

Voting Yourself out of Fellowship

by Jim Smyrl on the FBC Jax Official Blog

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[Note: This is a blog article posted by one James Smyrl, on the FBC Jax Official Blog that appeared for about 3 weeks, then was taken down by the church with no explanation except for "technical difficulties". In this blog Smyrl refers to a Catholic priest as a "cult leader" - but agrees with his decision to withhold communion from parishioners on the grounds they committed the sin of voting for Obama...and then Smyrl indicates that voting for Obama is a sin which must be repented of, and perhaps is worthy of breaking fellowship over - and for some odd reason compares it to the sin of maliciously dividing a fellowship. No wonder the church took this off their website. Such "brilliance" shines forth from Smyrl - as Vines would say, if we were searching for ignorance, we would have to drill maybe 1/4 inch into his skull and we'd hit a gusher.]

I do not make it a regular practice to quote cult leaders in a positive manner.

[Yes I believe the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church are cultish, but that is for another day.] However, **one Catholic Priest got it right, even though his solution is theologically flawed.** In a letter to his church members, Jay Scott Newman of the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Greenville, SC took a bold stand towards those who voted for the continuous murder of the unborn. A portion of his letter states,

"Voting for a pro-abortion politician when a plausible pro-life alternative exists constitutes material cooperation with intrinsic evil, and those Catholics who do so place themselves outside of the full communion of Christ's Church and under the judgment of divine law. Persons in this condition should not receive Holy Communion until and unless they are reconciled to God in the Sacrament of Penance, lest they eat and drink their own condemnation."

Theodorus Frelinghuysen, upon entering the colonies in 1720, invoked a similar warning on his congregants in the Raritan Valley of New Jersey. He prohibited church members from participating in the Lord's Supper as a result of their sinful lifestyles. It was only upon personal repentance before God that Pastor Frelinghuysen allowed church members to return to the table.

Newman's view of repentance is heretical in that he believes grace is imparted through the elements of the supper as well as through the act of confession to a man. His Catholic view of repentance negates the sufficiency of Christ alone for all matters of faith and forgiveness. However, his stance for human life is commendable.

Paul in I Corinthians 11 states:

17But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. 18For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, 19for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.

Paul's command to those that were approaching the Lord's Table in an unworthy manner did not include confession to a man or reception of grace through a man-made effort. Rather, Paul commanded the church,

28Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

The scriptural directive, for those that have acted in a manner that misrepresents the nature and character of God, is to personally confess sin to the Savior, Who alone can cleanse us of all sin. **Whether it is the sin of voting in a manner that misrepresents God's character or the sin of maliciously dividing fellowship with other believers, Christ is the answer for reconciliation. He alone will reopen the door for the rebellious to approach the table in a worthy manner.**