

Chapter 17 – Application to Democratic and Republican Policies Today

Summary of earlier discussions and comparison of conclusions with Republican and Democrat positions

- A. Differing fundamental principles between Republican and Democrats make non-partisanship difficult today
1. Note alternative book by **Jim Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It***. Wallis' title implies non-partisan, but content says otherwise (liberal views: economy, war, capital punishment, same-sex marriage, abortion – “ethic of life,” support of Democratic candidates, opposition to Republican candidates)
 - a. Though he does not outright say this, he implies that God supports the Democratic Party
 - b. Wallis's conclusions informed by the following:
 - (1) Wallis is a pacifist: anti-Iraq war, anti-capital punishment
 - (2) Solution to poverty is the gov't redistribution of wealth
 - (3) Abortion and homosexual conduct are not determining factors with respect to lawmaking
 - (4) If you want to be truly “pro-life,” you will support more (government) help for the poor, therefore be a Democrat
 2. By contrast, ***Politics -- According to the Bible*** (Grudem) takes a different view on these and other issues.
 - a. Though I disagree at times disagree with Republicans (Bush era high spending, for ex.), positions favored by Republicans for the most part seem to me much more consistent with biblical teachings than Democrat positions.
 3. **Vote for candidate or vote for the party?** Political parties get bills passed, not individual candidates.
 - a. Every vote for every candidate is a vote for that candidate's party.
 - b. The party in power determines the course of the nation
 4. Republican vs. Democrat: general differences
 - a. Republicans strongly tend toward:
 - (1) Smaller government
 - (2) Lower taxes
 - (3) Strong military defense
 - (4) Traditional moral standards re. abortion and definition of marriage
 - (5) Promotion of democracy
 - (6) Promotion of free market economies
 - b. Democrats strongly tend toward:
 - (1) Larger government
 - (2) Higher taxes
 - (3) Reliance on negotiation rather than superior force in dealing with enemies
 - (4) Opposition to biblical moral standards re. abortion and “homosexual” marriage
 - (5) Promotion of socialist-leaning economy that is highly controlled by government
- B. **The Courts and Ultimate Power in a Nation** (ch. 5)
1. Excessive Power of the Supreme Court
 - a. Founding fathers put ultimate power not in hands of people, but in a document – the US Constitution
 - b. Unelected Supreme Court Justices who answer to no one impose laws on nation
 - (1) Have imposed left-leaning, liberal policies not approved of by a majority of our nation (abortion, church & state, private property rights; these decisions override the right of people to determine their own laws)
 - c. Democrats favor appointing Supreme Court justices who *make* laws rather than *interpreting & applying* as was intended by the Founding Fathers.
 - d. Republicans favor appointing justices who will judge *according to original public meaning* of laws, and state and federal constitutions to which justices themselves are subject.
 - e. Consistent election of Republican candidates will help ensure appointment of “**originalist**” justices
- C. **Protection of Life** (ch. 6)
1. **Abortion** is the intentional taking of human life and should be prohibited by Law.
 - a. Democrats favor “woman's right to choose”
 - b. Republicans favor laws prohibiting abortion (except to save life of mother)
 - c. Abortion laws can only be implemented by reversal of *Row v Wade* (“original intent” Supreme Court justices needed)
 2. **Euthanasia** is prohibited by biblical commands against murder
 - a. more liberal Democrats favor “liberalization” of euthanasia laws, some Democrats oppose this
 - b. Nearly all Republicans oppose allowing euthanasia (at least national leadership level)
 3. **Capital punishment** – Bible supports the gov't's right to carry out capital punishment at least for premeditated murder
 - a. 52% of Democrats support the use of capital punishment (Gallup)
 - b. 78% of Republicans and 66% of Independents support capital punishment (Gallup)
 4. **Firearms** ownership – Bible supports gov't allowing an effective means of self-defense
 - a. Republicans by a large proportion favor citizen firearm rights

- b. 60% of Democrats favor stricter gun control laws (compare 13% of Republicans and 17% of Independents)
- c. Opposition to all private gun ownership is found in the liberal parties of other nations, as well.

D. Marriage (ch. 7)

1. Bible restricts marriage to **one man and one woman**
 - a. Republicans tend to strongly support the above definition of marriage
 - b. Some Democrats support the above definition, but party as whole does not.
 - c. More than seven-in-ten liberal Democrats (72%) favor same-sex marriage, eight-in-ten conservative Republicans (81%) oppose it (10/2009, the Pew Research Center, People for the Press).
2. Bible indicates **marriage is for life**
 - a. Democrats generally support liberalization of divorce laws
 - b. Republican sometimes support liberalization of divorce laws, but often oppose liberalization of divorce laws
3. **Pornography** is harmful to marriage and society and should be prosecuted under current anti-pornography laws
 - a. Republican-appointed Justice Dept. officials & local prosecutors much more likely to prosecute

E. The Family (ch. 8.)

1. Positions I advocated in Ch. 8:
 - a. Bible views bearing of **children as a blessing** from God to be encouraged and approved
 - b. In general, **parents** have primary right to determine kind of education of their children
 - (1) What children are taught and the moral & behavioral standards of schools requires more parental involvement
 - c. States should not remove right of parents to discipline their children, even physical discipline (ex. **spanking**)
 - d. **Voucher system** to pay for tuition would lead to higher quality in education, greater choice, more competition
2. Re. the above positions: Democrats tend to place views of gov't and teachers over parents, Republicans largely believe parental views take priority
 - a. Opposition to physical discipline comes almost entirely from Democrats (seek to outlaw spanking)
 - b. Opposition of vouchers comes almost entirely from Democrats (political clout of NEA)
 - c. Republicans tend to favor protection of parental rights, right to exercise physical discipline, & voucher programs

F. Economic Policies (ch. 9)

1. Bible supports a system of **private ownership of property** & an emphasis on a **free market**
 - a. Democrats favor more gov't regulation re: private property, economy, & income redistribution (ex. higher taxes).
 - b. Republicans favor protection of property rights, free markets, and competition
2. Businesses are basically "good" because they are primary means of wealth creation in economy (though, can do evil)
 - a. Democrats favor higher taxes for businesses and more gov't regulation on businesses
 - b. Republicans, generally (but not uniformly), favor lower taxes and less regulation on businesses
3. Concerning the rich & the poor:
 - a. Democrats use rhetoric portraying rich as evil & support redistribution of wealth from rich to poor (ex. tax law)
 - b. Republicans tend to favor individual freedom, allowing all (rich or poor) to keep the fruits of their labor
 - (1) For Repub., wealthy people have created economic good for society & personal benefit is acceptable & good.
 - (2) GOP generally promotes equal opportunity, not equal outcomes
4. **Lower taxes** are better for an economy and provide freedom for people to decide how their own money is used.
 - a. Democrats consistently increase state and federal taxes when in power (ex. California, New York, etc.)
 - b. Republicans, generally, tend to decrease taxes permanently for the entire nation (not just certain groups)
5. A **competitive market for healthcare** provides better healthcare than any gov't-run or managed system
 - a. Free market health care is best (ie. elimination of state mandates to buy, limit of malpractice awards, purchases across state lines, giving tax break to individual purchasers) & provides the US with the best healthcare in the world.
 - (1) Republicans favor the above policy while Democrats favor more gov't managed system

G. The Environment (ch. 10)

1. God created a resourceful **earth w/ abundant resources** of every kind (in contrast to fear-generated media coverage)
 - a. **Energy** resources should be developed from many sources (wind, hydroelectric, oil, coal, natural gas, nuclear power, solar energy). All of above make products & cost of living less expensive and so increase personal freedom.
 - (1) Democrats block the use of many of these energy resources (prevent drilling – offshore & in Alaska, block nuclear power stations from being built, etc.).
 - (2) Republicans (nearly all) have favored the development of the above energy resources.
2. Human production of **carbon dioxide** likely has no significant effect on the earth's temperature.
 - a. Democrats favor reducing human carbon output because of "**global warming**"
 - (1) This requires reductions in standard of living or extreme increase in costs
 - b. Republicans argue carbon dioxide reduction is prohibitively expensive, harmful to the poor, create massive increase in gov't control of personal lives, waste of money & effort because carbon dioxide is naturally occurring.

3. **CAFÉ standards** generally supported by Democrats & generally opposed by Republicans do more harm than good (force people to drive smaller, more dangerous cars, resulting in more injuries and fatalities)
 4. **Cap and trade:** An attempt to force reduction in energy use on nation. Will decrease production, raise prices.
- H. **National Defense** (ch. 11)
1. Strong military defense is a moral obligation from God. US military power increases peace and protection.
 - a. Prominent Republicans and some (but not all) Democrats agree with this perspective.
 - b. Obama Admin. & its more liberal supporters in Dem. party press for massive cuts in defense spending (F-22 Raptor)
 2. **Islamic Jihadism** is not caused by poverty or oppression or negotiation failure (which is liberal Democratic position), but is caused by evil religious view and can only be overcome by superior military force (more Republicans hold this view)
 - a. **Iraq, Afghanistan** are just wars & it was/is morally right to defend against enemies. Requires resolve, not quick exit.
 - b. Democrats tend to push for quick withdrawal indifferent to the consequences (though Obama did surge troops in 09)
 - c. Republicans tend to agree with the position as stated in point 3 above.
 3. **Nuclear weapons** are fact of life. Historically, once weapons are developed they are never abandoned.
 - a. Republicans tend to support a strong nuclear force
 - b. Democrats tend to impose greater reductions in force and impose restrictions on development and testing.
 4. **Missile defense systems** are morally good. Saves lives without destroying lives. Have become increasingly accurate.
 - a. Republicans support the development and employment of such systems
 - b. Democrats oppose and even mock such systems (Obama cancelled deployment in Czech R. & Poland)
 5. **CIA** is necessary to gain intelligence that prevents attack and should be viewed as generally good.
 - a. Democrats tend to investigate and restrict CIA, Republicans tend to support it.
 6. Interrogation: Humane treatment of prisoners is morally right for the US. But in “ticking bomb” type scenarios **“coercive interrogation”** is necessary to save lives. “Torture” is not a helpful word for clarifying issues (many different meanings).
 - a. Republicans tend to support the above statements (with strict guidelines imposed)
 - b. Democrats tend to insist that no coercive interrogation should ever be used (Obama has banned)
- I. **Relationships with Other Nations** (ch. 12)
1. **Foreign policy** should seek the good of the US and its citizens, but also should attempt to give help and do good for other nations when possible to do so. Ex. Foreign aid through gov’t and private sources is good.
 - a. **Israel:** US should support because it’s a functioning democracy, a growing economy, a vital ally in the Mid. East, and, from the Bible, God still has a future purpose for the Jewish people (Rom. 11).
 - (1) Arab-Israeli conflict due to refusal to recognize Israel as a nation that has a right to exist.
 - (2) Up to the time of the writing of this book, Dems. and Repubs. have largely supported Israel
 - (3) Some recent statements by Obama have seriously called into question his commitment to Israeli support.
 2. **Immigration** – Bible requires immigrants to be treated fairly, as equals, so long as they fall under the category of “sojourner” or “alien” as used in the OT (people who came with full knowledge and permission of the host nation. Ex. invaders are not considered “sojourners” or “alien”). I have argued the following:
 - a. A complete and secure border fence must be built before the nation is ready to work toward any other solutions
 - b. “Chain migration” system must be reformed. Teaching of English language and American values should be required.
 - c. Illegal aliens: criminals should be deported, for the rest a program of registration with difficult but obtainable path to citizenship with appropriate fines. Those have been waiting to enter the country legally should be given priority.
 - d. “Guest worker” programs not appropriate. Would cause another large immigration problem
 - (1) Republicans tend to support the general policies above (though some hyper-conservatives are utterly opposed)
 - (2) Democrats favor quick citizenship for illegal immg. (more Dem. votes); block quick completion of border fence.
- J. **Freedom of Speech** (ch. 13)
1. Freedom of speech is an essential policy for any free nation.
 - a. **Campaign finance restrictions** impose restrictions on freedom of speech & give unfair advantage to wealthy candidates
 - (1) Democrats favor campaign finance restrictions (Dem. candidates favored by Hollywood & Media have advantage)
 - (2) Most Republicans oppose, but some support (McCain being the most prominent).
 - b. **“Hate speech”** codes on Univ. campuses are wrong, unconstitutional, criticize Christian speech, favor liberal speech
 - (1) Democrats and liberals in academic communities favor hate speech codes (not a political issue for Republicans)
 - c. **“Fairness Doctrine”** is a wrongful restriction on freedom of speech & would be used to destroy conservative talk radio (primary media outlet for conservatives in the US.)
 - (1) Some Democrats support reimposition of Fairness Doctrine; (2) Republicans uniformly oppose
- K. **Freedom of Religion** (ch. 14)
1. Neither the Bible nor the US Constitution excludes right of people or gov’t officials to give expression to religious views in the public square. (contrast “separation of church & state,” & difference btwn “freedom of” & “freedom from” religion)

- a. Generally imposition of “freedom from” religion restrictions come from Dem. appointed judges (however, some Repub. appointed judges as well).
- b. Republicans in general appoint original intent judges who do not impose such restrictions on religion
- 2. **Faith-based programs** by which religious organizations receive gov’t funding to carry out social welfare are legitimate by biblical standards and the US Constitution.
 - a. Republicans tend to support faith-based programs (though not uniformly)
 - b. Democrats tend to be reluctant to support (though not entirely)
- 3. **IRS prohibition** against political advocacy by churches seems to be unconstitutional restriction on freedom of speech.
 - a. Not many Republicans or Democrats have expressed an opinion (though policy imposed by Lyndon Johnson, Dem.)

L. **Special Groups** within the nation (ch. 15)

- 1. Policies that favor certain special groups do so at the expense of the rest of nation (ex. unelected gov’t **regulators, earmarks, affirmative action, gender-based quotas, farm subsidies, tariffs, NEA, trial lawyers**, special reservations & legal systems for **Native Americans, gambling interests**)
 - a. Much more support of the above listed special groups and polices comes from Democrats over Republicans.
 - (1) Farm subsidies gets bipartisan support from reps of agricultural states.
 - (2) Both Democrats and Republicans are guilty of inserting earmarks into bills.
 - (3) Democrats give strongest support to the other special interests

M. **Media Bias** (ch. 16)

- 1. Media strongly favors liberal candidates, policies; so the “watchdog” function of press often missing due to bias.

N. **Why do the Two Parties Adopt these Different Policies?**

- 1. **Different views of government:** Liberal versus conservative
 - a. Big gov’t and making everyone equal financially = liberal
 - b. Small gov’t and allowing greater individual differences and greater individual opportunity and freedom = conservative
 - c. Bible emphasizes individual freedom and a limited role for gov’t (ch. 3).
- 2. **Abortion**
 - a. Democrats have become the party that defends abortion rights
 - (1) position is fundamentally opposed to biblical teachings
 - (2) leads to difference in sexual moral standards
 - (3) Increasing separation in overall sexual and marriage values (homosexual marriage) of Repub. vs. Democrats
 - (4) Democrat position has evolved to general stance no universal moral sexual standard between consenting adults.
 - b. Republicans cannot reach a place of national / state leadership with a pro-abortion stance (or it is extremely difficult)
 - (1) Most Repub. either instinctually or due to biblical teachings hold that marriage is between 1 man and 1 woman.
- 3. **Individual human responsibility for good and evil choices**
 - a. Republicans: holding people accountable, need for military, need for strong police force, strong enforcement of criminal laws
 - b. Democrats: personal criminal choices due to something else, such as: environment, society, gun laws, corporations, or national gov’t.
- 4. Beliefs about the relationship between the human race and the **natural world**
 - a. People who consider the earth and environment the highest value have gravitated to Dems
 - b. People who consider the Bible or, else, people the higher value have gravitated to Repubs.
- 5. Beliefs about **whether we can know right and wrong**
 - a. No absolutes about right or wrong lead to a seeking of great power (big gov’t) in order to effect change.
 - b. Holding an absolute moral standard will lead to smaller gov’t since God is the final authority, not gov’t.
- 6. **Religious beliefs**
 - a. Conservative evangelicals who hold that the Bible is God’s Word have tended toward the party that most closely aligns with the teachings of Scripture – the Republican Party
 - b. Moral relativists have gravitated toward the party that most aligns with their principles – the Democratic Party.
- 7. **Conclusion:** The differences between Democrats and Republicans today have great significance. These differences are not accidental, but stem from differing convictions about several deep moral and theological issues.

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