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THE PASTOR'S WEEKLY BRIEFING(R)  
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GOOD MORNING, COLLEAGUE  
by H.B. London, Jr.

It's over ...  
Now let's get back to the "main thing"

Over the past couple of days, I have received many postmortems related to the recent presidential election -- men and women in high places putting their spin on what happened, why it happened, and what will happen now that it has happened. It becomes humorous at times. But it's not.

The truth is, with 97 percent of the precincts reporting, the American people have spoken -- 63,878,236 voted for President-elect Obama and 56,394,736 voted for Senator McCain. McCain was outspent by many millions of dollars. Sen. Obama ran a near-perfect campaign -- won the big states, excited millions of new voters, and will now be our 44th president.

I have also learned that the exit polls showed that voters who either attend church once a week or who attend church more than once a week voted for McCain 55 percent to 43 percent. What do those numbers mean?

I do know this. I am going to pray for a peaceful transition from President Bush to President-elect Obama. I am going to pray for a revived church and a more courageous clergy. As Charles Colson writes, "This is no time for Christians to go into bunkers. This is a time to repent, to pray more. It's time for Christians to lead."

A pastor wrote, "Obama is going to need all the strength he can get to lead us through the dark days ahead. ... Our only hope as a nation is that God will hear our prayers and guide our president."

In reality, it is pretty difficult to look past 1 Tim. 2, where Paul admonishes us that "prayers be made for everyone -- all those in authority." And so, we shall pray.

Now, I want you to weigh in. Please!

In many ways, I think the church has become tepid, passive and overly tolerant of what we see and hear. How are you feeling about where we are as a nation? As a church? What about your church? What would you change if you could about your fellowship? I would like to know. Please either jot me an e-mail at [pwb@family.org](mailto:pwb@family.org) or post a comment on our Pastoral Family Forums at <http://www.fotfforums.org/fusetalk/forum/messageview.cfm?catid=54&threadid=10767&enterthread=y>. We will keep your name and address confidential, but we might print your thoughts.

Now -- stand up straight -- put a smile on your face -- and preach the best sermon you have ever preached this next Sunday. Be encouraging!!! --HBL

Featured on The Heart of a Pastor podcast:

This week ... "It's Crunch Time"

Next week ... "A Willingness to Lead"

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#### Marriage, Family Prevail at the Polls

Marriage and family were the big winners Tuesday, as three states voted to protect marriage in their constitutions and Arkansas voted to provide children with both an adopted mom and dad. Florida, Arizona and California became the 28th, 29th and 30th states to amend their constitutions to define marriage as the union between one man and one woman.

Despite tens of millions of dollars spent by gay activists to defeat the marriage initiatives, pro-family leaders in the three states led heroic campaigns to protect marriage from activist judges and lawmakers.

In California, Proposition 8 reverses the state's Supreme Court decision in May that legalized same-sex "marriage." Arizona voters, who narrowly rejected a marriage-protection amendment two years ago, supported Proposition 102 on Tuesday. In Arkansas, voters overwhelmingly approved Initiative 1, which requires couples to be married before they can become foster parents or adopt.

Florida's Amendment 2 received the 60 percent support it needed to pass -- and a few extra percentage points. "This is a victory for children and for the future of Florida," said Mathew Staver, founder and chairman of the Liberty Counsel. "Amendment 2 will prevent activist judges from redefining marriage by the stroke of a pen." [citizenlink.com]

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#### Americans Keep Giving Even in Tough Times

While the recent economic downturn has caused many churches and non-profit organizations to wonder what the last two months of the year may hold in store, two recent studies suggest that, even amid tough times, Americans will keep giving.

A national survey of online consumers released this week finds that 51 percent (89 million people) plan to donate to nonprofit groups via the Internet in November and December. The study, which was commissioned by Convio Inc., a

Texas-based maker of online donation software, estimates that online giving to charities will top \$3 billion during this holiday season.

A related report, released in September by Giving USA Foundation, surprisingly shows that, over the past 40 years, times of recession and economic slowdown have not had a major impact on charitable giving. The research reveals that, during recessions since 1969, total giving has only dropped by an average rate of one percent. "It's important at this juncture for cooler heads to prevail and for non-profits to not listen to those who would claim the sky is falling," said George C. Ruotolo Jr., past chairman of Giving USA Foundation. "Those charities with a clear and compelling case and an established loyal donor constituency will continue to succeed, even in difficult times." [GivingUSA Foundation, yahoo.com]

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#### Supporters Defend Troopers' Memorials

American Atheists Inc. contends that roadside crosses placed by family members in memory of the Utah Highway Patrol personnel who lose their lives in the line of duty are unconstitutional. In 2005, they filed a lawsuit against the Utah Highway Patrol and Utah Transportation Department in objection to the crosses.

In 2006, the court allowed the Utah Highway Patrol Association to intervene in the case to defend the memorials. The nonprofit Alliance Defense Fund is representing the UHPA on behalf of the troopers' families.

"It's ridiculous that a small group of offended atheists would seek to stop the families of slain troopers from honoring their loved ones as they see fit," said ADF Senior Legal Counsel Byron Babione. "Stamping out these symbols of sacrifice is the first step to forgetting the people who daily risk their lives to keep America safe. The groups and officials filing briefs in support of the memorials underscore the importance of this case."

According to a district court judge, no state or federal constitutional violations were found and so ruled against the atheists in 2007. The district court ruling said, "It is not the place of law or government, using Establishment Clause jurisprudence, to exhibit hostility toward religion." Dissatisfied, atheists appealed. Support for the memorials is flooding into the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver. [worldnetdaily.com]

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#### The News at a Glance

##### \* It's OK to Pray in Jesus' Name

Last week, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals -- using a case from Cobb County, Ga. -- proclaimed that praying "in Jesus' name" was acceptable at county board meetings when other constitutional provisions were followed. This ruling is directly in conflict with the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which concluded in an opinion written by ex-Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, that city officials properly excluded from a rotation of leaders for opening prayers at a municipal meeting a pastor who prayed "in Jesus' name."

The ruling said precedent makes it clear that "the content of the prayer is not of concern to judges where ... there is no indication that the prayer opportunity has been exploited to proselytize or advance any one, or to disparage any other, faith or belief. Whether invocation of 'Lord of Lords' or 'the God of Abraham, Isaac and Mohammed' are 'sectarian' is best left to theologians, not courts of law," the court said. [worldnetdaily.com]

\* Emotional Pain and Abortion

The Elliot Institute -- through a nationwide telephone survey conducted in February -- found that a full 85 percent of American adults believe negative emotional problems are common after an abortion. Even 60 percent of those who identified themselves as strongly pro-choice said they think emotional pain is common. It was also noted that, of the 47 female respondents who reported having an abortion, 76.6 percent reported a negative emotional reaction following the procedure. Similarly, 60 percent of 25 male respondents involved in an abortion also experienced emotional consequences. [worldnetdaily.com]

\* Christian-Themed License Plates

New license plates, that depict a stained-glass window with a cross on the left-hand side and the words "I Believe" across the bottom, are the subject of a lawsuit in South Carolina by the Americans United for Separation of Church and State. The group sued state officials on behalf of two Christian pastors, a humanist pastor and a rabbi in South Carolina, along with the Hindi American Foundation. The Department of Motor Vehicles will begin making the plates after it gets at least 400 prepaid applications or if a sponsoring organization makes a deposit of \$4,000 by May 1. [thecronline.com]

\* Study Links Sex on TV to Teen Pregnancy

A groundbreaking study has confirmed what many parents and family advocates have been saying for years: Highly sexual content on television is a bad influence on teenagers. A RAND Corp. study published in the journal Pediatrics showed that teens exposed to high levels of sexual content on TV were twice as likely to be involved in a pregnancy in the following three years as teens with limited exposure. The study, based on interviews with more than 2,000 teens, called it "a compelling link." [citizenlink.com]

\* Discovery of Oldest Hebrew Text

In a site that overlooks the Elah Valley, where David slew Goliath with a well-aimed shot from a sling, archaeologists have discovered what they say is the oldest Hebrew text ever found. The discovery -- by archaeologists Prof. Yossi Garfinkel and Sa'ar Ganor of Hebrew University -- is being hailed as one of the most important finds in Israel since the Dead Sea Scrolls. The text, written in ink on a pottery shard, dates -- according to Carbon-14 dating as well as chemical analysis of the pottery found at the site -- from between 1,000 and 975 B.C. -- the time of King David's reign. The writing, therefore, predates the Dead Sea Scrolls by about 1,000 years. [israelnationalnews.com]

\* Prime Time Television and Profanity

According to a new study from the Parents Television Council, the harshness and frequency of profanity during over-the-air broadcast networks' prime-time programs has increased dramatically since the PTC's last similar study in 1998. Researchers reported nearly 11,000 expletives on prime-time network shows in 2007, almost twice as many as in 1998. CBS and FOX were the biggest offenders, with their shows accounting for almost 60 percent of all shows that aired the f-word. [pluggedinonline.com]

\* Tiller Helps to Secure Victory for Pro-Abortion District Attorney

Notorious abortionist George Tiller of Wichita, Kan., spent more than \$100,000 to help re-elect pro-abortion District Attorney Nola Foulston. According to Associated Press reports, Foulston previously blocked 30 criminal charges being brought against Tiller. Tiller's ads attacked Sedgwick County district attorney candidate Mark Schoenhofer.

Question of the Week:

I'm wondering if I am at the point of burnout with the needs of my congregation. I have been praying that the Lord will open the door for a ministry assistant in the near future. How can I get some help in these financially difficult times?

Answer:

Many pastors of small- to medium-sized churches feel overwhelmed. Without knowing all the details about your congregation, let me make a suggestion out of my experience in ministry. Some years ago, in one of my church situations, the congregation was growing, but we couldn't afford to hire someone full-time. We had someone who suggested our vision might have to function with "near-sightedness." I was being stretched too far and was often functioning beyond my areas of giftedness. Thankfully, we were able to identify a particular parishioner who had strengths in aspects of ministry that could really complement what I was best at doing. We were able to hire this woman on a part-time basis, without paying the whole benefit package, because her husband had a good job with benefits. She already knew the congregation quite well, and she was able to jump right in and do an excellent job. She was also able to give me many insights into the dynamics of the congregation from a woman's perspective, and was able to get into some helpful relationships with some of the women that would have never been safe for me as a male pastor. All that to say, I urge you to look around your congregation. God may have placed some gifted people right there already who could expand and enrich your ministry.

"It was God who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature believers" (Ephesians 1:11-13).

JMB

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Your Two Cents

We want to know what you think, so each week, we will open a new topic or discussion thread in our Parsonage message boards where you can express your opinions. This week's topic:

"How do you feel about the outcome of the election?"

Give us your two cents right now by visiting our Parsonage message boards at: <http://fotfforums.org/fusetalk/forum/index.cfm?forumid=2>

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Featured Resource of the Month -- Clergy Appreciation Month Testimonies

We would love to have you share your Clergy Appreciation Month testimony with our Pastoral Ministries staff. It is always exciting and inspiring to hear how God blesses His people when they obey His commands and care for one another.

Please visit our Web site and fill out the testimony form, sharing how your church has tangibly honored you and your family during this month, and the impact it has had on both you and your congregation.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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Please feel free to send this e-mail message  
to a friend or colleague.

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<http://www.parsonage.org>

For a listening ear, referrals or prayer in a time of crisis, pastoral families are encouraged to call our toll-free Pastoral Care Line at (877) 233-4455.

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