

Why This Isn't Politics As Usual

Recently two well-known charismatic leaders contacted me to voice their concerns about the sudden increase in attacks against charismatic Christian leaders—especially Peter Wagner and the New Apostolic Reformation. How timely, then, that I had already planned to publish Wagner's response in this issue and examine the new role that Pentecostals and charismatics are playing on the national scene.

What's being attacked isn't new. Conservative, Bible-believing Christians have long believed we should put righteous people in government and other positions of influence. Preachers have thundered against sin from the pulpit and called people to repentance. Yet mostly we do that within the church's four walls, out of range from hearing the cultural elites who increasingly don't want any restraints on their favorite sin.

These attacks are part of an effort to intimidate using a spirit of fear—and sadly most of the time it works. This happened to Sally Kern, the Baptist pastor's wife who as an Oklahoma legislator was concerned about how some gay activists were targeting Christian candidates. She sounded the alarm and was viciously attacked in ways so extreme we can't even repeat some of them here—just because she voiced biblical principles. If you want to read more, buy her book, *The Stoning of Sally Kern*—if you can find a copy, that is. Most secular stores won't even stock it, and sadly many Christian stores won't either because they don't want to stir up problems. (You can still order it online or buy the Kindle version.)

A couple of months ago I attended the Republican presidential debate in Orlando, Fla., as a member of the media. *Charisma* doesn't usually cover live debates, and I

wouldn't have attended had it not been in my hometown. I went specifically asking: How does this affect the Spirit-filled community? And how do I cover it in *Charisma*?

I believe it's timely to report on the political scene and, a year before the next presidential election and before the primaries heat up, to ask how it affects the Spirit-filled community. We aren't covering politics to endorse a candidate, although later we will. As readers may know, last election cycle I supported former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee.

Given Huckabee's decision not to run again, I'm in a quandary of whom to support. I have my personal favorites, but that's not necessarily a reason to support someone—just because you like them. Michele Bachmann, for example, was extremely likable when we interviewed her about her spiritual life.

I'm glad Christians such as Bachmann, Gov. Rick Perry and others are getting involved and running for office. For years Pentecostals were passive when it came to politics. But with the direction our country is going, it's not just a political issue anymore. There is a moral issue of getting into office leaders who share our values and lead accordingly.

That's why we're speaking prophetically to the entire charismatic church in this issue, particularly with our cover story by John Stemberger, the respected attorney who led the campaign to put a marriage amendment in the Florida constitution. He looks at the *real* issues, including how politicians—especially the left—attack any candidate with a Pentecostal connection.

There is a battle for the soul of this nation that goes deeper than just "politics." Since America stands for freedom around the world, what happens here has ramifications around the world. This isn't the place to discuss in-depth the terrible condition of the nation, nor how President Obama seems to be leading in the wrong direction. With him going down in the

polls almost daily—even with his core constituencies—it's as if the country is waking up to this.

But it's more than just replacing Obama with someone with a more conservative approach to governing. There is a spiritual dynamic involved. Remember, "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers" (Eph. 6:12).

The Bible tells us to pray for righteous leaders so we can live a peaceable life (see 1 Tim. 2:1-2). My advice: *Pray!* For all intercessors, pray that God will give us leaders in government, business and other areas who will get this nation on the right track.

Follow **Steve Strang** on twitter at *@sstrang* or *@ministry21*. Sign up for his newsletter at [and](#) read how he was approached after the debate by one of Ron Paul's advisers who told him conspiracy theories regarding Pentecostals and politics.