

The following message was distributed last Monday by our Ohio District Superintendent, Rev. John Wootton. It's a good response for all of us:

Thank God for America! As a testament to the world of the amazing freedoms we are so blessed to enjoy, the most powerful and influential nation just finished a historic election. The God-honoring principles which guided the founding of our country have made it possible that, without force or government control, ethnic minorities and all free people have irrefutable evidence that anything is possible.

Now is certainly the time for the people of God to lead, and lead well! As church leaders, those who follow your example will be looking for healthy ways to process the news that Barack Obama will assume the presidency on January 20. Thankfully, God's Word has guiding principles for us to apply when we think of our president-elect (scriptures paraphrased):

Romans 13:1-4

- Barack Obama's presidency is appointed by God. (v 1)
- Christians should lead the way in supporting Barack Obama's presidency. (v 2)
- Barack Obama's presidency can be a force for good and a deterrent against evil. (v 3)
- As president, Barack Obama is God's minister to you for good. (v 4)

Based on countless surveys and demographic studies, the majority of our Assemblies of God congregations are comprised of evangelical Christians who likely did not vote for candidate Obama. One key reason, among others, would be his troubling record on issues regarding the sanctity of life.

But there is a key difference between "candidate Obama" and "President Obama," and our positive leadership as ministers could not be over-stated at such a pivotal time in our nation and

in our state. While we as individual citizens and Christians must do all we have done and more to support causes and candidates that promote healthy developments for the collective heart and soul of our nation, we would be terribly remiss if we overlooked many wonderful opportunities of an Obama presidency, opportunities such as:

- Exalting God for his continued blessing on our wonderful country with its unparalleled freedoms!
- Praying for all our leaders. Imagine, for example, the tremendous long-term good that could happen if President Obama's heart was softened on the pro-life issue, for all the world to see!
- Reaching out with the love of God to all minorities in a much greater way via tremendous new avenues that will continually emerge in coming months and years!
- Supporting loudly when President Obama chooses wisely. You know firsthand what it's like to assume a position of leadership for the first time. How meaningful it is when voices of affirmation and support rise above the negative critiques!
- Remembering who is in control. Who knows what our amazing God is up to? It is not beyond our God to use an Obama presidency to open greater doors for missions and the worldwide spreading of the gospel!

On a related note, we are thankful that the voters of Ohio once again rejected a casino initiative. We extend appreciation to Shirley Alford and her family for Jay Alford's lasting legacy of speech and action on this critical issue. (Rev. Alford pastored Youngstown Highway Tabernacle for many years.)

Thank you in advance for your positive leadership in Ohio's churches and ministries!

John Wootton
District Pastor