



BO'S BLOG

There was a letter to the editor of the Prosser Record-Bulletin in April that raised the question, "Is it appropriate for a pastor to be involved in a school bond campaign?" I think that question raises an interesting topic for reflection.

As I noted in last month's blog, all Christians are called to the duty of Christian behavior, or moral action. We must live out our faith. Based on Jesus' teachings to "do to others what we would have them do to us," and to "love your neighbor as yourself," sometimes that duty calls us, as Christians, to become involved in the political process, because the political process is one of the tools we can use to make the changes we need to be a better community. As Americans, we are encouraged to participate in the political process. As Christians, we are asked to let that participation-whether it be making speeches, writing letters, giving money or time, and even voting-be informed, as all our other actions should be too, by our faith.

Pastors are generally seen as leaders within their congregations, and sometimes within their communities as well. They also tend to be seen as moral leaders, although these days we are well aware that they are subject to the same human frailties and misjudgments as others. And it is perhaps because pastors are seen as moral leaders that they need to be careful and clear about how they participate in the political process. I cannot, and should not, say from the pulpit, "You must vote this way." That would be an abuse of my position as pastor, not to mention an endangerment of our non-profit status with the IRS.

But I can, and should, say, "This is what I believe our faith says about this issue." Many pastors did just that during the Vietnam War. Not telling people what to think, but raising the issue and the questions up for people to think about for themselves-"How does my faith relate to this issue?" I can march on Washington, as did Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and many other pastors, did. I can run for office, as other pastors, like the Rev. Al Sharpton, have already done. And it is appropriate for a pastor like me to work on a school bond committee, as Rev. Paul Fredricks and Rev. Gary Wolfer have already done. Because pastors, like all Christians, have been called to both faith and action.

Shalom,
Bo