A Dual Citizen’s Dilemma
A Christian’s Political Responsibility

Homecoming and Parents & Family Weekend 1999

Politically Involved Alumni
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Fennema and Raffaele: Covenant's Newest Professors

One is a former Covenant professor returning after twenty-four years away from Lookout Mountain. The other began his career as a naval officer on steamships and now works as a professional arbitrator. But both Jack Fennema and Gary Raffaele have one thing in common—as Covenant's newest faculty members, they hope to add something of themselves to the school community.

Fennema's return to Covenant marks the fourth time he has lived in the Chattanooga area. While in the U.S. Air Force, he was stationed at a now-defunct base on Lookout Mountain. He returned to the area to become the founding principal of Chattanooga Christian School and later taught at Covenant, leaving in 1975. He is now a member of the education department.

"I feel comfortable [at Covenant]," Fennema says. "I feel as though I belong here."

Fennema says his return to Covenant "pulled something together for each member of [my] family." His wife, Barbara, is teaching at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, and his fifteen-year-old daughter, Paige, attends Chattanooga Christian School—the institution her father helped start.

Fennema notes Covenant's spirit remains the same as when he left. "More buildings, more people...less parking," he chuckles. "But in essence, it really hasn't changed that much. I see Covenant as a blending of the reformed and evangelical [traditions]. I think that's a healthy blending."

When not in the classroom, Gary Raffaele is an active labor arbitrator who handles both public and private cases. But he began in a vastly different career. He received a bachelor of science degree from the State University of New York's Maritime College and served as an officer for a variety of steamship and tanker companies.

In 1973, he received a doctorate in labor relations from Harvard University. Since then he has taught at schools including the University of Rhode Island, Boston University's Overseas Program, and Tsinghua University in Beijing, China. Most recently, Raffaele taught at the University of Texas at San Antonio where he developed the school's personnel/human resources major in the business department.

At Covenant, Raffaele will be a visiting professor of business. His goal is to "make the business student at Covenant distinct." He hopes to "bring a different perspective to the department," he says.

He also looks forward to "becoming part of the Covenant community. The thing that a small school gives is a sense of community."

Covenant Starts Year with Record Enrollment

Covenant opened the 1999-2000 school year with record enrollment totals: 1,124 students are enrolled this semester. Enrollment increased by eighty students from last year's total of 1,044. The upsurge was sparked in part by 258 new students. Traditional undergraduates number 829. The rest are enrolled in Covenant's Quest and Master of Education programs.

Covenant welcomed the record student body with Convocation ceremonies on August 30, 1999. Joel Belz '62 gave the Convocation address, speaking to a crowd so large that it overflowed the chapel seating and spilled onto the building's main stairways.

Belz, the founder of God's World Publications and publisher of the Christian news magazine World, challenged Covenant's students and faculty "to set about the task of being faithful in exploring every facet of life as though Jesus Christ really matters and really rules in every detail."

Admissions officials expressed excitement over the school's growth. "I think the rise in enrollment this year is largely to be attributed to the fact that Covenant students are receiving an
excellent education—challenging in terms of academic rigor and uncompromising in its spiritual foundation,” says Charlie Phillips, vice president of development and admission.

Phillips says $12 million in improvements at the school also have helped its image as a “Christ-centered college of substance and excellence.”

“If we desire to continue to broaden the scope of the curriculum, this will mean that significant growth will continue to be an aspect of Covenant for some time. We are not growing simply for growth’s sake, but because growth is the condition demanded by progress.”

But even as growth continues, Phillips says, the notion of a close-knit “Covenant family” will carry on. “My guess is that, as long as we continue to matriculate students who are strongly committed to Covenant’s biblical and reformed distinctives, the sense of community will remain.”

Enhanced Orientation Week Challenges Students

A more academically rigorous orientation and a streamlined registration process greeted freshmen arriving on campus this fall.

Freshman orientation week was redesigned during the summer to give new students a better taste of Covenant’s academic flavor. Freshmen spent much of the week in Self in Society classes, where they listened to lectures and took part in small-group discussions led by Covenant professors.

Students were also assigned summer reading: before arriving at Covenant, freshmen were to read Stephen Garber’s The Fabric of Faithfulness and respond to the book with twelve journal-style essays.

Associate Dean of Students Barb Schreur says students worked through about half of the Self in Society course material during their first week at school. Schreur said the school “challenged” the freshman class with the new requirements. “Overall, they responded very well,” she says.

The school registration process changed this year as well. Instead of holding all freshmen registration on one day, small groups registered at different times during the week. The new procedure created some headaches for the registration office, Schreur said, but was much simpler for students.

Tom Okie ’02, a Resident Advisor in Founders Hall, says orientation week was “more fruitful” than in years past, with “a lot less fun and games...and a lot more serious academics. I think it was a good way for the college to start out stating what they want to do here.” Okie continues. “Also, having the faculty involved is a good idea.”

Freshman response to the orientation also has been positive. “It was a good idea of what classes [are] like,” says Marie Gonzalez ’03. “It went smoothly.” John Tracy ’03 says the week of challenging classes was encouraging. “It was good to finally be in a place where people were actually interested in learning and were actually struggling with new ideas.”

Registration “couldn’t have been easier,” Tracy says. “The last school I went to, I stood in line for two hours to finalize my schedule, and I stood in another line for forty-five minutes to have my photo ID taken.” At Covenant, Tracy says, the whole process took less than 10 minutes.

![Calendar](image-url)
Covenant Teams Led by Young Talent

Covenant College soccer has a fresh face this season. Despite some tough losses, the men’s and women’s varsity soccer teams both have been lifted by outstanding performances from freshman players. In fact, more than halfway through the season, the leading scorers for both Covenant teams were freshmen.

The men’s team, whose record stood at 6-5-1 in mid-October, has seen five freshmen—Sheldon Grizzle, Ben Kellogg, Michael Krom, Tim Montgomery and Stephen Strawbridge—take hold of a starting spot for at least part of the season. Grizzle led the Scots in points (14) and goals (6), and Kellogg and Krom have also been outstanding, says head coach Dr. Brian Crossman.

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The Scots lost nine upperclassmen at the end of last season, leaving the team with “some big holes to fill,” Crossman says. “It’s a very young team . . . They’re an enjoyable group to work with.”

The Scots got off to a quick start with blowout victories at Toccoa Falls and Bluefield, speeding to a 6-2-1 record. But losses to Montreat, Bryan and a muddy, hard-fought, Homecoming defeat against Milligan has virtually eliminated Covenant from this year’s TVAC playoff race.

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All the young talent, Crossman says, serves notice that the Scots will be a challenging opponent in years to come.

Meanwhile, the Lady Scots were sparked by the play of freshman goalie Abby Harrell, whose performance has opposing coaches calling her the best keeper they have seen in recent years, according to Mark Duble '92, the Lady Scots head coach.

"[She's] certainly the wall . . . for us," the coach said. "You have to make a great shot to score on us."

In a 6-1 homecoming loss to Milligan, Harrell made an astounding 24 saves. "She was like an ice-hockey goalie," says Duble.

The team's offense was led by freshmen Juliane Savage and Ashley Harbert, each of whom have four goals. "Nineteen of the twenty-four women we have are either freshmen or sophomores," says Duble.

The young Lady Scots were 3-7-2 midway through October, but that record is deceiving, Duble says. Five of the team's losses went into double overtime, he explains.

The Lady Scots, Duble says, are "twenty-five great kids . . . with high GPAs, who want to play soccer and love the Lord. They play their hearts out every time they go out on the field."

The Covenant men's and women's cross-country teams were led by the running of Joel Collier '03 and Kristyn Borger '02. Borger took first place in September's Truett-McConnell XC Invitational, while Collier came in first in the Covenant College Invitational on Homecoming weekend.
Bob Ashlock (Education) in April joined others in the education department at a teacher educators' conference on "Reviving the Christian Mind" at Wheaton College in Illinois. He spoke in March at a regional conference of Christian Schools International in Chattanooga, discussing "Portfolio Assessment." Ashlock recently consulted with Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, assisting in their preparation for a Georgia Professional Standards Commission review of their educational programs.

Calvin Beisner (Interdisciplinary Studies) lectured this summer on Christianity and environmentalism for five Summit Ministries youth conferences and for the Christian Student Worldview Conference in Newport News, Virginia. He also spoke on economics and the environment at the World Journalism Institute in Asheville, North Carolina. Beisner took part in a weeklong conference on market economics and religious faith at Grove City College in Pennsylvania in June where he gave three lectures and responded to five others. In April, he delivered a lecture and responded to other presentations at an environmentalism conference at Malone College in Ohio.

Robert Bryan (Information and Computer Science) has completed the requirements for the Ph.D. in Information Systems at Auburn University.

Ray Clark (Biblical Studies) and Tim Everaritt (Education) traveled to Budapest, Hungary, in August to conduct teaching seminars for about twenty Hungarian and Romanian teachers. Clark spoke on "The Teaching Methods of Jesus" and Everaritt discussed "The Integration of Faith and Learning." Everaritt also worked with teachers in the development of integrated units. The two professors spent a day working with the Budapest staff of the Association of Christian Schools International, revising their curriculum for the summer institutes. This was the education department's fourth year of working with ACSI in Eastern Europe.

Bill Davis '82 (Philosophy) taught a one-week class entitled "Ministry to the Postmodern Mind" at Westminster Seminary in California this summer.

William D. Dennison (Interdisciplinary Studies) has had four articles published in the past year: "Van Til and Common Grace" appeared in Mid-America Journal of Theology. Kerux: A Journal of Biblical-Theological Preaching ran Dennison's "Abraham: The Prophet (Genesis 20:1-18)." Calvin Theological Journal featured "Rudolf Bultmann: Pastor?" which is Dennison's first publication relating to his dissertation, "Dutch Neo-Calvinism and the Roots for Transformation: An Introductory Essay" was included in the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society. This summer Dennison presented four lectures on "Postmodernism and History" at the World Journalism Institute in Asheville, North Carolina, and he presented a lecture, "Biblical Theology and the Enlightenmen" at the Kerux Conference in Westminster, California. Dennison is also serving as interim men's basketball coach at Covenant.

Brian Fikkert (Economics) and Robert Littlejohn, vice president of academic affairs, recently traveled to Kenya along with former Covenant President Marion Barnes to explore the possibility of establishing a joint program between the Chalmers Center and Daystar University. The project has been approved and will be led by Covenant graduates Sila Tuju '97 and Jason Trimiew '99.

David Friberg (Music) plays organ at Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church and serves as an accompanist for the Chattanooga Choral Arts Society. In July, Friberg participated in a Bach organ tour of Germany sponsored by the Westfield Center in Massachusetts. He also attended the third annual Music at a Crossroads Symposium in Seattle, Washington. He prepared and presented festival services for the Chattanooga Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church last fall.

Jay Green (History) taught a modern world history course at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga during the summer. He also did editorial and administrative work for the journal, Christian Reviews in History.

Jeff Hall (Dean of Faculty) gave a presentation entitled "The Complex Decisions and Implications of Assigning Grades to Student Work" at the conference of the Council of Independent Colleges in June.

David Hoover (Business), Brian Fikkert, Russ Mask and Mike Parker of the Chalmers Center traveled to Bangkok, Thailand, in May to attend the Christian Microenterprise Development Conference. They joined more than 250 missionaries and Christian relief agency heads to consider biblical principles as they pertain to microenterprise projects. Mask, international microenterprise coordinator for the Chalmers Center, gave one of the conference's plenary addresses. In the speech, he shared the results of research that will be summarized in his upcoming book, The Christian Microenterprise Development Handbook: Counting the Cost and Building the Kingdom.

Charlie Phillips, vice president of admissions and development, also attended.

Edward Kellogg (Art) is one of eight featured artists in the East Tennessee Art Currents II exhibit at the Carroll Reece Museum at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. His paintings were on display at the museum until January 8. The exhibit is designed to shine a spotlight on some of the most significant work being produced by artists in the East Tennessee area.

Jerry King (Career Development) traveled to Uganda in June for a missions trip. During his two weeks in the towns of Mbane and Kampala, King's mission team ministered to prisoners. Visits to the prisons included bringing sugar, salt, medicine, clothes and Bibles to the prisoners. More than 1,600 inmates heard the gospel, including the death row inmates of Condemn Prison. King was able to share his testimony at the prisons and evangelize to the general Ugandan community.

Larry Mehne (Chemistry) recently served on the Executive Committee of the Chattanooga Section of the American Chemical Society. He also co-authored a paper entitled "Synthesis and X-ray Crystal Structures of Mixed Sandwich Group 8 Cyclopentadienyl Complexes Containing Crown Trithioether Ligands," which was accepted for publication in May.

J. Drake Smisson (Foreign Language) spent two weeks this July teaching English and French at the Music and Language Institute in Queretaro, Mexico.

Randy Smith (ICS) took a yearlong sabbatical doing research for Hitachi in Atlanta, Georgia, and Intel Corporation near Portland, Oregon. He also worked on his doctoral dissertation in computer science with Nova Southeastern University.
Approximately 800 alumni, parents and family members attended Homecoming and Parents and Family Weekend on October 8-9. Much needed rain fell steadily on Saturday, but it did little to dampen visitors' spirits. Visitors had opportunities to interact with students, faculty, administrators and alumni during a host of events planned throughout the weekend.

Jim Grauley '82 (center), was honored as alumnus of the year during Friday's chapel. Grauley is Eastern manager of Bank of America's Community Development Corporation. He is shown with Alumni Director Marshall Rowe '87 (left) and Randy Cobler '77 (right), president of the alumni association.

James Ward '72 returned to the Great Hall, where he first performed publicly as a student, to sing and play to a full room Friday night.
Fans and players alike braved the elements Saturday afternoon as both Covenant men's and women's teams lost their games to Milligan College.

Both Covenant men's and women's cross-country teams took first place at the Covenant College Invitational on Saturday running through fog and rain to beat Lee and Lincoln Memorial Universities. Andrew Kaufmann '03 is show during the men's meet. Sarah Akin '01 (left) and Jane Berry '03 (right) navigate a wooded trail during the women's meet.
On Saturday evening, reunion classes meet at alumni homes for dessert. Class of '64 met at the home of Peggy and Jack Muller '64, class of '69 met at Steve '69 and Mary (Belz '68) Kaufmann’s, class of '74 met at the home of Ketta (Hudson) Settle '75, classes of '79 and '84 met at Buck '80 and Eve (DeBardeleben '79) Roebuck's, class of '89 meet at the home of Karen (Newton) Fogo '89 and the classes of '94 and '99 met at the home of Krue and Hollee (Huckaba) Brock '92. The following photos were taken at the reunion desserts and include spouses and friends from other class years.

Class of 1964 Dessert

Class of 1969 Dessert

Class of 1974 Dessert

Class of 1979 Dessert

Class of 1984 Dessert

Class of 1989 Dessert
A Christian's Political Responsibility

"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." This was our Lord's answer to a question Christian's grapple with as vigorously today as they did two thousand years ago. The actual question posed by the religious leaders in Jesus' day was, "Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" But this question springs from a broader one—how are believers to honor and obey both their temporal king and the King of Kings?

Christians through the centuries have come up with varying answers concerning their role in government. Some have completely washed their hands of any governmental involvement including voting and military service. Others have tried to make the Church the ruler of the current kingdom. Some have used religion as a catalyst to incite revolt against their government.

"Since Constantine, Christians have been vitally concerned with the place of the state in life," says Louis Voskuil, Covenant history professor. One course Voskuil teaches is "The History of Political Theory." The church's involvement in government continued throughout the Middle Ages, the Reformation and into the early modern era, Voskuil adds, but after the Reformation, the state became more and more secular.

"As Christians were confronted with growing secularization, they began to feel that involvement in politics was not as productive as involvement in other social roles," Voskuil says. They retreated from politics feeling that it was "impossible to make headway, a waste of time and possibly corrupting." Christians pulled away from political involvement—unless issues affected them. What followed was a "pendulum swing" approach to Christian involvement in government.

Evangelicals Return to Politics

"A growing segment of evangelicals in the last thirty years realized that there were too many cultural issues to address and they couldn't deal with them without being publicly involved," Voskuil says. Abortion is an example of an issue that evangelicals felt they must speak out on, he adds.

Evangelicals have made a massive return to politics as voters, candidates and lobbyists on all levels of government. The results of Christian involvement in politics are interpreted in various ways by
different culture-watchers. In their recent book, *Blinded by Might, Can the Religious Right Save America?*, former Moral Majority insiders Cal Thomas and Ed Dobson contend that despite twenty years of engaging government with huge amounts of effort and money, no significant advances have been made in long-fought battles against abortion, pornography and the disintegration of the family.

"Two decades after conservative Christians charged into the political arena, bringing new voters and millions of dollars with them in hopes of transforming the culture through political power, it must now be acknowledged that we have failed. We failed not because we were wrong about our critique of culture, or because we lacked conviction, or because there were not enough of us, or because too many were lethargic and uncommitted. We failed because we were unable to redirect a nation from the top down. Real change must come from the bottom up, or better yet, from the inside out," (p. 23) writes Thomas, Covenant College's 1999 Commencement speaker.

Dobson adds, "The list could go on [abortion, pornography, poor education, racism, the gay agenda, family breakdown and sexually transmitted diseases]. However, I do not believe that politics is capable of solving any of these problems. The transformation of our culture will come through the power of the gospel—one person at a time. I fear that in the Religious Right we have opted for a shortcut to culture change—namely, legislation," (p. 183).

Despite a perceived lack of progress, the question should be asked, "How bad would our country now be if Christians had not been politically active over the last twenty years?"

In *World* magazine's May 15, 1999 issue, several cultural observers were asked to respond to the statement, "The past twenty years of Christian political activism have been a waste of time."

"Absolutely not," replies Kay James, dean of the Robertson School of Government at Regent University. "I shudder to think what America would look like if Christians had not been politically active for the past twenty years. In this soul-searching, we seem preoccupied with setbacks, instead of with our many victories and the prevention of defeats," she adds.

"Hardly," responds Michael Cromartie '76, vice president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center and director of The Evangelical Studies Project. "Abortion, partial-birth abortion, legal battles against same-sex marriage, and the worldwide persecution of Christians would not even be on the agenda for discussion if it were not for the persistent political activities of conservative Christians. Have mistakes been made? You bet. And any Christian political activist whose public posture communicates smugness, arrogance, and self-righteousness is an activist who needs to revisit the Sermon on the Mount daily," Cromartie says.

March Bell '78, national coalitions director for the Bauer for President Campaign 2000, takes a "both/and" approach rather than an "either/or" approach about fighting injustice. Christians need to be represented in politics and involved in hands-on ministry, he says.

"I never met a Christian activist in D.C. who thought that we were going to create a Christian America through politics," adds Bell. A good example of a "both/and" approach to addressing a social problem can be found in the abortion crisis. Bell estimates that there are about fifteen full-time pro-life activists in Washington, and he says they are doing important work, but they are complemented by the volunteers at 3,000 crisis pregnancy centers around the country.

Mariam (McKowen) Bell '78, is director of federal affairs for Justice Fellowship, the public policy arm of Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship Ministries. She is also March Bell's wife. Her comments about the power of politics parallel her husband's: "I've spent almost twenty years in government, and I've never met anyone who thought that just politics would save the culture. We need good, strong families; we need to evangelize; we
March Bell '78 works with conservative Christian Gary Bauer's presidential campaign.

“Need to aggressively exercise the stewardship of our citizenship; you do it all—not just one thing.”

A Political Calling
The high reputation and social esteem that politicians commanded in times past are gone. Voters seem to consider politicians as a necessary evil, prone to scandal and rarely trustworthy. Is this an occupation fit for a Christian?

Yes, argues Voskuil, “Christians ought to be in politics all the time—not just when issues pop up [that concern them].” They should “strive for a biblical notion of public justice for all people—not just a Christian advantage,” he adds. Christians who are called to lobby and educate politicians on specific issues must “work out a Christian perspective on their slice of politics,” Voskuil says.

Cromartie considers working in and around government “a high calling and important calling but no more important than anybody who is a teacher, coach, janitor, dentist or a doctor.” A Christian politician’s responsibility is to “go on a daily basis to represent people in a fair and just way and pass bills which treat people as being made in the image of God,” he says.

Mariam Bell agrees that Christians need to engage our political system. “As believers we have to fight for real liberty. Our first amendment liberties have been eroded through interpretations by the court. I believe I was called to be [in Washington] to push the envelope—to push it hard,” she says. She has lobbied against abortion, pornography and child abuse and promoted adoption, disadvantaged youth, foster care reform, religious liberty and prison reform during her career.

“I felt a sense of calling to take a Christian worldview and apply biblical principles in politics and government. I felt that was what God wanted me to do with my Covenant education and law degree,” March Bell says.

“If [pastors] call on young people to think of politics as a career where Christians can serve God as a calling—which government leadership is—then the Kingdom can make an impact in many areas of society,” says Randy Nabors ’72, pastor of New City Fellowship in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Believers who do serve in the public square will not find it an easy task. Changes in legislation come slowly, incrementally, with much effort and excruciating compromise. When speaking of Christianity, the word “compromise” is not far from heresy. Our faith rests on immutable truths embraced for centuries by believers who were willing to die before compromising, but “the essence of politics is compromise,” says Voskuil.

Cromartie adds, “Politics is the art of finding approximate solutions to basically insoluble problems.” But there is good compromise in politics and bad compromise.

“Settling for less than what you want, but more than you currently have is good compromise,” explains Bobby Franklin ’77, member of the Georgia House of Representatives. It frustrates him to see representatives who claim to be Christians vote as if they were not. He refuses to compromise biblical principles to get reelected or ease passage of his own bills.

His belief in God’s sovereignty gives him a different perspective about staying in office. “If the Lord wants you there, he’ll keep you there. Getting reelected is not my job—it’s the Lord’s,” Franklin says. His job is to be faithful to God and “work as hard as I can.” Unlike many politicians, he reads every word of every bill before voting on it.

Mariam Bell says that to compromise does not mean to go against your principles. Christian activists have to take a long-range view of outcomes. “Not everything is going to be done in your lifetime,” she says. If a legislator can get fifty percent of what he or she wants on a
certain issue this time and then another ten percent next year and ten more the year after that, he or she will eventually create legislation that comes closer to a biblical standard.

“We will never get rid of injustice entirely, but we should work for justice continually,” Cromartie says. “Work, but never expect anything utopian from politics,” he adds.

**Pastors and Politics**

A pastor has a unique and delicate role in the area of political involvement. “The role of a pastor is to administer the sacraments and expound the Word. Sometimes expounding the Word includes addressing cultural issues,” says Cromartie, but he adds, “The Sunday pulpit should not become a political harangue.” He does not recommend pastors telling their congregations what bill to vote for or what candidate to support.

“The church should teach its people to be involved in politics and to honor the position of governors,” says Voskuil.

Bell advises that pastors should “preach the whole counsel of God including issues in the public square.”

Mariam Bell says believers need to hear the “prophetic voice” of pastors on issues. She is less comfortable with the idea of pastors promoting specific candidates for office.

Pastor Harry L. Reeder III ’74 has recently left as senior pastor of Christ Covenant Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, to become senior pastor at Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. “I think a pastor should be personally involved as a citizen of his country. In his pastoral capacity, he should preach on issues from a biblical perspective. He should not be identified with one candidate or party so he is free to speak to all candidates, all parties and the entire electorate. A pastor’s role is prophetic, not political,” he says.

In Charlotte he was involved in the Arts and Sciences Council working against public funding of “obscene, pornographic and blasphemous art” including a play that portrayed homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle. He also was involved in the issue of sex education in school. He worked in the effort to remove county funding for Planned Parenthood and state funding of abortions.

He arrived in Birmingham only weeks before a vote on a state lottery in Alabama. He has spoken against it as a “counterproductive activity” and a “nonprogressive tax” which obtains revenue from those least able to afford it.

His time at Covenant gave him the “realization that the Bible was sufficient to give a framework for a worldview.” He also valued the opportunity to study under Francis Schaeffer three times while at Covenant. He says Schaeffer taught him the difference between “winning arguments and winning people.”

Although on sabbatical, Nabors replied by email to questions concerning what a pastor’s role in politics should be.

“If a pastor preaches a Gospel that encompasses all of life, it will be hard for him not to be ‘involved’ in politics. Preachers need courage to preach without hesitation on every issue to which the Bible speaks and to be bold in areas of morality and justice. They need to be reticent to denounce government leaders, even when they disagree with them, and they must never mock or abuse them with public signs of disrespect. Disagreement is one thing; disrespect is another. Our disagreement has to be carefully phrased, biblically based and it cannot be seen to parrot a political party’s ideology. We must be above party, and not have our souls belonging to anyone but God. That’s hard.

“Pastors ought not to be afraid of relationships with political and governmental leaders. The danger is that knowing people of power is a great temptation. Since all pastors have egos, it is quite tempting to feel that you are important when powerful people come to hear you preach or know your name or invite you to special functions.

“Areas that has given me some political influence are ministry to the poor, racial reconciliation and neighborhood development. The church becomes influential in a neighborhood when the neighborhood realizes the church is engaged for the community’s good and not just for the church’s self-interest. Tip O’Neill said, ‘All politics is local.’ When churches or pastors make an impact on specific neighborhoods for positive reasons, they in turn have political power. That power must be gently applied. Americans fear churches that become politically powerful. We should fear them too since that is not our primary area of ministry—it is peripheral,” Nabors concludes.

In Blinded by Might, Dobson describes how he left politics behind completely when he left the Moral Majority
in 1987 to become the pastor of Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His church will not even host voter registrations drives.

Dobson writes, "I decided that I would avoid all political entanglements. I would not attend either Republican or Democrat events. I would not march for or against anything. I was convinced that as a pastor I was called to reach Republicans and Democrats and Independents with the gospel. I was called to reach pro-life people and pro-choice people. I was called to reach pro-gay and anti-gay people. If I engaged in public political activities, I ran the risk of alienating the very people I was called to reach," (p. 152).

His apolitical stance does not mean that he dilutes the Bible's message on moral issues. “In teaching the Bible one cannot avoid the moral issues of our day. So, for example, as I have taught, I have dealt with the fact that life is a gift from God and that it begins at conception. To abort a baby is the taking of human life. Or again, sexuality is a gift from God and is to be enjoyed within the commitments of life-long heterosexual marriage, and all expressions of our sexuality outside this principle are sinful. Keeping the pulpit free of politics does not mean keeping it free of clear, biblical, moral teaching,” (p.152).

Being apolitical also does not mean that Dobson’s church is uninvolved. The congregation ministers to women who have had abortions and supports a pro-life clinic. They ministered to a former homosexual believer during his downhill battle with AIDS.

A Citizen’s Responsibility

Most of us are not politicians or pastors, but as citizens of a democracy we also have a part in “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

“Christian’s who don’t vote and participate in the political process are ignoring their responsibilities as written in Romans 13. In a constitutional republic, the citizens are the government,” Bell says.

Mariam Bell considers a citizen’s minimum responsibility to government to include staying informed, voting and communicating with political leaders. “Your call or letter makes a lot of difference,” she says, adding that even half a dozen calls or letters on an issue from voters can get a politician’s attention.

“The purpose of politics is to try to restrain evil and sin by laws that promote justice for all. Christians are commanded to love our neighbors, and one indication of that love is being thoughtful and careful citizens. We have a duty to be responsible citizens, yet we do it without any illusions...never expect anything utopian from politics,” says Cromartie.

Christians are also called to pray for their leaders. The apostle Paul writes, “I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness,” (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Paul gives more instruction to citizens in Romans 13:1-7: “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebelled against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.”

**HE WHO CONVERTS HIS NEIGHBOR HAS PERFORMED THE MOST PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN POLITICAL ACT OF ALL.**

—C.S. Lewis, from “Meditations on the Third Commandment” in *God in the Dock*.
Over the next twelve months we will all be overwhelmed with political messages as the 2000 elections build momentum. These messages can remind believers to pray for their leaders as the Bible commands. In this cynical age, Christians must remember that they are commanded to honor the leaders God provides.

Scripture makes it clear that God puts leaders in their place and expects them to use their power wisely and with justice. Pastors owe their allegiance to God and are to fearlessly preach the word he gives them. The Bible calls believers to be agents of justice and mercy in their communities. As Mariam Bell says, in a democracy believers must be good stewards of their citizenship in a country led by a "government of the people."

Politically Involved Alumni

March Bell ’78 is national coalitions director for the Bauer for President 2000 campaign. He has known Bauer for eighteen years since Bauer was in the Department of Education under Reagan, and Bell was a lawyer for the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee. They worked together in the successful passage of The Equal Access Act allowing students in religious clubs to meet on school grounds just as other clubs.

His positions have included counsel to the Committee on the Judiciary of the U.S. Senate; executive director of the Rutherford Institute; issues director for Americans for Robertson; special assistant, drug policy coordinator, trial attorney and acting assistant U.S. trustee for the U.S. Department of Justice; counsel for justice affairs for the U.S. House of Representatives' Government Reform and Oversight Committee; deputy director of the Department of Environmental Quality of Virginia; and associate professor of government at Regent University's Washington campus.

He has written articles for various law and policy journals and for The Wall Street Journal, Christianity Today, Washington Times and World Magazine.

Bell was a philosophy major at Covenant. He did graduate studies in political philosophy at Western Kentucky University and received a law degree from Pepperdine University.

Mariam Bell ’78 is director of federal affairs for Justice Fellowship, a Christian public policy organization that promotes biblically-based principles of restorative justice for America's criminal justice system. It was founded in 1983 as a subsidiary of Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship Ministries. She assisted U.S. Representative Charles Canady of Florida in passing the Religious Liberty Protection Act of 1999.

Bell began her career in Washington as a legislative assistant to Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA). She was then associate director for public liaison in the Reagan White House. Her next position was with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as deputy assistant secretary for public affairs.

Her most recent positions have taken her out of government and into political action. She was acting chief
operating officer of The One to One Partnership which promotes mentoring of disadvantaged youth. She moved on to become director of governmental affairs at Childhelp USA, a child abuse prevention group. Before her current position she was vice president of public policy and programs for Enough is Enough, an anti-pornography organization. “Pornography is cultural and moral pollution, and the Internet has become the Chernobyl of pornography,” she says.

“What I learned at Covenant really turned the world upside down. I learned that everything we do is ministry,” Bells recalls.

To learn more about Justice Fellowship, point your browser to: www.justicefellowship.org

Michael Cromartie ’76 is vice president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center and the director of the Evangelical Studies Project. The center is a research “think tank” in Washington, D.C., established in 1976 to clarify and reinforce the bond between the Judeo-Christian moral tradition and domestic and foreign policy issues.


He is the co-editor, with Richard John Neuhaus, of Piety and Politics: Evangelicals and Fundamentalists Confront the World, now in its fifth printing.


Cromartie holds an M.A. in justice from The American University in Washington, D.C. He formerly worked as a special assistant to Charles W. Colson at Prison Fellowship Ministries.

“It was at Covenant that I learned about Christian world and life views,” Cromartie says. His years at Covenant gave him a “good grounding in liberal arts and thinking in a Christian fashion. It rooted me in biblical tradition to go into the other world,” he adds. He was also influenced by hearing Francis Schaeffer at Covenant.

For more information about Cromartie and the Ethics and Public Policy Center, point your browser to: www.eppc.org.

Bobby Franklin ’77, is the Georgia house representative for district thirty-nine in Cobb county. Franklin has served two terms and is up for reelection in 2000. He lost his first race in 1994. Franklin believes that government’s influence on life should be greatly limited. Its function is to “protect citizens and punish criminals.” He does not see government as the solution to our culture’s problems. “Until you change a person's heart—which only the Lord can do—there will be crime,” Franklin says. Bills he has sponsored would abolish the state income tax, sentence drunk drivers who commit vehicular homicide to life in prison or death, and prohibit finger printing for driver’s licenses and ID cards.

Franklin is also a business analyst. His major at Covenant was biblical studies and his minor was in business. At Covenant he learned that “you can serve the Lord in every walk of life as long as the Lord calls you there. I first heard the concept of a biblical worldview at Covenant—it was a foreign concept to me—the idea that the Bible spoke to everyday life.”

To learn more about Franklin’s work in the Georgia House of Representatives point your browser to: www2.state.ga.us/Legis/1999_00/house/gash039.htm.
Reversing the Death Spiral of Cultural Entropy

By Harry L. Reeder III '74

Salt Obstructs Decay—Change Obstructionists

When Jesus called us to be the “salt of the earth,” He gave us a very specific charge as believers. Salt is an instrument of preservation and purification. To whatever it is applied, it will preserve and purify. It obstructs decay. Thus is established our Savior’s command to be change obstructionists.

Since the culture is in a death spiral, it is changing. Its changes are downward and are motivated by rebellion against God (self centeredness) and morally characterized by unrighteousness (sin). By biblical definition, this spiral can only lead to death. Our lives, what we do and say, should make us obstructionists to this change.

We obstruct decay by living for Christ with integrity, love, faithfulness and dependability. We obstruct decay when we manifest His Law with a commitment not focused upon personal happiness but personal holiness—as you “sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence,” (I Peter 3:15). Thus the tide of evil is held at bay and, in many cases, turned away. We obstruct decay when we serve the Lord in every sphere of life, including academia, politics, athletics, the arts, and the corporate world.

Our problem in these arenas is exactly what the Lord warned us about when he said, if the salt has lost its saltiness then “it is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men,” (Matthew 5:13). I believe that’s where Christians and the Church find themselves today. A prime reason our culture is in a state of unchecked cultural entropy is because we have lost our saltiness. Instead of affecting what is around us, we are now being trodden under the foot of the world. Christians are to be “in this world but not of it” as they maintain a distinct and powerful testimony of personal holiness. While our culture is dropping all social sanctions against sin and has lost the ability to blush at evil, the believer must be different. Sin and evil are not humorous or something to dismiss or observe with personal detachment. Hear it again, “The wages of sin is death,” (Romans 6:23). We cannot, and we must not, sign any personal peace treaties with sin. We must oppose the sin still remaining within us and also that outside of us. The first steps to reverse the cultural death spiral are to personally commit to holiness and then to build churches that preach, teach, honor, and obey the Word of God. When believers commit to both vocational and moral excellence and manifest their love for Christ, then the salt is applied and it is salty.

Change Obstructionists do restrain the death spiral of a culture, but they will not reverse it. What will reverse our culture’s downward spiral? One thing.

Light Displaces Darkness—Change Agents

Our Savior said, “You are the light of the world,” (Matthew 5:14). While salt is a preservative that purifies, light actually displaces darkness. As believers, we act as light in two ways: proclamation and penetration.

In proclamation we declare the Gospel. For a culture to change, people must change. For people to change, their

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Cultural Entropy continued

hearts must change. Only the Lord can change the heart, and He does so through the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8). Change obstructionists fight to stop the culture from devolving into ungodliness and wickedness. Change agents introduce godliness and righteousness, thereby reversing the culture. Such changes are the result of changed lives. Only one thing has the power to permanently change lives from the inside out—the Gospel.

A cultural life spiral is the result of people, one person at a time, coming to Christ and being freed from the power, the penalty, and increasingly the practice of sin. When lives change, families change. Then neighborhoods change, cities change, and states and nations change. The outward manifestation of changed lives then changes the culture. Just as it doesn't take much salt to affect what it has been sprinkled upon, neither does it take much light to overcome the darkness. But because light travels in waves from its source, if the source of light is covered, it might just as well be extinguished. Don't let the light be placed under a cover. Put it out on the table. How do we do that?

The Gospel must be proclaimed indiscriminately to everyone with compassion and conviction. Proclaim it everywhere. Remember, light penetrates, moving out from the source and replacing the darkness. As believers we must move out to speak and share the Gospel winsomely where we live, work, play, study and recreate. All of life is under the eye of God, and all of life is for the glory of God. Therefore, in all of life, we live and speak the Gospel of God manifesting and proclaiming the free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Let me give you an example. If a Christian is elected or placed in an official capacity, he or she will be salt, restraining sin as a change obstructionist if consistently pursuing holiness and speaking the truth in love. Then, with that influence, comes the opportunity to share Christ, live Christ, and proclaim the Gospel of Christ to others. As people respond to Christ and their lives are changed from the inside out, that Christian official not only has been an effective change obstructionist, but also has become a change agent.

One Thing Is Needed

Physicists tell us that only one thing can offset the inevitable increase of entropy in a closed system: an injection of energy or power from a source outside the system. As believers, you and I are not part of “the system.” Our citizenship is in heaven! We can reverse cultural entropy and its death spiral and begin a life spiral by injecting into this world system the greatest source of power the universe has ever known, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By developing a Christian mind and leading a Christ-centered lifestyle, we obstruct decay. By our presentation of the Gospel, God changes lives for now and for eternity.

Are you willing to be the Lord’s instrument as a change obstructionist by pursuing personal holiness? Will you move into the crucial and influential arenas of our culture for Christ? As a change agent, are you willing to lift high the banner of Christ and proclaim His Gospel in those same arenas through a commitment to excellence in what you do and through the content of what you say? If so, then you can be part of the greatest cultural reversal in history.

Harry Reeder is the new senior pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. This is an excerpt from an article in Students for America’s NationBuilder magazine, edited by Jonathan Roberts ’92.
Good Citizenship is a Christian Duty

Few subjects evoke stronger emotions than the topic “Christians in Politics.” Being a member of a politically active family, I have some strong convictions myself.

The first is that it is the duty of every citizen, especially that of every Christian, to be politically informed and to vote. In a limited constitutional republic, the restraint of evil of those in authority can only exist if the electorate is involved. Sadly, only about forty percent of the eligible voters vote even in presidential elections, and Christian apathy is not unlike overall voter apathy.

If someone wants to be in a position to influence the way others vote, the best way to do that is by becoming actively involved in one of the two major parties at the local level. The strength of any party depends on grassroots involvement. The absence of Christians in local politics assures that the Christian voice will be unheard at the national level, for national leaders and national issues emerge from the local issues and local leaders. Christians must be involved in shaping all laws that affect the public good, not just those special laws such as abortion, prayer, gambling, etc.

Politics is the art of negotiation and compromise. At Covenant, we lift up a model of transforming culture. Without compromising personal convictions, Christians must adeptly practice the art of compromise to build consensus to pass laws that the citizenry will support. This is the only realistic model of transforming culture through politics.

Public leaders need to be active in influencing public values. A politician can influence the electorate and must vote his or her conscience, even if it may mean going against the popular will.

Christians, however, must recognize the limitations of politics. Often culture is best transformed through other institutions, especially the family, the Church, and the school. God will bless a godly people who may have ungodly leaders. God cannot be expected to bless an ungodly people even if they happen to have godly leaders.

Good citizenship is a Christian duty if we take seriously our responsibility to respect those in authority. The fact that our citizenship is in heaven does not excuse us from participation in the God-ordained affairs of government that affect justice, peace, prosperity and liberty.

—Frank A. Brock
Make a Gift of Stock Before Year-end

A gift of appreciated securities to the college can greatly benefit students who attend Covenant with scholarships and financial aid. You may also benefit by receiving a charitable income tax deduction.

Outright Gifts of Appreciated Securities
Long-term appreciated securities are stocks or bonds that have been owned for at least a year and have increased in value. Making a gift of appreciated securities benefits you in two ways: you receive a charitable income tax deduction for the full fair market value of the securities and avoid capital gains taxes on the appreciated securities. The gain is measured by the difference between the cost basis (the amount originally paid for the stock) and its current fair market value.

For example, suppose you hold 1,000 shares of stock that were purchased at least a year ago. When you bought the stocks they were worth $10 per share, and today they are worth $30 per share, for a total of $30,000. If you make a gift of these securities outright to Covenant, you immediately receive a $30,000 charitable income tax deduction and avoid capital gains taxes. At a capital gains tax rate of 20%, the tax due on a gain of $20,000 is $4,000.

Stock Loss
If you have experienced a stock loss because of a drop in the value of your stock, such as with an initial public offering (IPO), it is unwise to give the stock directly to Covenant. It is far better to sell your stock, take the loss on your tax return, and then donate the proceeds to Covenant, thus obtaining a charitable income tax deduction for your gift and a capital loss.

For further information on gifts of securities, please contact: D.C. Dreger, CFRE, Director of Development, Covenant College, Scenic Highway, Lookout Mountain, GA 30750. Phone: 706/820-1572, ext. 1229. Email: development@covenant.edu. All correspondence will be held in strict confidence.
Wanted: Groovy Snapshots from Your Covenant Days

This issue's selection comes from deep within the Covenant College archives. It is tentatively dated circa 1965. Particular items of interest include the groovy "beach party with guitar" poster and an authentic manual typewriter. Most importantly, this photograph captures the rare "guy with double-breasted corduroy blazer" in his habitat. This may be the only photographic documentation of this fashion species. Please send your photographs for consideration to Marshall Rowe, alumni director, Covenant College, 14049 Scenic Highway, Lookout Mountain, Georgia 30750-4164.