



The Vision

"Mobilizing Pastors Across America"

May 2001

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Dave Welch, Executive Director

Monthly message from Pastor Rick



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Dear Vision America Friends and Family,

On Tuesday morning in route to Louisville, Kentucky, to catch a flight home after two Vision America events in southern Kentucky, my host, Mark Cunningham, pulled off the interstate in Frankfort and stopped at the Kentucky State Vietnam War Memorial. The memorial, which displays the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, is a large sundial which in the course of a day, casts a shadow over the year that each soldier listed died. As we stood there, I again considered the question...If these men and women could step forward in 2001 and see the state of moral affairs in America today and hear the issues we are debating now, thirty years later, would they be willing to lay down their lives?

Could any of those Vietnam Veterans, most of whom died before they reached their 25th birthday, ever have imagined an America where 1/3 of the babies conceived would be murdered before full-term...where 1/2 of the babies delivered would be born out of wedlock...where homosexuals would openly display their shame on the Washington Mall or parade their despicable activities in marches down the main streets of New York, Washington, Houston, San Francisco, etc...where the Ten Commandments would be banned from public display...and where students would openly murder their classmates without regard for the outcome? I do not believe the America of 2001 is the America those young men and women died for.

Consider this fact: 70% of this generation 30 years and younger are either dead (33% died in their mother's womb), in prison or addicted to drugs. The Scripture tells us that if we forget God's laws, God will forget our children. Can anyone legitimately deny that this generation of children has paid a horrifying price for our sin? Beneath the thin veneer of pleasure is a washed out, drugged out generation of despair and hopelessness. If we continue in our sin, it will only get worse.

Beloved, I get very discouraged by the apathy I see in so many who claim to know Christ, and at times, I get overwhelmed with the realization of how under equipped we still are as an organization to do anything about it. The temptation is always there to quit and give up. But then I remember my own words, "Christians don't lose until they quit." If we really believe that with God all things are possible, then how can we quit?

We need to get before even more people in order to identify God's remnant of pastors who will stand up, speak up and refuse to give up. I know that our vision is from God, our message is right and our cause is just, but we cannot do it alone. There are thousands of people just like you who must help us if we are going to make a difference. Please pray for us! Help us financially whenever you can. Network us with others you know, and with God's help, we will succeed. Jesus is Lord!

Your Servant,

Contents

Page 2 - Feature Article
The Model is Simple...

Page 3 - Missouri Pastors
meet and pray at Capitol

Page 4 - Book Review:
Federer's "God and Country"

By Dave Welch,
Executive Director

The Model Is Simple, The Challenge Is Great

Much emphasis is being placed today on the use of mass communication, particularly the Internet, to activate Christians on urgent legislative matters, to vote, and to encourage involvement in general. The use of electronic mail communications has exploded (just check your inbox!), and websites have proliferated exponentially.

There is no question that the development and use of the Internet has radically and forever changed our lives. Access to the volume and scope of information that is now at our fingertips is mind-numbing and nearly overwhelming. This article, however, is not intended to simply sing the praises of this incredible medium, but to also point out some very important limitations it has with respect to Christian civic involvement.

The first point I would raise revolves around an issue that was addressed at a symposium in which I recently participated, hosted by Gordon College in Gloucester, MA. A group of about thirty men and women representing various Christian ministries and organizations discussed the results of a study that we had participated in last year on Christian Civic Education. In one segment it was mentioned that there is a distinct difference between mobilization and organization.

It is fairly simple now to mobilize activists via an e-mail broadcast that can reach thousands in only seconds. Online petitions clog our inboxes and supposedly generate tens of thousands of "signatures." Is that approach really effective? According to a recent Citizen Link article produced by Focus on the Family, Congress received over 80 million e-mail messages last year. That number is increasing by one million per month, and is resulting in an unmanageable flood of messages.

The article also states that only 2 percent of Congressional offices handle e-mail effectively. It also states that, "The problem is certainly understand-

able. Technologically, it is as easy to e-mail all 540 members of Congress (435 voting representatives, five non-voting delegates and 100 senators) as it is to contact only one member."

That phenomena would be described as "mobilizing", and is an important aspect of influencing government *if* performed effectively. It is not, however, organizing. For example, such efforts may cause 100 people to e-mail, call or even write their legislator. That is a good thing. The problem is that if I stop there, what we have are 100 separate citizens unknown to each other, working separately with little coordination other than the "reaction factor." They are mobilized, but they are not organized.

In the realm of political action, this is not good enough. Yale political scientists Don Green and Alan Gerber found in studies that phone-banking and direct mail do little to increase voter turnout, and in cases may even depress it. *"Instead of calling or mailing, these researchers found in an ongoing series of experiments that if you want people to vote, you should approach them the old-fashioned way: Knock on their front doors and ask them, face to face. During the 1998 mayoral election in New Haven, Conn., they found that brief visits by get-out-the-vote canvassers to the homes of registered voters raised turnout by 10 percentage points. A letter to voters that contained the same appeal did increase turnout, but by less than 1 percentage point."* (Washington Post, February 10, 2001)

The person-to-person contact described above is basic, old-fashioned grassroots. It is still the most effective way to achieve measured action on election day, and in between elections as well.

Let me put it this way. An e-mail list is a tool, while a trained and networked citizen is the craftsman. A quality tool, used properly, enhances

the work of the craftsman, but is of no value unless there is a craftsman who is willing and able to do something with it.

During and after the 2000 election, I repeatedly heard from national campaign operatives, political leaders and analysts that the "vacuum" in the pro-life, pro-family grassroots was glaring. Why is that?

One reason could be that grassroots organizing is hard. It is thankless. It takes a much longer term commitment than other actions. It requires asking people personally to do something. It takes planning, perseverance and focus.

It is also labor and people intensive compared to sending out broadcast e-mails, fax blasts and even conducting seminars. It is, however the desperately needed missing ingredient in our "movement."

Our grassroots plan is simple: **1)** A pastor visibly leading his congregation to be active citizens, and forming a citizenship ministry in the church. **2)** Multiply that team by enlisting other pastors in the community to do the same. **3)** Network that group of pastors and lay leaders into a cohesive team that meets regularly, communicates closely and acts together to impact the moral and political climate of the community. **4)** Add technological support.

What would America look like if we had a team like that in each major community in key states around the nation? It's not rocket science, it will just take the determination and resources to make it happen. Technology will help, but it will never replace a dedicated team working together toward a common goal. That, in essence, is the heart of the Vision America mission.

Missouri Pastors Gather At State Capitol To Follow 1 Timothy 2 "In Person"

Nearly one hundred Missouri pastors, leaders and legislators came together on April 10 at the State Capitol to take seriously one of the scripture passages chiseled into the Capitol Rotunda, "The earth is the Lord's and all the fullness thereof." Vision America of Missouri hosted a Legislative Prayer Luncheon right in the Capitol building, drawing pastors literally from one side of the state to the other, rural as well as inner city.

Many of the pastors said that this was their first trip ever to Jefferson City. VA of MO Chairman Pastor Jim Carter, Administrative Coordinator Barbara Cooper and the team worked hard putting this event together in a short time, and the results were bountiful. Over a dozen legislators from both chambers and both political parties alternately greeted the group with enthusiasm.



Pastor Michael Jones (L) of St. Louis prays for all local elected officials

"I was thrilled and reinvigorated to see so many Pastors adding their voices in support of Godly legislation," said Sen. John Loudon. "After I appealed, and the pastors assisted, my parental consent resolution was promptly reassigned to a favorable committee and has already had a hearing!"

Pastor Carter was very enthused not only by the numbers for this first

time event, but also by the response of the pastors during and after the event. "The Pastors really understood how crucial their role is as opinion makers, community leaders and providing



Pastor Jim Carter speaks to the Pastors to open the prayer luncheon

accountability to elected leaders," he said.

Nearly all of the legislators who stopped by to address the pastors appealed to the pastors to visibly stand with them in their respective communities to promote legislation that reflects pro-life, pro-family values. Conservative Democrat Ted House expressed his appreciation for the Pastors who came and for their willingness to become involved.

VA Executive Director Dave Welch flew in for the event and was very enthused by the overall success of the luncheon. "I guarantee that as we duplicate this model across the nation we will see strongholds of unrighteous laws broken, elected leaders become more accountable and the churches becoming reinvigorated in their role as 'salt'."

The VA of MO team is following up with the participating pastors to encourage to them start local Pastor Policy Councils and organize at the community level.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 30 - MAY 5— VA cosponsors Christian Legacy Tour from Norfolk, VA to New York, featuring Dr. Marshall Foster

MAY 4,5—20th Anniversary Council for National Policy gathering

APRIL 30—VA sponsoring a Houston Pastors Luncheon featuring Pastor Billy Epperhart from Litteton, CO

MAY 3—Pastor Rick speaks at a rally in Rockingham, North Carolina

MAY 17— VA Pastor Luncheon in San Diego, CA featuring Pastor Scarborough and Bishop George McKinney

JUNE 14—VA of Iowa Pastor Luncheon and Rally featuring Pastor Rick (dates tentative)

AUGUST 23—VA National "Heroes of the Faith" Banquet, Houston, TX

On my honor, I will do my best:

To do my duty to God and my country, and to obey the Scout Law.

To help other people at all times.

To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

The Boy Scout Oath

VA Kicks off National Series Of Events In Texas

Starting with a special Pastors Luncheon in Houston on April 30 that featured Pastor Billy Epperhart, VA is launching a new series of events designed to dramatically expand the network of pastors and churches involved in promoting active citizenship. Over sixty pastors and elected leaders participated in this luncheon that featured Pastors Scarborough, Epperhart and Laurence White.

In addition to a pastor luncheon and rally in San Diego that is being co-hosted

by Bishop George McKinney of St. Stephens Church of God in Christ, plans for similar programs are being developed for over fifteen major American cities.

"We are not going to give the enemy of our soul one inch of this nation without a fight," national Executive Director Dave Welch said. "There is no 'safe-haven' for the forces that would divide and marginalize the Christian influence in this nation. We are going to the front lines and will do everything within our means to identify,

inform and mobilize pro-life, pro-family pastors and their congregations in key areas of the country," he concluded enthusiastically.

A partial list of states where VA will take the "Stand up, Speak up and Refuse to give up" campaign includes Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, North and South Carolinas, Florida, Texas, Michigan and other key "battleground" states.

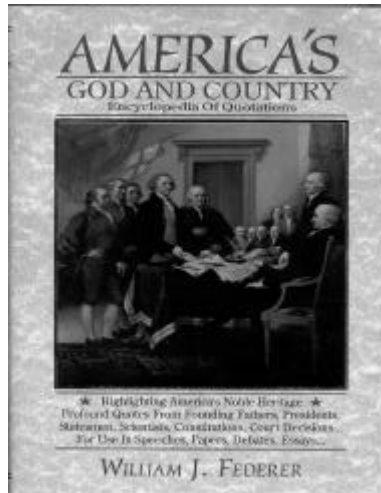
ESSENTIAL TOOLS: America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations By William J. Federer

Essentially every Christian involved in the effort to get government on the right track has wished at one time that they had the right historical quote to use in a debate, discussion, letter, etc. Yet how many people have the time to do topical research of books and archives to find just the right one?

Former pastor and current author, speaker and leader William Federer of St. Louis, has already solved your dilemma. After thousands of hours of research, editing and proofing, the *America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations* was first published in 1995. It has subsequently been revised and reprinted and is also now available in a software version.

There is no better tool available than this print/software combination for leaders, pastors, elected officials, students or anyone else who desires to have accurate historical quotes at their fingertips. For example, you can find information listed in the book by topic from "Abolition of Slavery" to "Youth", or by name from "Abington Township" (U.S. Supreme Court case) to "Yeates, William Butler."

Using the software version, you simply enter a search word, topic or name to access thousands of quotes from the Magna Carta to Ronald Reagan—even Rush Limbaugh!



The software version also includes the King James Bible, Webster's 1828 Dictionary and Nave's Biblical Topical Index. An example of the quotes found in the book and software include:

- "The Glory of God, the public interest of religion and the good of others, [as] civil liberty cannot be long preserved without virtue. [A Republic] must either preserve its virtue or lose its liberty." (Rev. John Witherspoon, 1785)
- "Religion begat prosperity, and the daughter devoured the mother." (Rev. Cotton Mather, 1702)
- "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports." (George Washington, 1796)

In appreciation for all gifts of \$35 or more received in May and June, we will send, upon request, a hardback copy of "America's God and Country" or the software version. Please note on your check which you prefer and it will be shipped promptly. This is an invaluable resource for every American engaged in the effort to reintroduce Biblical values into culture, education and government!



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