

“Do You Have More Information on School Discipline Problems?”

In the late 1940s teachers listed the worst problems they faced in school as chewing gum, running in the hall, etc. A few years ago teachers listed some violent crimes as the worst problems. Do you have more detail on this?

One example often used to demonstrate social decline is the list of discipline problems in the public schools. Usually the list contrasts school problems 50 years ago with those today.

Supposedly the top problems in the schools 50 years ago were: talking, chewing gum, running in the halls, making noise, getting out of line, violating the dress code, and littering. According to the survey, today's school problems are: drugs, alcohol, pregnancy, suicide, rape, and robbery.

Unfortunately, the school discipline list is an invention. The lists are not the result of research or surveys. The first list (50 years ago) catalogues daily disturbances. The second list (today) is actually composed of items from a “Safe School” questionnaire. To read more about these school discipline lists, see Barry O'Neill, “The invention of the school discipline lists,” *School Administrator*, 51 (1994): 8-11. I would NOT recommend you use these lists to demonstrate social decline.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate social and moral decline in this country would be to cite many of the statistics in Bill Bennett's book *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994) or at the Empower America Web Site (www.empower.org). These show a dramatic change in social statistics from 1960 and use respected instruments of measurement.

“Should Christians Give the Pledge of Allegiance?”

Should Christians give the pledge of allegiance?

Your question is an old one. First century Christians struggled with how much allegiance (if any) they were to give to Rome. The founders of this country struggled with it as well.

At one extreme you have the Jehovah's Witnesses (who do not pledge because they believe it is idolatry). At the other extreme you have Christians with a mindset of “my country right or wrong.” A proper biblical response is somewhere in the middle.

Romans 13 tells us to obey those in authority. Other passages allow for civil disobedience (Acts 5:29, Daniel, etc.). Christians who live in a country with a godly government shouldn't have much concern about a pledge of allegiance. However, Christians who lived in, say Nazi Germany, might legitimately have reservations about a pledge of allegiance in that country.

I believe that if a Christian feels that it would be wrong for him or her to pledge allegiance, then I believe he or she should refrain. But if Christians then concludes it is wrong for every other Christian to do so, they are mandating a standard of behavior that I do not believe can be found in Scripture. Obviously Jesus Christ deserves our total

allegiance, but I don't believe that a pledge of allegiance to a country undermines that.

Even though this issue doesn't necessarily involve the issue of civil disobedience, you might want to look at [Civil Disobedience, my transcript on the topic](#), at the Probe web page (www.probe.org) as well as some of my other writings on Christians and government.

Thanks for writing. I hope this helps.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

“Does Capital Punishment Take Away a Person's Chance to Be Saved?”

I have a question concerning your article [“Capital Punishment,”](#) in which you discussed the biblical perspective on the death punishment. My question is, does capital punishment take away a person's chance to be saved? Don't we all have the time to accept Christ until we die, and doesn't the death punishment cut short that chance? I'd appreciate your comment on that. I'm currently looking into the issue of capital punishment, and your article has helped a great deal. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you for your e-mail about capital punishment.

I believe that the overriding concern with capital punishment is whether it is just, whether it is biblical, and whether it is a deterrent. I believe I addressed those issues in my

essay.

Your question is an interesting one, but maybe not central to a person's belief in or against capital punishment. However, let me address it, if I can.

I have heard some argue that the prospect of being put to death focuses a criminal's attention on what he or she did and how that might affect their eternal destiny. A person on death row usually knows when he or she will be put to death—something that the person they murdered didn't know. Perhaps that would cause them to accept Christ. I know of many examples of murderers on death row accepting Christ. I wonder how many of them would have done so if they weren't on death row.

The death penalty might cut short their life, but I don't think it would necessarily cut short their opportunity to accept Christ. In fact, it may actually force many criminals to make a decision they might have otherwise postponed.

Again, I don't think this would be a compelling argument against the death penalty. It's an interesting question, and I hope I helped you think through it a little bit better.

Thank you for writing.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

“Is a Raffle the Same as

Gambling?"

Is a raffle the same as gambling? For example, the church has an article and they ask the brethren to buy a ticket for two dollars, then they will pick one ticket and that person whose number they pull will get that article. What does the Bible say on the subject? Please help me. I think it is gambling but there are others who do not think so.

I know of many churches that sponsor various forms of gambling (Bingo games, raffles, etc.). So your question is not unique.

At the outset, let me acknowledge that there are some differences between gambling in secular arenas and inside the church. The goal of a church-sponsored event is fund-raising, often for a good cause. The goal is not so much to win a large prize but to contribute to a good cause with the possibility of winning something.

But that distinction is often lost on those affected by gambling. Because I have written on the subject of gambling, I have been in contact with many people whose lives have been shattered by an addiction to gambling. For them, the distinction between gambling outside of church and inside church is irrelevant. Their lives have been adversely affected by gambling.

Many Christians have been writing books in the last few years about gambling, calling for the church to provide help and counseling for gamblers and their families. But I would argue that a church loses its moral authority to help those struggling with gambling. How can you reach out to gamblers and their families devastated by casino gambling, racetrack gambling, or lottery gambling when your church sponsors Bingo games and raffles?

Moreover, a Bible-centered church should be a refuge from the world. People addicted to gambling need a safe place to escape

the temptations of the world. When we bring gambling into the church, it is no longer a place where an addict can escape from the world.

Norman Geisler in his book *Gambling: A Bad Bet* addresses the argument that gambling must be OK since “they do it in the church.” He points out that churches do all sorts of things that can’t be morally justified. Cults have promoted sexual orgies, “divine deception,” and all sorts of corruption. That doesn’t make it right. He and I would argue that even though gambling may help a church raise money for a good cause, we shouldn’t use questionable means for a good end. The means and the ends must be moral. As one clergyman put it, “We don’t need to use the devil’s water to operate the Lord’s mill.”

Gambling is wrong wherever it takes place. I would encourage you to download my [article on gambling](#). It provides a biblical perspective on this issue. I believe these biblical principles apply to gambling outside the church and inside the church. Thank you for writing.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

“Why Do Christians Have to Bash Pop Psychology?”

Dear Mr. Anderson,

I was just browsing the Probe Ministries website and read parts of your article about [Pop Psychology Myths](#).

Honestly, I just don’t get it. Well, I should tell you I come from a strong Christian background, involved in Campus

Crusade, youth groups, church ministries etc. But sometime during my senior year of college I just about HAD IT with Christian culture and all their myths.

Why is it wrong to have self-esteem? I hid behind the Bible for years to make me feel good about myself, but I was never convinced. My personal calling isn't to humble myself to meekness, never thinking for myself, in order to be "godly." I feel better, accomplish more, and fulfill the talents God has given me when I act in ways to help my self esteem, like taking good care of myself, being assertive in my writing career and not letting people walk all over me, like I used to do, when I was a walking sin-o-meter... Why is it so important to make rules and laws and lists of myths when the whole essence of Christianity is Grace and Love? Doesn't this fear of the world seem somewhat legalistic?

I really don't know where I am going with this, I am just so frustrated with Christians who spend all their time worrying about the "world's ways" when things just AREN'T so black and white. There is wisdom in pop psychology—some of it is just plain nonsense, but there is some wisdom, just as there is some wisdom in Taoism. For goodness sakes, a great deal of it parallels scripture.

Anyway, something to chew on. I very much respect your degrees and figured you may be open to some discussion on the subject.

Thanks for writing. I thought the book by Chris Thurman (*Self-Help or Self-Destruction*) that was a basis of my week of radio programs was very well written and discerning. Perhaps I should do another week of programs on the other five myths of pop psychology mentioned in the book so that the analysis would be more complete.

I don't think that my transcript (nor the book) denies that there is any wisdom in pop psychology. But I do think we should be more discerning, and that's what we were trying to

convey in the program. Anyway, thanks for your opinion.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

China, The Olympics and Christians

When the 2008 Olympics were awarded to China back in 2001, there was a naive hope that this decision would change China and also lead to an improvement in human rights. It turns out that instead of changing China, it may have changed us.

One example of this can be seen in our country. When the Olympic torch was carried through various cities in the world, it was protected not only by the local authorities but also by the Chinese secret police. So when the torch came to San Francisco, once again the Chinese secret police showed up. Now to be fair, the news reports actually said that they were volunteers from the Special Forces academy of the Peoples Armed Police. But a better description for them would be Chinas secret police.

This organization has been used to protect embassies in Beijing. But it has also been called upon put down protests in Tibet and suppress protests and other forms of expression in China. They were described by the chairman of the 2012 London Olympic committee as thugs. Others described their tactics as aggressive.

It is amazing to me that we allowed these secret police in our country, but it illustrates my point. We thought that these trade overtures and the Olympics would change China. In the

long run, they may have a positive impact. But so far it seems like we are the ones who have changed.

There was also the naive hope that bringing the Olympics to China would usher in an era of improved human rights in this communist country. It appears that in some ways the situation is worse. China has invested time and money in preparing for the Olympics. It appears they have also done all they can to rid the nation of anyone who could be seen as a dissident.

For decades, China has been rounding up Christians and other dissidents. They have been beaten and thrown in jail. Some have been killed. Lord David Alton estimates that each year 8,000 executions take place in China. Those who escape this persecution must live in a society where political and religious opinion is repressed, where journalists are jailed, and where the Internet and overseas broadcasts are censored.

The Chinese constitution promises its citizens that they have freedom of religious belief. But we know better. While there is an official state church, most of the growth (and the perceived potential threat to the government) takes place in the underground churches. As we get closer to the Olympics, the government seems bent on doing more to smash the growing home church movement.

As Christians we should be in prayer about what is taking place in China. But a growing debate has centered on what the U.S. government should do. Some have called for President Bush to boycott the opening ceremonies. They believe this would be a strong statement of our repudiation of the practices of the Chinese government. Others have suggested that President Bush go and use the Olympics as a platform to speak out against the Chinese government.

I see merit in either action. What is unacceptable is the current policy of silence. The president, his administration, and even corporate sponsors have been silent about what has

been going on for decades. Now even the secular world is calling for action because of Chinas policy toward Tibet. It is time for all of us (Christians included) to break our silence and speak out.

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Do We Need a “Hate Crimes” Law?

April 4, 2007

Congress is once again weighing the possibility of passing a hate crimes bill that would give special federal protection based upon race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX) introduced the David Ray Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 (HR 254) in January. Many believe that if the bill is passed, it could open the door to prohibit any opposition to homosexuality whether in the church or the society at large.

It is quite possible that hate crimes legislation might even be used to define biblical language as hate speech. For example, city officials have already had a billboard removed in Long Island, NY, because it was classified as hate speech. The billboard read: If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. (Leviticus 20:13)

Consider how hate crimes legislation in Philadelphia was used against Christians. In 2004, six men and five women were arrested in Philadelphia while preaching and speaking during a

public homosexual celebration known as OutFest. These Christians (later known as the Philadelphia Eleven) walked into the gathering singing hymns and carrying signs encouraging homosexuals to repent. They were immediately confronted by a militant group of gay activists known as the Pink Angels. These activists blew loud whistles and carried large pink signs in front of the Christians in order to block their message and access to the event. Many of the gay activists screamed obscenities at the Christians.

Those arrested ranged in age from a 17-year-old girl to a 72-year-old grandmother. After spending twenty-one hours in jail, the Philadelphia District Attorneys office charged five of them with various felonies and misdemeanors stemming from Pennsylvanias hate crimes law. If the Philadelphia Eleven were convicted of these charges, they would have faced forty-seven years in prison and \$90,000 in fines each.

Even though a video clearly showed that no criminal activity took place, the prosecution refused to withdraw the charges, and characterized the groups views in court as hate speech. The judge for the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas Judge finally dismissed the charges, saying that she found no basis whatsoever for any of them.[\[1\]](#)

But even apart from the concerns about how a hate crimes law could be used to promote the homosexual agenda are deeper concerns about hate crimes legislation in general. For example, there is a major question whether hate crimes are really the problem the popular press makes them out to be. The FBI annually publishes Hate Crime Statistics. The most recent report shows that hate crimes reached an eight-year low in the last reporting period. A study by the Family Research Council found that there are significant discrepancies between hate crimes reported by law enforcement and the media.[\[2\]](#)

Hate crimes laws also rest on the flawed assumption that enhanced penalties deter crimes. First, there is no evidence

of this. Most of these crimes are crimes of passion and are not likely to be influenced by greater criminal penalties. Second, the argument for greater deterrence usually comes from those who argue that the death penalty has no deterrent effect. Do they really believe that a hate crime law deters a criminal simply because he or she might spend a few extra months in jail?

A final objection to these laws is that they criminalize thought rather than conduct. Hate crimes laws essentially punish thought crimes. They punish people because of their point of view. Criminal prosecutions delve into more than the defendant's intent; they inquire into the opinions about his or her victim. And trying to distinguish between opinions and prejudice is often difficult.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "If there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other it is the principle of free thought—not free thought for those who agree with us but freedom for the thought that we hate."^{3}

We may not like what some people think, but we should not have laws on the books to punish thought crimes. We already have laws on the books to punish what a person does. Those laws are sufficient to punish those who commit crimes of hate.

Notes

1. "Judge drops all charges against Philly Christians," *WorldNetDaily*, 17 February 2005, www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=42905.
2. Leah Farish, "Hate Crimes: Beyond Virtual Reality," Family Research Council, www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=IS03K01.
3. Oliver Wendell Holmes, *United States v. Schwimmer* 279 U.S. 644 (1929).

“Spanish Language Immersion Programs in Public Schools?”

Should we be concerned about Spanish language immersion programs in public schools? Our system just started one, offering Spanish-only kindergarten and first grade classes. Am I just an alarmist or is this just another ploy to undermine our sovereignty?

Thank you for your e-mail. I have noticed that some states (like North Carolina) are implementing a Spanish language immersion program like Los Puentes. On its face, it is probably a good idea since children learn language so much easier when they are younger. So I don't think there is anything to be concerned about English-speaking students learning Spanish at a young age.

That being said, there are concerns people have raised about bilingual education that does not put Spanish speaking kids into the mainstream. Recently I had a guest on [my radio program](#) who was responsible for some of this (in particular he was the reason all ballots are in both English and Spanish).

Also, the Rand Corporation released a study that documented the costs for language assistance instruction programs. They found that the total per pupil costs was estimated to be in the range of \$460 to \$1,600 in 2007 dollars. The total cost was \$3.9 billion.

Bilingual education has been expensive, and it doesn't seem to help Spanish-speaking students. It tends to isolate them rather than integrate them.

Thanks for writing.

Biblical Perspective on Giving – Giving Cheerfully and Sacrificially

Kerby Anderson provides a balanced, biblical perspective on how we should approach giving as Christians. One key point stressed from the book of 1st Corinthians is that God loves a cheerful giver and He honors those who give beyond their perceived ability. Read this article with an open heart asking God for His guidance on your giving habits.

The Controversy

In this article we are going to be talking about a biblical perspective on giving. In the past, we have discussed biblical principles concerning spending and focused primarily on the subject of [debt and credit](#).^{1} Here we will discuss such issues as the Old Testament tithe, New Testament giving, and related questions that often surface in the minds of Christians.

At the outset, we should acknowledge that there is some controversy surrounding a biblical perspective of giving. For example, if you ask if a Christian should tithe, you will get very different answers from various members in the body of Christ.

In fact, asking the question in some churches today is likely to start an argument. A few months ago, *The Wall Street*

Journal ran an article entitled The Backlash Against Tithing.[{2}](#) More recently CBS News ran a feature, To Tithe or Not To Tithe?[{3}](#) Even the secular media is noticing how controversial tithing has become in some churches.

The idea that Christians should give ten percent of their income to the church has become quite controversial and is increasingly being challenged. Church members say they should be free to donate whatever they choose. Some are reacting against a strong promotion of church giving that includes sermons, flyers, and brochures. Some balk at churches that have set up giving kiosks where church members can give using their debit cards. They have called them Gods ATM machines.

Others are reacting to the legalism that says the Old Testament law code concerning the tithe applies to the New Testament church age. And still others want to be good stewards of their giving and want to know more about how a church spends its money.

The best estimates are that Christians give about two and one-half percent of their income to the church, far below the ten percent advocated by those teaching tithing. And it appears that church giving is on the decline partially due to a decline in regular attendance and also due to the fact the Christians are giving to other charitable organizations. They balk at the idea that the church is Gods storehouse and want to give to other mission agencies and Christian organizations.

It isnt that Christians are stingy. Last year Americans gave an estimated \$97 billion to churches, and that is almost a third of the countrys \$295 billion in charitable donations.[{4}](#)

A number of church leaders and theologians have also entered the debate. They point out that the tithe was an Old Testament requirement, and that New Testament believers no longer live under the Law but under grace.

So in this article we look at the relationship between tithing

and charitable giving while looking at the idea of giving in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament Tithe

How are the tithe and charitable giving related? In order to answer that question we need to understand the relationship between the Old Testament tithe and New Testament giving. Lets begin with the teaching about the tithe. The Old Testament principle of the tithe provides the foundation for New Testament giving.

The word tithe means a tenth part. Once you understand that, you realize that many people use the phrase tithe, but arent really accurate in using it. Someone who makes \$3000 a month and gives only \$100 a month is not tithing. One study found that only three percent of households tithe their income to their church.[\[5\]](#)

The principle of the tithe can be found in Leviticus 27:30 which says, A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. We can derive three principles from this passage. First, the tithe was applied to everything from the land and did not just apply to some income or wealth. Second, the tithe belongs to the Lord and not to the people. And, third the tithe is holy, that is, it is set apart and should be given to the Lord.

What if a believer in the Old Testament did not tithe? The answer to that question can be found in Malachi 3:8-10. It says,

Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, How have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this, says the

Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

If the nation of Israel refused to pay the tithe, then they were considered guilty of robbing God. The Israelites were to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, not just part of the tithe.

In the Old Testament, the tithe was not voluntary but mandatory. Two kinds of giving are taught in the Bible: giving to the government (compulsory) and giving to God (voluntary). Israel was not only a spiritual community but a nation. The tithe was necessary to fund the nation. That is why many have referred to the tithe as a precursor to taxes. Israel was a theocracy, and the priests were the leaders of the government. They were supported by the tithe.

There were actually three tithes. One tithe was for the priests and Levites: A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord (Leviticus 27:30). This was paid to the Levites, who in turn gave a tenth of that to the priests (Number 18:26). This would be similar to the New Testament giving that goes toward ministry.

The second tithe provided funds for the Jewish festival (Deuteronomy 12:17-18). And a third tithe was to provide support for the widow, orphans, and poor (Deuteronomy 14:26-28). The first two were regularly collected, while the last one was collected every third year. Thus, the total amount of tithe was approximately twenty-three percent each year.

The tithe in the Old Testament was to be given from the first fruits. Proverbs 3:9 says, Honor the Lord from your wealth / And from the first of all your produce. The tithe was to be the first and the best of the crop, not an afterthought.

The first fruits applied to the vineyard (Leviticus 19:23-25) as well as to the production of grain and fruit trees (Exodus 23:16). It also applied to any coarse meal (Numbers 15:20-21) and other produce (2 Chronicles 31:5).

New Testament Giving

Does the New Testament teach the tithe?

Actually, nowhere in the New Testament is there an explicit command to tithe. The primary reason is that the tithe was for the Levites and the priests. The substitutionary death of Christ for our sins did away with the need for a temple. Christians don't need the temple and don't need priests as intercessors. We are all priests now and no longer live under law but under grace (Romans 6:15).

New Testament believers are never commanded to tithe. They are instructed to pay their taxes (Romans 13:1-7). That is the only *required* giving in the church age.

Christians are instructed to give to those who minister (1 Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 2:10). We are to give to those who trust God to supply their needs (Philippians 4:19). We are to give as God has prospered us (1 Corinthians 16:2), and are to give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7). And the Bible teaches that we will ultimately give account of our stewardship (Romans 14:12).

We might note that the first century believers set a high standard for giving. They sold their goods and gave money to any believer in need (Acts 2:45). They sold their property and gave the entire amount to the work of the apostles (Acts 4:36-5:2). And they also gave generously to the ministry of Paul (2 Corinthians 8:1-5) on a continual basis (Philippians 4:16-18).

Even though the tithe was no longer required, it appears that

the early believers used the tithe as a base line for their giving. After all, a large majority of the first century believers were Jewish, and so they gave not only the tithe but above and beyond the requisite ten percent.

Paul makes it clear that Christians are not to give grudgingly or under compulsion but as each believer has purposed in his heart (2 Corinthians 9:7). So the tithe was no longer the mandatory requirement, but it appeared to provide a basis for voluntary giving by believers.

Some have noted the similarity between the free will giving in the Old Testament and New Testament giving. One example would be when Moses challenged the people of Israel to give to the tabernacle. They were so enthusiastic, that the people were restrained from bringing any more. For the material they had was sufficient and more than enough (Exodus 36:6-7).

Another example of this would be the free will offerings collected when the temple was rebuilt. We read in the Old Testament book of Ezra that the people were encouraged to give a free will offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:6). So you can see that the concept of voluntary giving did not begin in the New Testament. There are a few examples of it in the Old Testament.

Biblical Principles on Giving (part one)

Given that Christians are commanded to give, the real question we need to answer is how they should give. Not all Christians give the same amount, and sadly many Christians do not give anything to their church or to Christian organizations. So lets look at a few key principles that should guide our giving.

The first principle is that when you sow generously, you will reap generously. 2 Corinthians 9:6 says, Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows

bountifully will also reap bountifully. Elsewhere in Scripture, we read that the size of a harvest corresponds to what we scatter. Proverbs 11:24-25 says,

*There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more,
And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it
results only in want.*

*The generous man will be prosperous,
And he who waters will himself be watered.*

Of course a spiritual harvest may differ from the kind of seed that is sown. For example, a material seed (giving to ministry) may reap a spiritual harvest (1 Corinthians 9:9).

God has both blessed us materially (Acts 14:17) and spiritually (Roman 5:17). So we can be assured that God will increase our harvest. Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness (2 Corinthians 9:10).

A second principle is that we are to give according to what we have purposed in our hearts. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says, Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Your giving should be a deliberate act and not just a quick response to some emotional appeal. Certainly there is nothing wrong with giving a freewill offering because God has moved you to support a particular missionary or project. But we should also have a purpose and a plan to our giving.

Many Christians have begun to give through an automatic deduction from their checking account. This has the positive effect to providing regular support for the church or Christian organizations. The monthly amount is deducted whether you are actively thinking about the ministry or not. The possible negative effect is that it could become so automatic, that you might forget about the ministry and fail

to pray for it.

A third principle is that we are to give voluntarily. We are told in 2 Corinthians 9:7 that we are not to give under guilt or compulsion. That admonition does not mean that we are only to support the local church or Christian organizations when we feel like it. In this particular passage, Paul was challenging believers in Corinth to give to a special need (the financial needs of the believers in Jerusalem). This was a one-time special offering that was above and beyond providing for the regular needs of the church in Corinth.

Biblical Principles on Giving (part two)

Another principle taught in Scripture is that we are to give generously. Notice that in 2 Corinthians 9:7 it says that God loves a cheerful giver. God values not the size of the gift (Acts 11:29; 1 Corinthians 16:2) but the heart of the giver (not reluctantly or grudgingly) and the willingness of the giver (a cheerful giver).

We see that principle played out in the Old Testament. When the temple needed to be rebuilt, Joash put an offering box out for those who would give to this important work. 2 Chronicles 24:10 says, All the officials and all the people brought their contributions gladly, dropping them into the chest until it was full. Notice that it says they gave to the rebuilding of the temple gladly. They were glad to give and provided a model for what Paul calls a cheerful giver.

We are also to give sacrificially. As Paul was writing to the church in Corinth, he told them of the sacrificial giving of the Macedonian Christians. He said, . . .in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord (2 Corinthians 8:2-3).

Consider that on the one hand Paul is talking about their deep poverty but then goes on to say that they still gave beyond their ability. I don't know too many people who today are giving beyond their ability. I know quite a few people who are giving less than their ability. Over my years in ministry, I have had many people tell me that they cannot afford to tithe. In this passage, Paul challenges the believers in Corinth (and by extension challenges us) to reevaluate our priorities and give sacrificially.

Once again we can see this principle at work in the Old Testament as well. David balked at giving a sacrifice to the Lord that was not really a sacrifice for him to give. In 2 Samuel 24:24 David says, I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing. David is reminding us by his behavior that true sacrificial giving means being willing to sacrifice that which we would be inclined to keep for ourselves.

I trust this biblical perspective on giving has been helpful to you. It has been challenging for me to research and write, and I hope it challenges you to reconsider what you are giving to the church and Christian ministries. May we all be found faithful in our giving to the Lord.

Notes

1. Kerby Anderson, Debt and Credit, Probe, 2008, www.probe.org/debt-and-credit/
2. Suzanne Sataline, The Backlash Against Tithing, *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 November 2007.
3. Martha Teichner, To Tithe Or Not To Tithe? CBS News, 2 March 2008, www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/03/01/sunday/.
4. Giving USA Foundation, www.givingusa.org/.
5. George Barna, Tithing Down 62% in the Past Year, *Barna Update*, 19 May 2003, www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=139.

Fertility and Voting Patterns

November 1, 2007

Does fertility affect voting patterns? Apparently it does much more than we realize. And this has been a topic of discussion for both liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans.

Arthur Brooks wrote a significant op-ed on the “Fertility Gap” last year in the *Wall Street Journal*. He said: “Simply put, liberals have a big baby problem: They’re not having enough of them . . . and their pool of potential new voters is suffering as a result.”

He noted that “if you picked 100 unrelated politically liberal adults at random, you would find that they had, between them, 147 children. If you picked 100 conservatives, you would find 208 kids.” That is a “fertility gap” of 41 percent.

We know that about 80 percent of people with an identifiable party preference grow up to vote essentially the same way as their parents. This “fertility gap” translates into lots more little Republicans than little Democrats who will vote in future elections.

So what could this mean for future presidential elections? Consider the key swing state of Ohio which is currently split 50-50 between left and right. If current patterns continue, Brooks estimates that Ohio will swing to the right and by 2012 will be 54 percent to 46 percent. By 2020, it will be solidly conservative by a margin of 59 percent to 41 percent.

Now look at the state of California that tilts in favor of liberals by 55 percent to 45 percent. By the year 2020, it will be swing conservative by a percentage of 54 percent to 46 percent. The reason is due to the “fertility gap.”

Of course most people vote for politicians, personalities, and issues not parties. But the general trend of the “fertility gap” cannot be ignored especially if Democrats continue to appeal to liberals and Republicans to conservatives.

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