

Americans Want a President Accountable to God

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[02.15.08] A recent nationwide poll revealed that most Americans want a president who possesses biblical principles of leadership.

The Zogby Poll, conducted for the American Bible Society, shows by far that the most important virtues are truthfulness and integrity. And respondents said they want a president that understands accountability to God and has a servant mentality.

Six in 10 said they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who speaks publicly about following the example of leaders from the Bible and who uses the Bible consistently for public and personal matters.

According to Zogby, most of those surveyed, 78 percent, view candidates citing Scripture when discussing political stances as positive. Almost 50 percent said they would not vote for a presidential candidate who did not believe in God.

But 20 percent said they would vote for someone who did not believe in God and 20 percent said this would not affect their vote. The poll surveyed 1,008 adults, and nearly one-quarter said they were born again.

Assemblies of God Clergy to Counsel in Bars

Senior pastor, Chuck Kish, recently began a ministry that will put clergy in local bars one night a month to listen to those in need.



[02.14.08] Senior pastor Chuck Kish of Bethel Assembly of God in Carlisle, Pa., recently began a ministry that will put clergy in local bars one night a month to listen to those in need, reports *The Patriot-News*.

Rather than patrons pouring out their souls to bartenders, Kish contends that pastors can not only listen with a nonjudgmental ear, but also shine a light on whatever dark situation is discussed—without preaching the gospel per se.

Though the fledgling ministry hasn't had many takers (or talkers) yet, it has attracted worldwide media attention and Kish remains hopeful.

"This is what the church is always supposed to do, to love people, regardless of their differences," he told *The Patriot-News*. "Jesus did it, got out among the prostitutes and all that. The story of what we're trying to do went all over the world. If all churches were doing what they are supposed to be doing, this would not have been news. Not at all."

Casting Crowns' Mark Hall Leads Dove Nominees

Vocalist and songwriter Mark Hall picked up six nominations for the 39th Annual Gospel Music Association Dove Awards broadcasting live in April.



[02.14.08] Casting Crowns' lead vocalist and songwriter Mark Hall led all nominees for the 39th Annual Gospel Music Association (GMA) Dove Awards, announced today, with six nominations, including Male Vocalist of the Year and Song of the Year for the band's "East to West."

Other leading nominees named for gospel music's best in 2007 were Chris Tomlin, Toby Mac and David Crowder Band with five nods each. Four nominations each went to Point of Grace, Jeremy Camp, The Clark Sisters, Ernie Haase & Signature Sound and Ricky Skaggs.

Closing out GMA Music Week, this year's awards will be held April 23 at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, and broadcast live for the first time on the Gospel Music Channel at 8 p.m. EST.

Along with Steven Curtis Chapman, Brian Littrell, Mac Powell and Davis Nasser, Hall was nominated for Inspirational Recorded Song of the Year for "By His Wounds" from *Glory Revealed* (Reunion Records). Hall also received a Worship Song of the Year nod for "Praise You In This Storm."

Casting Crowns was nominated for Artist of the Year and Group of the Year, and the band's "East to West" received a Pop/Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year nod as well as a Pop/Contemporary Album nomination for *The Altar and the Door* (Provident-Integrity).

The nominations for Tomlin, who led all Dove nominees for the past two years, included Artist of the Year, Male Vocalist of the Year and Song of the Year. Toby Mac was also nominated in those same categories. **-Christian Retailing**

For a full list of nominees, announced at a press conference in Nashville, visit www.gmamusicawards.com/categories.

The Clark Sisters Win 3 GRAMMYS

The Clark Sisters and Karen Clark-Sheard won three trophies Sunday night during the 50th Annual GRAMMY Awards in Los Angeles.



[02.12.08] "Blessed & Highly Favored" by The Clark Sisters and "Never Gonna Break My Faith" by Aretha Franklin and Mary J. Blige were both honored in the Best Gospel Performance category. A GRAMMY for Best Gospel Song went to Clark-Sheard for writing "Blessed & Highly Favored." The Clark Sisters' *Live: One Last Time* (EMI Gospel) also won for the Best Traditional Gospel Album.

Before the Daylight's Shot (204 Records) by Ashley Cleveland received a GRAMMY for Rock or Rap Gospel Album, while Israel and New Breed won Best Pop/Contemporary Gospel Album for *A Deeper Level* (Integrity Music).

Israel and New Breed, who won their first GRAMMY last year, performed a gospel medley along with Aretha Franklin, The Clark Sisters, the Madison Bumblebees and Trin-i-tee 5:7.

Free to Worship (Verity Records) by Fred Hammond garnered a trophy for Best Contemporary R&B Gospel Album, while *Salt of the Earth* (Skaggs Family Records) by Ricky Skaggs & The Whites won the Best Southern, Country or Bluegrass Gospel Album.--

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For a complete list of GRAMMY award-winners, visit www.grammy.com/Grammy_Awards/50th_show/list.aspx.

Haggard Ends New Life Restoration™ Process

Ted Haggard, who stepped down in November 2006 amid a sex and drug scandal requested an end to the oversight of council members appointed to help spiritually restore him.



[02.11.08] The council appointed to administer fallen pastor Ted Haggard's process of "spiritual restoration" has agreed to his request to end their oversight reports the *Rocky Mountain News*.

Despite this, members of the New Life Church team contest that "the process of restoring Ted Haggard is incomplete and [New Life] maintains its original stance that he should not return to vocational ministry."

Haggard, who was fired in November 2006 as pastor of the church he founded amidst a sex and drug scandal, will reportedly maintain what New Life described as an "accountability relationship" with Phoenix First Assembly of God pastor Tommy Barnett.

According to the *Rocky Mountain News*, Barnett pastors the church Haggard now attends and was a member of the council helping to restore him.

Fox News reports that Haggard's "spiritual restoration" process was expected to last at least another four years.

Miracle at the Super Bowl

David Tyree, a Giants wide receiver, says that his touch-down and 35 yard “acrobatic catch,” which some say was the turning point of Super Bowl XLII, was nothing short of a miracle from God.



[02.08.08] On February 3, more than 90 million people watched Super Bowl XLII. Some watched because they were legitimate fans of either New England or New York. But truthfully, most likely watched to see history made one way or another—either the Patriots were going to finish out a perfect season at 19-0 or the NFC’s fifth-seeded Wild Card Giants were going to shock the world and play the ultimate role of spoiler.

Of those two scenarios, very few prognosticators, fans or casual bystanders gave much hope for the latter to happen. But when New York pulled off the historic 17-14 upset, at least one member of the team wasn’t surprised.

“It felt like it was destiny,” said David Tyree, a Giants wide receiver. “That’s kind of how I felt going into it. I was never moved. My faith was never rocked. I knew God would do what He said He was going to do.”

When New York started the season 0-2, Tyree wrote a letter to his team. In that letter, he encouraged the other players and coaches to keep the faith. Tyree was confident that God has a special plan for the Giants. This confidence for the born-again, spirit-filled believer came from prophetic words he was receiving from the Holy Spirit through various friends and spiritual confidantes.

Throughout the season, Tyree also benefited from his relationship with “spiritual mom” Apostle Kimberly Daniels, founder of Spoken Word Ministries in Jacksonville, Fla., whose son Michael Jennings also plays for the Giants. The night before the Super Bowl, Daniels and husband Ardell prayed with Tyree and received some very specific prophecies about his

role in the game.

Daniels told Tyree that the Lord would “quicken” his feet and give him “hind’s feet” which she later explained to him were like the feet of a kangaroo. She also told him that he would have “spiritual glue” on his hands and would make “the big play.” Daniels’ husband prophesied that the sports world would no longer know him as just a special teams player but as, “David Tyree, the receiver.”

Earlier in the season, another friend prophesied that Tyree’s platform would be enlarged.

“At that time, I had a broken wrist and I was out,” Tyree recalls. “But trust me, I was receiving the Word and I was definitely not turning away the Word of the Lord. I just trusted God and we held on to the Word of God by faith. It was not a pretty year for me as a receiver. I had to hold on to that truth until this very last game.”

After catching only four passes all season—none of which resulted in touchdowns—Tyree started to experience some amazing results in the Super Bowl, including a 5-yard touchdown reception from Eli Manning that put the Giants ahead 10-7 with 11:05 left in the fourth quarter. At that point, Tyree admits he assumed that was the fulfillment of the prophetic words that had been spoken into his life.

But late in the game, the Patriots responded with a touchdown and reclaimed the lead, 14-10. With just over two minutes to play, Tyree and the Giants offense took the field for one last shot at Super Bowl immortality.

At the 1:15 mark, New York faced a third down play needing five yards to keep the drive going. Manning narrowly averted multiple sack attempts, including one defender who had grabbed his jersey. The quarterback rolled to the right and launched a 32-yard pass down the middle of the field where Tyree—who admits he has the worst vertical leap among the team’s receiving corps—jumped higher than ever before and trapped the ball on the back portion of his helmet. With Patriots

defensive back Rodney Harrison draped on his right side like a “Siamese twin,” he secured the ball and maintained possession despite landing squarely on his back.

“Obviously that catch was the Ephesians 3:20 catch,” Tyree says. “You can do exceedingly and abundantly above all that you could ever ask or imagine.”

Four plays later, Manning tossed a 13-yard game-winning touchdown pass to Tyree’s good friend Plaxico Burress. But after the game, everyone was still talking about “the catch.” In fact, many reporters and pro football historians are calling Tyree’s acrobatic grab one of the greatest catches in Super Bowl—if not NFL—history.

Tyree says he is excited to see how God will use this moment in the spotlight not just for the public stage but within the ranks of his team as well. He plans to use the off-season as a time of preparation for what the Lord is planning to accomplish within the ranks of his own team.

And though many continue to be amazed by Tyree’s individual Super Bowl achievement, the unlikely hero remains quick to deflect the praise elsewhere.

“I stand in awe of God,” he says. “You have so many emotions throughout a game like that and an experience like that. But there was nothing but awe. I’m grateful to know a living God. He speaks. He walks. He talks. He’s walking with me. He’s dealing with me. He’s moving in my life intimately to the point where I don’t believe anybody can deny it.” —**Chad Bonham**

Inmates Committed Tithers

Recently the Assemblies of God honored 160 men currently serving prison sentences for collectively giving \$1,000 of their tithe money toward a well-digging project in Africa.



[02.07.08] Recently the Assemblies of God (AG) honored 160 men currently serving prison sentences at the Soledad, Calif., Correctional Training Facility for giving \$1,000 toward a well-digging project in Africa.

The mostly Christian inmates, with sentences ranging from soon-coming releases to life in prison, only earn between \$27 and \$36 for one month's wage.

Yet after they viewed a four-minute video about the Africa Oasis Project, in which the AG is building water wells in African areas where women and children have to walk 10 miles to obtain water, the men immediately gave a cumulative gift of \$1,000.

Despite the prisoners' meager wages, many have been tithing for the last five years, the AG news service reported.

"I've taught them how Scripture says to bring all the tithe into the storehouse," said Judge Lindsey, a chaplain working at the facility. "Little is much when God is in it. Here are men with small salaries, yet they are committed givers."

In the past, prisoners have given \$1,300 to victims of the 2004 tsunami in Asia, \$1,000 to Convoy of Hope for Hurricane Katrina aid in 2005, and have donated \$1,200 a year to sponsor three underprivileged children in Third World countries.

The prisoners' tithes have also helped purchase library materials, equipment and ongoing lunches for ministry volunteers.

Photo Credit: Sufi Nawaz

Study: Christians Leaving the Republican Party

The Barna Group released a study this week that found Christians are now more likely to vote for a Democratic

candidate in the upcoming November elections.



[02.06.08] The Barna Group released a study this week that found Christians, who in recent years have been considered the most reliable Republican voting block, are now more likely to vote for a Democratic candidate in the upcoming November elections.

The report found that social concerns, such as abortion and the protection of marriage, are not the only issues that are factoring into evangelical voter decisions.

“We have a greater proportion of faith-driven voters who are concerned about issues that are often thought of as 'liberal' social policy concerns, such as poverty and health care,” said Barna Group founder George Barna.

If the presidential elections were held today, the study found 40 percent of born-again believers would vote for a Democratic candidate and 29 percent would choose a Republican. The survey indicated 28 percent remain undecided.

In choosing specific candidates, the study found that Hillary Clinton garnered the highest percentage of the vote with 20 percent, Barack Obama came in with 18 percent and Mike Huckabee captured 12 percent—the highest percentage of all the Republican candidates. None of the other candidates reached the double-digit percentile.

These numbers sharply contrast the 62 percent of the evangelical voters who sided with President George W. Bush just four years ago.

“In recent elections, the faith vote sided with the Republican candidate early in the race, allowing those candidates to focus on winning over swing votes,” Barna said. “In this year’s contest, however, the faith vote cannot be taken for granted.”

A recent article by *The New York Times* found that evangelical

Democrats have not been tracked by exit polls.

This disparity is seen in the Democratic exit poll questionnaires, which largely do not ask the religious affiliation of Democratic voters.

Yet the vast majority of Republican exit poll questionnaires not only ask the religious affiliation of the voters but also the amount of times he or she attends a church service and whether or not he or she considers themselves a born-again or evangelical Christian.

“Much can change between now and November, but Republican candidates have a tough road ahead of them this year,” Barna concluded.

Malaysia Confiscates Christian Children's Books

The Malaysian government has confiscated English-language Christian children's books with illustrations of prophets as well as books that use the word “Allah.”



[02.05.08] The Malaysian government has confiscated English-language Christian children's books with illustrations of prophets as well as books that use the word “Allah,” according to the Malaysian online news agency Malaysiakini.com.

The illustrations were deemed offensive to Muslims since Islam, which shares some prophets in common with Christianity, prohibits the portrayal of prophets, Compass Direct News reported.

In a statement last month, the Rev. Hermen Shastri, general secretary of the Council of Churches Malaysia, questioned how

the books could be offensive to Muslims when they were not meant for them. Shastri urged the government to take immediate action to stop such seizures, *Compass* reported.

The right of non-Muslims to use the word "Allah" in their publications and practice of their religion is being tested in two court cases by the publisher of the *Herald*, a Catholic weekly newspaper, and the Evangelical Church of Borneo.

Churches Still Unable to Show Super Bowl

Though the Giants upset the undefeated Patriots in a riveting Super Bowl game, many churches had to cancel their parties because they couldn't show the game on screens larger than 55 inches.



[02.04.08] Though the New York Giants upset the undefeated New England Patriots in a riveting Super Bowl game yesterday, many churches were not able to enjoy it as they'd once intended.

This year the National Football League (NFL) continued to pull the plug on churches showing the big game to a big crowd, citing it as a copyright violation, reported the *Washington Post*.

Last year the issue made headlines when the NFL sent a warning letter to Fall Creek Baptist Church in Indianapolis, which, like many churches, hosted an annual party showing the game on a massive TV screen.

This year more churches canceled parties, according to the *Post*, leading many pastors to question why sports bars can

show the game but churches can't.

"Doesn't the NFL have enough money already?" said Steve Holley, pastor of Immanuel Bible Church in Springfield, Va., where Holley has been hosting Super Bowl parties for years. "It just doesn't make sense."

The answer, according to NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy, is that the league bans public exhibitions of its games on screens larger than 55 inches but by law has exempted sports bars from these regulations.

"We have no objection to churches and others hosting Super Bowl parties," McCarthy said, so long as they "show the game on a television of the type commonly used at home. It is a matter of copyright law."