hope that the politicians may miraculously change. Ministers constantly refuse to preach on or at political parties and their candidates. Christians still vote for the party of their parents and grandparents, while others see the "donkey" vote as a way of easing their

conscience.

This situation would be laughable if it were not so serious.

Now, at the risk of becoming very unpopular, it is time that some of these issues were confronted. So, here we go.

How many of you still vote for the same party your parents did? We suspect many do.⁶ The next question is simple. Why? Have you reviewed this party to see where it stands on a variety of issues? Have you grappled with and understood the ethical principles of this party? How do you respond to the implication of "party politics"?

We are going to take this one step further. We are going to name names. Take the Australian Labor Party (ALP). Surprisingly, it has a Christian following. It started as a loose affiliation of workers/labor movements and with federation these joined forces to form the A.L.P.

The necessary questions are, What does this Party stand for today? Have the original ideals changed or do they remain the same? If they remain the same, how do they measure up against solid Biblical principles?

On the Labor Party website, we read the following:

Separate labour parties had been established in the colonies during the formative decade of the 1890s. *These parties were sponsored by the trade union movement, to help get sympathetic politicians elected to colonial parliaments.*

So, right from the outset, the union movement sponsored and manipulated the Labor Party. Consequently, the aims and power of the union movement were often at the forefront of the actions and policies of the A.L.P.

The A.L.P.'s own statements show the potency and effect of this arrangement:

⁶ This may have changed in the last few years given that a few new political parties have arrived on the scene.

Conscription was supported by a majority of leading Labor politicians and opposed by nearly all union leaders. *The union officials and other elements within the Party used their control over the Party organisation to eject pro-conscriptionist politicians from the Party.*⁷

Naturally, we must ask, has this trend continued? We would like to say that it has not, however the evidence does not suggest this. To assess this, one only has to look at the recent connection between the A.L.P. and the union movement. Both Simon Crean and Bob Hawke were leaders in the ACTU. Both entered politics. Both entered under the Labor flag.

As noted, the link is not coincidental. During the Cain era in Victoria the union disputes crippled the state. All seemed well until the coffers ran dry and the unions could not be paid. Upheaval became common place. Now, the Bracks' Labor government, only new to power in that same state, has the Police and nurses imposing work bans. It seems that history may be repeating itself.⁸

Changing tack let us look at our

own faith—Christianity. To our knowledge, every attempt to legislate religion has come from Labor. Bob Hawke took this country to a referendum on the issue of religious liberty. Most recently, Steve Bracks introduced legislation in Victoria on religious vilification. The intent was the same, to legislate religion.⁹

Morally the Labor Party has brought corruption. It was Don Dunstan who first legalised homosexuality in South Australia.¹⁰ Brothels were legalised by the Cain government in Victoria and the Beattie government in Queensland. Last, but by no means least, we have the issue of abortion. In most states abortion is illegal, however, loopholes mean that it is commonplace. Now, the Labor Party cannot be blamed for these loopholes. Nor can they be blamed for the inaction of other governments. What they can be blamed for is the introduction of a national health scheme, Medicare, which funds these horrific and barbarous procedures.¹¹

This may be a quick snapshot, but it nonetheless shows that the Australian Labor Party has no sympathy

with Christianity or its principles.

This then begs the question, How can any Christian support such a party?

One final aspect. If we were to have a candidate who was a self confessed atheist or even an agnostic (?), would you vote for them? Self confessed atheists and agnostics have stood as candidates. They have been elected. Thus, one must ask, How does a Christian vote for an atheist? In considering the answer, pay attention to the words of the Westminster Larger Catechism, Question and Answer 105:

What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?

The sins forbidden in the first commandment are, **Atheism**, in denying or not having a God;¹² Idolatry, in having or worshipping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God; the not having and avouching him for God, and our God; ... hatred of God; self-love, self-seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part; ... making men the lords of our faith

7. <http://www.alp.org.au/about/history.html>. Italics added.

8. We would also draw attention to the present crisis with Ansett. The ACTU organised a rally in Canberra. When two Liberals approached the gathering they were asked to leave. The Labor politicians were invited. The Liberals were not.

9. The sinister aspect of this legislation is this: What is granted by law can be revoked by law. If we gain freedom as Christians by an act of the law we can lose that freedom when that law is repealed or modified in some way.

10. "He was also a leader in the fight for gay and lesbian rights. His first attempt to reform the laws relating to homosexuality in South Australia was in 1965 when he was Attorney-General. After permission had been granted by cabinet, he was knocked back by caucus. He later supported Peter Duncan's private member's bill which sought to decriminalise homosexual acts. That bill was knocked back by the Legislative Council and it was not until after the 1975 state election that this bill vigorously supported by Don Dunstan became law." Senator Stott-Despoja, **Parliamentary Speeches and Actions**, 15 February 1999, **Adjournment: Death of Honorable Don Dunstan**. Available at: http://www.adelaide.edu.au/dunstan_foundation. This should also provide a window to the soul of the now leader of the Democrats.

11. In 1996/97, 76191 abortions were paid for by Medicare at a cost of \$9,904,276. Now, as stated the blame must be shared by all governments who have done nothing to reverse this. However, our point here is simple. The Labour Party introduced a system with an item number for abortion despite the fact that abortion is illegal in most states. Even if one were to argue that the item number was there for the genuine case where a mother's life was in danger, one would have to ask questions about the number of procedures performed. Eighty thousand is a lot of babies. It is inconceivable that they are all the result of pregnancies that threaten the mother's life.

12. Note well that the Confession does not recognise "agnosticism." It is subsumed under "atheism."

and conscience; slighting and despising God and his commands.

Thus, if you voted for one of these atheists you have contravened the first commandment!¹³

Yet, herein lies the problem. We do not often, if ever, think of the possibility of contravening a commandment when we go to the ballot box. This illustrates two important aspects. First, Christians today do not read and study the Scriptures enough to understand their full scope and import. If they did, they would see clearly that God's law touches every area of our lives. Most Christians agree with Paul when he says, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). However, few really contemplate the scope of Paul's statement. If we are

to do **all** to God's glory, then this must include the ballot box. Therefore, we are obliged to work out the ethical commands and to apply them consistently and faithfully.

Before moving on we need to highlight this aspect. Often Christians are asked to rally against a certain person, book, song, et cetera. Whilst this is acceptable, we really do need to ask the question, Why that book, person, or song? All too often the Christian cannon is unpacked and aimed at one of the aforementioned. Then it is packed away. Why? Why does it not fire at all the cannon fodder out there? Why just one person, book or song?¹⁴

Second, Christians are too often wilfully ignorant of politics. They elect atheists and then complain when the atheists rule and make laws consistent with atheism. This is akin

to an ostrich placing his head in the sand to avoid an issue and then complaining because he has sand up his nose. Correctly, it is like buying a dangerous dog then complaining when it bites. You knew what the dog was and of what it was capable, yet you still purchased it. Why then should you complain when it bites you!

Christians must study God's word and see what He has to say about politics. Then, armed with this knowledge they must willingly approach the ballot box. In other words, the Christians of this nation must make a present plan to change the political make-up of this nation. This plan must be acted upon now, so that our children and grand-children may live in true freedom.

13. So we are not condemned for being one-sided, this statement also condemns John Howard for opening a Buddhist temple. Ironically, there seems to be an opinion that John Howard is a Christian. If this be so, then his condemnation is the greater. As an after word, he recently admitted that he was a poorly practicing Christian. Opening a Buddhist temple is poor indeed.

14. We raise this because all too often the Christians are whipped into a frenzy over a singular issue when, all the time, there is a long list of even more dangerous items to be found every day within the Church.