

So, Health Care Reform has passed. My friends on one side of the political spectrum call it the most wondrous legislation since the Civil Rights Act; my friends on the other side see it as a domestic Pearl Harbor, which will destroy our economy and doom the next generation to poverty.

Well, as someone once said, usually neither our fondest hopes nor our deepest fears ever materialize. I haven't had a chance to study fully the 2700 pages of the bill, so I'm not really sure what to think about it all. Still, it was reassuring to know that the sun did, in fact, arise this morning.

But a deeper question is this: is the passage of the legislation God's will? I suspect those who support it will say "yes" and those who oppose will say "no." (Religious folk are often quick to claim God's approval for their point of view.) However, I'm not one to say that everything that happens is God's will. By the way, such thought, that everything that happens is willed by God, is more of a Muslim concept than Christian.

And, when it comes to politics, long ago when Israel demanded to have a king "like the other nations," the implication is that for better or worse, it will often be human decisions, rather than divine, that guide a nation. [And there are conflicting views even in the Old Testament about this whole idea of kingship. . . you are invited to read 1 Samuel 8:10-22 and 10:1-8 to see a contrast in tone about the first king, Saul.]

In the New Testament, Paul, in Romans 13, writes, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God." Against this point of view stands virtually the entire Book of Revelation, in which government is seen to be an agent of, and spawned by, Satan, rather than God.

Jesus himself accepted the reality of government's power when he said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's," but then reminded people of faith to be true to their calling: "Give to God what is God's."

As individual Christians who happen to live in a nation in which we can express our opinion by voice and vote, may we continue to live up to the high ideals that our faith expects from us. May we regard political adversaries as just that, adversaries, rather than as demonic or enemies of God or nation. May our words be fair and our attitude generous. Above all, may we be people who, even in the midst of the most divisive debates, bear witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ by the way we conduct ourselves, with our friends, our family, and with those who see the world differently than we do.

— Eric Lindblade