

## **"Christians Must Stand by Principles, Not a Political Party"**

Jim Minnery - Guest Columnist - Anchorage Daily News

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The French existentialist Albert Camus wasn't a man of faith but he had a pretty good grasp of certain things. "The world," he noted, "expects of Christians that they will eschew all fuzzy abstractions and plant themselves squarely in front of the bloody face of history. We stand in need of folk who have determined to speak directly and unmistakably and come what may, to stand by what they have said."

I love that. Know what you believe, say it clearly and loudly and stand by it. I love it, but I'm also challenged by it.

I represent an organization that believes public policy should protect all human life and preserve the institution of marriage. We address other issues such as gambling and pornography (we seek to decrease their influence) and parental rights and school choice (we think they should be expanded) but the hot-button issues of abortion and homosexuality are how we typically get defined and, often, maligned.

We can live with that. Indisputably, we're a socially conservative organization and we draw lines in the political and cultural sand when it comes to areas we believe God has clearly spoken about regarding social order.

The label I won't accept is being a mouthpiece for Republicans.

First, there are lots of Republicans, here in Alaska, across the country and in our current presidential race, who simply want these issues to go away. They may fight for a smaller, more efficient government, although that breed has become increasingly scarce, and they may support the global war on terrorism but they are painfully uncomfortable, wishy-washy or downright hostile to the idea of protecting the unborn and defending marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

Secondly, as was the case during the civil rights movement, truth eventually crosses party lines.

Our state fair booth this year was across from the Alaska Democratic Party. Often I'd venture over to their booth and strike up a conversation. "Many people," I'd start out, "have pigeon-holed us as a subversive pawn for Republicans and I just want to dismiss that contention. In 2006, several pro-life, pro-family Democrats were elected to Congress. Rick Santorum, one of the most ardent pro-life senators, was unseated primarily because his Democratic opponent, Bob Casey Jr., was a vocal defender of the unborn.

Many other examples exist including former NFL quarterback Heath Schuler, a Democrat elected to Congress, who said on his campaign that all life is sacred.

"On a local level," I'd pose, "can you introduce me to any Democrats who are unabashedly pro-life or don't buy into the notion that men should be able to marry men?"

Every person essentially answered the same way. They'd heard of that trend but didn't know anyone personally.

My experiences have been different. These issues go way beyond party lines. Numerous pastors I worked with during the advisory vote back in April regarding the same-sex benefits issue were minorities. Although plenty of them were Democrats, what brought them together was not a political philosophy. They were galvanized around what they believed to be an indisputable truth regarding the sanctity of marriage as God created it.

During a recent pro-life banquet I attended, the speaker was Dr. Alveda King, the niece of Dr. Martin Luther King. What a powerfully gripping testimony. Try and tell Alveda that Democrats need to sit on the far-left fringes of social issues. She ain't buying it.

I'm convinced there are many within the Democrat Party who have, in their hearts at least, said enough is enough. Moral stands on issues like life and marriage and family are not commodities to be bargained with.

You don't need to change your party affiliation to stand with us. You just need to be aware of the "come what may" part of what Camus referred to and humbly take the criticisms and jabs that will inevitably come our way. Don't worry, the leader we follow, a Jewish carpenter, took the brunt of it on our behalf.