

Sitting in the Gates of Sodom

Roger Hertzler

This past election will go down in history as a significant setback for conservative Christians in America. The “liberals” won the White House, as well as healthy majorities in the Senate and the House of Representatives. The question on the mind of most evangelicals in America was, “Where did we go wrong?” And probably right behind it came the question, “How will we ever get back what we’ve lost?”

The conservatives, will, however, claim victory in one major battle in 2008. Proposition 8, the measure banning homosexual marriage in California, passed with flying colors. Or maybe we should say, it passed, with somewhere around 52% of the voters in favor of the measure and the rest of them against it.

This solitary victory did not come without a price, however. In order to get this measure passed, evangelical Christians had to join forces with the Catholics, and then with the Mormons. (“It’s all for a good cause,” they told themselves sheepishly. “We’ll discuss doctrinal issues later.”) Then together they had to shell out well over \$30 million in cash, in order to match the equivalent amount spent by the other side. And now, after the measure has been passed and the conservatives have their position seemingly set in stone, the homosexuals are rioting in the streets, and it doesn’t look like they are going to quit until they get their way.

And we’re doing all this under the banner of, “Follow the path of Jesus”?

This isn’t the first time that the conservatives have suffered a setback. Years ago, in a city called Sodom, a conservative named Lot was actively engaged in a similar battle. His godly uncle Abraham had just rescued the entire city from a military defeat and probable annihilation. Perhaps now the city would stop their dreadful slide towards liberalism and adopt some of the conservative values of their champion, Abraham.

Determined to do all he could for the cause of conservatism, Lot ran for, and won, a coveted position sitting in the city gate. “From this position,” he thought to himself, “I can sway this society away from sin and toward God.” But despite his very best efforts and most clever campaigning strategies, He continually felt like he and his party were rapidly losing ground.

Abraham, meanwhile, kept mostly to himself in the faraway hills overlooking the Sodom valley. He had made a decision long ago that Sodom simply wasn’t his home. He was looking for a city having real foundations, whose builder and maker was God.

When election year rolled around, not only did Abraham refuse to run for office, but he even neglected to come down to cast his ballot at the voting booth! The few conservatives still in Sodom criticized him roundly for this, since “it only makes sense to do what you can for the cause of right.” Actually, though, Abraham was doing more than all of them put together. He was spending a significant amount of time on his knees, interceding for Sodom and especially for his nephew Lot.

One day Lot had a couple of visitors who told him he needed to leave Sodom. “But,” he protested vigorously, “how can I leave? I’m one of the only conservatives left in Sodom. Who will take my place in the city gate? What will happen to this city if I leave?”

“Exactly the same thing that will happen if you don’t leave,” came the urgent reply. “The only difference is that if you hurry, you just might personally escape the judgment that’s about to fall.”

Finally Lot agreed to leave, escaping with nothing but the clothes on his back and only part of his family. Everything else that he had ever lived for was reduced to ashes in a matter of minutes. In the weeks and years that followed, he often wished that years ago he would have followed the example of Abraham and stayed in the mountains, rather than pitching his tent toward Sodom.

Dear evangelical friend, can I ask you a question? Is your position today that of Abraham or that of Lot? Are you dwelling in tabernacles as you look for an eternal city? Or are you pitching your tent toward Sodom and then running for office in the city gate?

If we are truly disciples of Jesus, we have been called to be citizens of a kingdom that is not of this world. Let’s get out of Sodom’s military, out of Sodom’s elected positions, and out of Sodom’s voting booths. Let us not be enticed by Sodom’s financial opportunities nor by her abundant pleasures. Let the sodomites have Sodom to themselves, or fight it out with the Mormons if they wish, without us Christians sitting in the city gates making a nuisance of ourselves. Let’s lay down the carnal weapons of this world and pick up the mighty weapons of our warfare that God has given us, and then go to work at pulling down strongholds. Let’s get back to the power of the first Christians, who managed to turn the world upside down even though they were living in a society saturated in immorality and paganism.

Let’s escape to the mountains like Abraham, following our leader Who said, “My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight . . .”

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (Colossians 1:12-13)

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: (Hebrews 12:28)

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