

Don't Sit It Out

All sorts of people will vote in the 2004 election: liberals, conservatives, socialists, Green Party environmentalists, Dixie-crats and soccer moms. Even Bubbas for Bush are out in force. Hey, this is America—where we choose our own presidents, limit their powers and kick them out of office if they betray the public trust.

This year we have many potential leaders to choose from. If you think John Kerry and George W. Bush are the only folks running, do your homework. There are more than 90 people running for president—including representatives of the Prohibition Party, the Health Party and the Anti-Hypocrisy Party.

And don't forget Shakespearean actor Jackson Grimes, who lists his religion as "pagan." He's running on the ticket of the United Fascist Union. There's also a guy named Mike who is representing a group called—what else?—Mike's Party.

Our political process can get humorous at times—but there's something about this upcoming election that makes me mad. I'm irked that so many born-again Christians say they aren't going to vote on November 2.

Some churchgoers who can't stomach Bush and don't agree with Kerry on moral issues have decided to forfeit their votes. The underlying attitude is: "Why bother? We're going to be raptured when Jesus returns, so we might as well ignore this evil world."

It's what I call the "I'll Fly Away" mentality. It suggests that what happens on Earth is irrelevant since we're eventually going to heaven. It sounds pious, but it's bad theology.

I believe in heaven and plan to go there, but nowhere in the Bible does God give us permission to check out of reality just because the world as we know it will end one day. Jesus commanded us to "occupy" this Earth until He comes (see Luke 19:13).

When the disciples begged Jesus to tell them the secret of His return, He rebuked them and commanded them to be missionaries in the real world.

The apostle Paul reinforces this activist mandate. He says we are "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37) and that Christians should consider themselves spiritual soldiers whose mission requires holy boldness and aggressive faith.

In other words, we're on Earth for a reason. We don't have permission to keep our heads in the clouds. No pew-sitting, navel-gazing or spiritual draft-dodging allowed.

Jesus never intended for His church to be passive about our role in the world. He called us to be salt and light. He sent us to be healers and reformers.

He promised that if we would pray in faith and preach with power, He would cause His government in heaven to influence world affairs. In the here and now!

This is a foreign concept to many Christians. Our idea of spirituality involves cocooning inside our churches while gay activists take over our schools and Hollywood liberals mobilize voters.

They are the activists. We have become socially irrelevant. The only people who can make an eternal difference in the world have fallen asleep at the wheel.

Please wake up! If all the Christians who read Left Behind would go to the polls this fall, we might just influence our nation for righteousness. God will not hold gay activists, socialists, fascists, pagans or Mike's Party responsible if our nation sinks to a new low.

We're in the world. Let's engage the culture.