

Register to Vote

The 2000 presidential election was decided in Florida by only 537 votes, which put George W. Bush into the White House over Al Gore. Little did we know at the time that within a year our country would be at war against terrorism and that the outcome of the election would be crucial to the future of our country.

The election thrust Katherine Harris, the little-known Florida secretary of state, into the national spotlight. Her role in the election proved to be pivotal.

Few people are aware that Harris was impacted in 1966 by an intercessor in Bartow, Florida, who sparked the interest in government that led to Harris' running for public office years later. The intercessor was her fourth-grade teacher, a godly woman who prayed for all her students and tried to instill in them a love for their country and a sense of duty.

The reason I know this story is that the intercessor also prayed for me. She is my mother, Amy Strang, a powerful prayer warrior.

The point is that 35 years ago God set in motion events that would later help accomplish His purposes in the political arena. Yet too few Christians seem to understand the responsibility they have to be involved in government or even to vote.

At a recent meeting of leaders, Kenneth Copeland said he knows of a preacher who declared that the church's role is to evangelize the world, not to vote. He quoted an unverified

statistic that only 23 percent of born-again Christians voted in the last election.

In contrast, the people who favor abortion, pornography, radical gay rights and other behaviors the Bible calls sin are actively involved in the political process. They rally behind whichever candidates will make it easiest for them to pursue their sin.

Christian leaders meanwhile are strangely silent, often cowering behind the false notion that separation of church and state means the church cannot seek to influence the state. And many leaders are more interested in the success of their own ministries than in the fact that our nation is becoming more decadent by the day.

I believe it's time for church leaders to insist that their members register to vote and then actually go to the polls. There are many important elections coming up this fall, and in most states there is still time to register. (Our Web site provides access to voter registration information by state. Logon at .)

But we need to do more than just register and vote. Christians must get involved in the party politics of both the Democrats and the Republicans in order to influence the process of placing candidates on the ballot.

We also must educate ourselves about the issues that are of concern in each election and the stand various politicians are taking on them. Ministries such as Traditional Values Coalition and Christian Coalition are good sources of this type of information. In addition, your denomination may make

you aware of candidates who will promote issues that are in concert with your beliefs.

Here in Florida I am endorsing Jeb Bush for governor, Katherine Harris for U.S. Representative of District 13, and John Mica for U.S. Representative of District 7, where our offices are located. Beyond those few recommendations, it's nearly impossible to endorse candidates in such a large country. But we will open the bulletin boards on our Web site for readers to post their recommendations for political offices in their regions.

We urge you not only to register yourself but also to encourage friends and church members to register as well. If this editorial has motivated you to get more involved in the political process, then logon and tell us,

Meanwhile, please join me in praying for President Bush and for "all those in authority" over us so "we may live peaceful and quiet lives" (1 Tim. 2:2, NIV). Copeland says Bush has asked intercessors to pray for a shield around America in the war on terrorism and to pray he makes the right decisions. Once we have attended to the needs of our own country, we'll have greater freedom to evangelize the world.

Stephen Strang is founder and publisher of Charisma.