

The Prostitution of the Body of the Christ *(The 501(c)(3) shackle)*

*(When quoting scriptures, from the Rotherham Emphasized Bible New Testament,
I will substitute the Hebrew word Yahshua for Jesus, Yahweh and Elohim for God and Anointed for Christ.)*

John Kerry and the Democratic Party stand for partial-birth abortion (infanticide), sodomy and coveting the wealth of their neighbor. (See Appendix A) Their platform stands against three of Yahweh's Ten Commandments.¹ Can the pastors of 501(c)(3)² ministries instruct their flock not to vote for John Kerry and to stand against the Democratic Party? No! The pastors of Yahweh have been silenced because they have agreed not to "participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office." Why do pastors agree to keep quiet? They get a tax break. If John the Baptist's ministry was a 501(c)(3), he could not have spoken against Herod; Elijah could not have spoken against Ahab and Jezebel! The Church should break the shackles of the 501(c)(3) and make Yahweh their sufficiency. Peter and John were told not to speak in the name of Yahshua but they stated in Acts 4:19-20, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." In our Lord's time, Pharisees and Sadducees probably would have had 501(c)(3) ministries but Peter and John would not have had a 501(c)(3) ministry. Yahweh spoke through His prophets regardless of the threats of men. Today, pastors praise the martyrs, who have given their lives for Christ but if Yahweh told these same pastors to publicly speak against a political figure they would refuse in order to maintain their tax exemption status. This example might remind us of the rich young ruler who would not give up his wealth to follow Yahshua. Yahweh is able and willing to be our sufficiency if we but walk out in the faith of our Father, Abraham.

"Before 1954, the IRS and the courts generally recognized that participation in a political campaign is not a charitable activity, and an organization whose principal purpose was to do so could not be exempt under §501(c)(3). However, an organization whose principal purpose was religious or otherwise charitable could engage in incidental political activity without jeopardizing its exemption. In the course of the overhaul of the Internal Revenue Code in 1954, then-Senate Minority Leader, Lyndon Johnson, persuaded his colleagues to approve an amendment, adding the prohibition quoted above to §501(c)(3). Although, for this reason, there is no legislative history, it has been reliably reported that Sen. Johnson was angry at members of the Bass family who used several charities they controlled to oppose his election in 1948. The new prohibition would prevent a recurrence."

Pastors, who are responsible to Yahweh for their flock, have been unfaithful to Yahweh by not warning their flock about the Democratic Party. Yahweh called Israel a harlot when she was unfaithful to Him.³ Yahweh instructed Ezekiel to warn His people against sin. "A watchman, have I appointed thee to the

¹ Thou shalt not commit murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not covet, thy neighbours house,—thou shalt not covet, thy neighbour's wife nor his servant nor his handmaid nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything which belongeth unto thy neighbour. Exodus 20:13-17

² See Appendix B

³ Ez. 16:15-34

house of Israel,—and thou shalt hear, at my mouth a message, and shalt warn them from me. When I say to the lawless man— Thou shalt surely die, and thou hast not given him warning, neither hast spoken to warn the lawless man from his lawless way, to save himself alive the same lawless man in his iniquity shall die, but his blood, at thy hand will I require” (Ez. 3:17-18). Pastors are instructed to “Shepherd the beloved flock of God, which is among you... becoming, ensamples, to the beloved flock; And, when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, ye shall bear away, the unfading crown of glory” (I Peter 5:2-4). Pastors, by gagging themselves, have allowed the unrighteous acts of the Democratic Party to go uncontested. Their flock, many times unknowingly, have committed wickedness by supporting the Democratic Party platform of partial-birth abortion, sodomy and coveting because their shepherd has not led. The flock has not been told that you cannot be a disciple of Christ and a Democrat at the same time. “No one, unto two masters, can be in service...Ye cannot be in service, unto God, and, unto Riches” (Mt. 6:24). Christians, who vote the Democratic ticket, have sown and cultivated seeds of wickedness.

“In 1992, 44 percent of Catholics voted for Clinton [who twice vetoed a ban on partial-birth abortion], while only 34 percent of Protestants did so. In 1996, 53 percent of Catholics voted for Clinton [who allowed homosexuals in the military] and only 35 percent of Protestants did so. The voting record for Catholic women is even more remarkable, showing both a religious gap and a gender gap. In 1992, 44 percent of Catholic women voted for Clinton, while 39 percent of Protestant women voted the same way. In 1996, 59 percent of Catholic women supported Clinton, while only 47 percent of Protestant women did so.”(See Appendix C) Bill Clinton is an adulterer; supporter of homosexuality; stopped the Republicans from outlawing partial-birth abortion. Ministers did not instruct these Christian men and women, who voted for Bill Clinton, concerning the wickedness of the Democratic Party. Why? Their ministries are 501(c)(3) and by speaking up they would lose their tax-exempt status.

Kenneth Copeland, who has done a wonderful work in encouraging believers to vote, has been gagged also. He states, “if a candidate or people supporting a candidate are pushing abortion, sexual sin, pornography or anything like it, we need to reconsider supporting that person.”⁴ Reconsider? A prophet, which brother Copeland is, would have said, “*we shall not support that person.*” A wonderful prophet has been gagged because his 501(c)(3) ministry is not allowed to speak against the Democratic Party. Millions of his supporters are suppose to reconsider supporting a candidate who endorses breaking three of the Ten Commandments?

501(c)(3) organizations are appropriate for hospitals, etc. but not where the Word of Yahweh is spoken. Yahweh is our sufficiency and not the government. Money should not buy a servant of the gospel. The Apostle Paul would not be part of a 501(c)(3) ministry. Paul said, “I wrote unto you in my letter—not to be mixing yourselves up with fornicators; Not at all, *meaning* the fornicators of this world, or the covetous and extortionist, or idolaters” (I Cor. 5:9-10). Up to 50% of voting Christians are supporting the wickedness of the Democratic Party because their pastors are either ignorant of the platform of the Democratic Party or they have been silenced because they receive tax-exemption. 501(c)(3)’s began in innocence but they have now been used by our adversary through wicked men to silence the Pastor’s voice, thereby silencing Yahweh. Some might call that hush money! Let us unite and give up the tax-exempt status and speak freely as prophets of Yahweh, unshackled from the corruption, which resides in silence. Yahweh, El Shaddai will absolutely provide for the Body of the Christ!

⁴ The Responsibility of the American Believer, Nov. 2004, pg. 10

Appendix A

<http://www.priestsforlife.org/partialbirth.html>

The Partial Birth Abortion Procedure



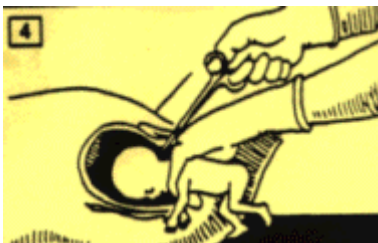
Guided by ultrasound, the abortionist grabs the baby's leg with forceps.



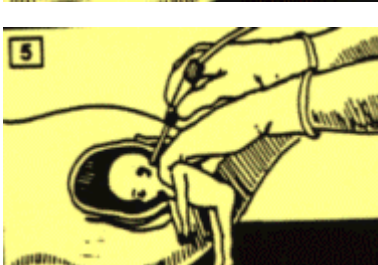
The baby's leg is pulled out into the birth canal.



The abortionist delivers the baby's entire body, except for the head.



The abortionist jams scissors into the baby's skull. The scissors are then opened to enlarge the hole...



The scissors are removed and a suction catheter is inserted. The child's brains are sucked out, causing the skull to collapse. The dead baby is then removed.

Astounded that this procedure is allowed to actually take place? So are we! When this procedure first came to the attention of the American public, Priests for Life led the way in crafting a [joint statement of pro-life leaders](#) on the issue.

Search Results

Your search for **partial birth abortion** returned 7 result(s):

1. [WVC: Sign the Women's Health Petition Today](#) - Rank: 1000
...loria Feldt, President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America "By signing the deceptively-named **Partial-Birth Abortion** Ban into law, Bush confirms that his administration and Congress have both the power...
/wvc/weekinreview/200312050001.html
2. [WVC: Republican Economics: Children and Working Families Last](#) - Rank: 921
... of Representatives took a major step in weakening woman's right to choose by passing the so-called **Partial Birth Abortion** Bill, refusing to allow medical decisions that protect the health of the pregnant wo...
/wvc/weekinreview/200306090003.html
3. [WVC: Bush Versus Women: The President's Secret War](#) - Rank: 859
...lifornia, and Nebraska, Justice Department lawyers argued for upholding the bill banning so-called "**Partial Birth**" abortions — even though the Supreme Court has already ruled a similar bill unconstitut...
/wvc/weekinreview/200404050001.html
4. [WVC: George W. Bush, John Ashcroft And The Attacks On Women's Health](#) - Rank: 851
...ey General John Ashcroft is trying to subpoena the medical records of women who received so-called "**partial-birth**" abortions from seven physicians and at least five hospitals in the Midwest, New York, Philad...
/wvc/weekinreview/200402130001.html
5. [DNC Special Reports: The State of Women In George Bush's America](#) - Rank: 718
...e. In November 2003, Bush signed the first-ever federal ban on an **abortion** procedure, the so-called **Partial-Birth Abortion** Ban Act. The ban makes no exception for protecting the health of a woman. On his fir...
/specialreports/womenrecord/index.html

[WVC: Bush Cheney '04 Strategy: Negative Campaigns, Phony Statistics, And Wedge Politics](#) - Rank: 539

...acy" subpoenas. Ashcroft is trying to subpoena the medical records of women who received so-called "**partial-birth**" abortions, exemplifying just

Search Results

Your search for **gay** returned 35 result(s):

1. [DNC: GLBT Vote](#) - Rank: 1000
...Benefits DNC News Where's Mary? Not With Her Family at the GOP Convention For the past few years, **gay** rights groups have been asking, "Where is Mary Cheney?" Not on stage with

her family. Last night af...

</gibt/index.html>

2. [DNC Leadership Councils: Gay & Lesbian Leadership Council](#) - Rank: 455
...**Gay** & Lesbian Leadership Council JOIN Click here to become a member of the GLLC today!
CONTACT ...
</leadershipcouncils/gllc.html>
3. [DNC Special Reports: Top 10 Bush Flip Flops](#) - Rank: 305
...New York Times, 2/28/03; Bush Remarks at One-Year Anniversary of DHS, 3/2/04] 6. Bush
Flip-Flops on **Gay** Marriage Bush Flip: It's Up to the States to Decide In a 2000 presidential
primary debate, candidat...
/specialreports/top10_flipflops/index.html
4. [DNC: Speakers](#) - Rank: 286
...JEFF SOREF Chair, DNC Lesbian, **Gay**, Bisexual and Transgender Caucus Jeff Soref is Chair
of the DNC's Lesbian, **Gay**, Bisexual and Transg...
</speakers/00010083.html>
5. [WVC: Week in Review](#) - Rank: 264
... to have the full force of constitutional backing, not to have an ERA." DNC Continues
Commitment To **Gay** And Lesbian Americans. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD),
Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), Rep. Ta...
</wvc/weekinreview/20020524.html>
6. [WVC: George W. Bush, John Ashcroft And The Attacks On Women's Health](#) -
Rank: 264
...ow ranks as one of the top ten defense contractors in the country.How To Change The
Subject: Attack **Gay** Marriage. Let's see if we got this right: With growing criticism of his
economic policies, a contin...
</wvc/weekinreview/200402130001.html>
7. [DNC News: Where's Mary? Not With Her Family at the GOP Convention](#) - Rank:
235
...ouths Lynne Cheney as Straight Family Joins Dick on Stage Washington, DC - For the past
few years, **gay** rights groups have been asking, "Where is Mary Cheney?" Not on stage with
her family. Last night af...
</news/200409020012.html>
8. [DNC: Voting Rights Institute](#) - Rank: 235
Voting Rights Institute DNC News DNC Chairman commemorates the anniversary of the
voting rights act McAuliffe: "Every American must be able to exercise his or her basic, non-
negotiable right to vote. This year, Americans deserve an error-free, inti...
</vri/index.html>

Your search for **tax the rich** returned 10 result(s):

1. [DNC Special Reports: The Bush Record: Tax Cuts Help the Rich Get Richer](#) - Rank: 1000
...**The** Bush Record: **Tax** Cuts Help **the Rich** Get Richer Bush's **tax** cuts have benefited **the**
wealthy more than anybody else-whi...
</specialreports/taxes/index.html>
2. [DNC Special Reports: Another Bush Ripoff: Health Savings Accounts](#) - Rank: 774
...d into Bush's Medicare initiative was \$6 billion to encourage **the** use of Health Savings
Accounts, a **tax**-exempt account that would be used to pay for regular health care expenses.
Individuals are required...
/specialreports/healthcare_savings/index.html
3. [WVC: Honoring Americans in Military Service](#) - Rank: 676
... **the** longest since January 1984. **The** Bush administration has pushed through Congress a
massive **tax** cut that provides **the** vast majority of its benefits for **the** very wealthy, in **the**
name of economic s...
</wvc/weekinreview/200305270004.html>

Appendix B

THE CHURCH AND POLITICS: A REVIEW OF THE IRS GUIDELINES FOR CHURCHES

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Webster, Chamberlain & Bean

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Churches, like other organizations that are exempt from federal income tax under §501(c)(3), may not "participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office."

I. INTRODUCTION

A. History

Before 1954, the IRS and the courts generally recognized that participation in a political campaign is not a charitable activity, and an organization whose principal purpose was to do so could not be exempt under §501(c)(3). However, an organization whose principal purpose was religious or otherwise charitable could engage in incidental political activity without jeopardizing its exemption.

In the course of the overhaul of the Internal Revenue Code in 1954, then-Senate Minority Leader, Lyndon Johnson, persuaded his colleagues to approve an amendment, adding the prohibition quoted above to §501(c)(3). Although, for this reason, there is no legislative history, it has been reliably reported that Sen. Johnson was angry at members of the Bass family who used several charities they controlled to oppose his election in 1948. The new prohibition would prevent a recurrence.

B. Scope

The prohibition against participating or intervening in a political campaign applies only to elections for public office, and does not apply to attempts to influence legislation. (Churches and other §501(c)(3) exempt organizations may engage in such attempts to influence legislation as an insubstantial part of their activities.)

In addition, unlike the restriction on lobbying, the prohibition on political activity is absolute. Exemption under §501(c)(3) may be revoked for even the smallest amount of prohibited political activity. However the IRS rarely revokes exemption for political activity, despite frequent reports of church involvement in political campaigns by, *e.g.*, allowing candidates to speak from the pulpit, collecting campaign contributions during worship services, and ferrying voters to the polls in church vans festooned with signs promoting candidates of but one political party. Surprisingly, in the mid-1990s ministers from several churches in the Tidewater area around Norfolk, Virginia complained publicly after being visited by IRS agents whose purpose was merely to explain the rules prohibiting political activity, let alone open an audit or revoke the churches' exemptions.

C. Regulations

The regulations under §501(c)(3) elaborate on the prohibition only slightly, by defining the term "candidate for public office."

The term *candidate for public office* means an individual who offers himself, or is proposed by others, as a contestant for an elected public office, whether such office be national, State, or local. Activities which constitute participation or intervention in a political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate include, but are not limited to, the publication or distribution of written or printed statements or the making of oral statements on behalf of or in opposition to such a candidate.

Suffice it to say that the statute and regulations provide little practical guidance to the pastor or other church leader who is diligently attempting to ascertain which activities are permitted, and which are not. Although the IRS and the courts have issued a number of rulings and judicial opinions addressing these issues, to which we turn in a moment, except for three activities that are prohibited *per se*, the question turns on a review of all of the facts and circumstances, and slight variations in the fact patterns might easily produce a different result.

II. PER SE PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Three types of activities are prohibited *per se*: Candidate endorsements (or denouncements), candidate ratings, and contributions of cash, goods, or services to a campaign.

A. Candidate endorsements and denouncements

A church may not, as a matter of its official position, endorse or oppose a candidate for public office. Thus, a pastor speaking from the pulpit or otherwise in his capacity as the pastor, may not urge his audience to vote for or against a particular candidate. Likewise, a church may not publish an article in its newsletter, or place an advertisement exhorting readers to vote for or against a particular candidate. This is well-illustrated by the recent case of *Branch Ministries v. Rossotti*, involving the denouncement of Bill Clinton by a church. In 1992, only days before the election, The Church at Pierce Creek in Binghamton, New York, placed a full-page advertisement in *USA Today* and the *Washington Times*. The advertisement highlighted then-Gov. Bill Clinton's support for abortion on demand, civil rights for homosexuals, and the distribution of condoms to high school students, and then asked "How then can we [Christians] vote for Bill Clinton?" (The Church's advertisement did not tell Christians whether to vote for then-President Bush, running for reelection, or for Ross Perot, running as the candidate of the Reform Party.) Ironically, the advertisement also stated, "Tax-deductible contributions for this advertisement gladly accepted."

Despite its reticence to act against churches on account of their political activities, the IRS did not shrink from this "in your face" challenge and, in 1995, revoked the Church's exemption. The Church litigated the issue and the trial court summarily upheld the IRS' revocation. On appeal, the Court of Appeals gave equally short shrift to the Church's arguments.

The Church first argued that the Internal Revenue Service did not have statutory authority to revoke a church's tax-exempt status, because the Church's exemption is derived not from §501(c)(3), but from the lack of any provisions in the Internal Revenue Code for the taxation of churches. The Court of Appeals concluded that the Church Audit Protection Act, expressly authorizes the IRS to revoke the tax-exempt

status of a church in certain circumstances, including when a church is not exempt by reason of its failure to satisfy §501(c)(3).

The Church also challenged the IRS' authority, based the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The court found that under either rule the Church must first establish that its Free Exercise rights had been substantially burdened. The court denied the Church's predicate that "withdrawal of a conditional privilege for failure to meet the condition is in itself an unconstitutional burden on its Free Exercise Right." The Church's assumption is true only when "the receipt of the privilege (in this case the tax-exemption) is conditioned upon conduct prescribed by a religious faith, or...denied...because of conduct mandated by religious belief, thereby putting substantial pressure on an adherent to modify his behavior and to violate his beliefs." Because the Church did not also argue that withdrawing from electoral politics would violate its beliefs, and the sole effect of the loss of exemption might be some decrease in the amount of money available to the Church for its religious practices, that burden was not constitutionally significant. In fact, the court suggested that even that burden was overstated, because no tax is assessed on gifts, and if the Church does not intervene in future political campaigns, it may hold itself out as a §501(c)(3) organization without re-applying for exemption.

Finally, the court noted that the Church had alternate means by which to communicate its sentiments about candidates for public office. Following the Supreme Court's decision in *Regan v. Taxation With Representation*, the court observed that the Church could form a related §501(c)(4) organization, which could then sponsor a political action committee in order to participate in political campaigns.

Because the church had failed to show that its religious activities were substantially burdened by revocation of its tax-exempt status, the court did not consider whether the prohibition serves a compelling government interest, or, if so, whether revocation of exemption was the least restrictive means of furthering that interest.

In an earlier case, *Christian Echoes National Ministry, Inc. v. United States* the court agreed with the IRS that a religious corporation whose publications attacked candidates and incumbents considered to be too liberal, and urged its followers to elect conservatives, including Strom Thurmond and Barry Goldwater, violated the prohibition on participation in political campaigns. The court in *Christian Echoes* overruled the trial court's Free Exercise analysis (prohibiting the IRS from evaluating the organization's activities as "religious" or "political" for purposes of denying tax-exempt status), and concluded that revocation of exemption was the least restrictive means of upholding the Government's "overwhelming and compelling...interest: That of guarantying [sic] that the wall separating church and state remain [sic] high and firm." (<http://www.priestsforlife.org/elections/symposiumwatkins.htm>)

Appendix C

Catholics and the 2000 Election

By Paul J. Weber
America, October 28, 2000
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Catholic voters are now a looming presence on the fringe of both parties.

The year 2000 elections increasingly look like another turning point in American politics. The old issues that formerly ignited our passions—crime, defense, civil rights, balanced budget and abortion—have all but burned out. Neither party is clear about which new concerns will catch fire, even this late in the campaign. But one certainty remains: Catholic voters are important in this election.

Consider the following: (a) Catholics make up 24 percent of the electorate, some 62 million citizens, (b) Catholics actually vote at 4 percent higher rate than Protestants (the difference would be even more significant if Hispanic turnout were not so low), so the impact is greater than numbers alone and (c) the Catholic population is heavily concentrated in key states, i.e., those with high Electoral College votes, as the table below demonstrates:

State	Electoral Votes	Percent Catholic
California	54	28.9
New York	33	44.3
Texas	32	23.2
Florida	25	23.2
Pennsylvania	23	33.2
Illinois	22	33.2
Ohio	21	24.2
Michigan	18	29.2
New Jersey	15	45.9
Massachusetts	12	54.3

Finally, (d) Catholics vote somewhat differently than Protestants. If we had voted the same in the 1996 election, we would now be worrying about President Dole’s age! The last two presidential elections show dramatic differences. In 1992, 44 percent of Catholics voted for Clinton, while only 34 percent of Protestants did so. In 1996, 53 percent of Catholics voted for Clinton and only 35 percent of Protestants did so.

The voting record for Catholic women is even more remarkable, showing both a religious gap and a gender gap. In 1992, 44 percent of Catholic women voted for Clinton, while 39 percent of Protestant women voted the same way. In 1996, 59 percent of Catholic women supported Clinton, while only 47 percent of Protestant women did so.

More important than numbers alone is the fact that the Catholic vote is up for grabs. As William Prendergast has pointed out in a splendid book, *The Catholic Voter in American Politics* (1999), Catholics are now quintessential swing voters. (The statistics in this article are drawn from this book.) To the immense frustration of politicians and political scientists, they no longer fit dependably into the old political categories. A solid majority of Catholics are economic liberals: pro-safety net, pro-progressive taxation, pro-labor unions, pro-foreign aid, pro-environmental protection and pro-government regulation of industry and consumer products—all traditional Democratic themes.

On the other hand, the majority of Catholics are social conservatives: pro-death penalty, anti-abortion, anti-drugs, opposed to the sex and violence that characterize the entertainment industry. These are all traditional Republican themes.

Nor can politicians discover the key to the Catholic vote by looking to church teachings. Catholics follow church doctrine only selectively, when they know it at all. Catholics use birth control and have abortions at the same rate as the rest of the country, are quite tolerant of gays but are in favor of the death penalty and nuclear weapons. As a result, Republicans and Democrats make symbolic gestures and appeal to that part of the Catholic ethos they think will bring them a majority of votes. But both political parties have serious difficulties with Catholics.

First, a look at Republicans. Republicans have a complex history with Catholicism that, while not now well known, has left lingering suspicions. Torrents of anti-Catholic rhetoric filled early Protestant sermons and writings at the time of America's founding. That rhetoric spilled over into the first national election won by Republicans. Begun in the 1850's upon the collapse of the Whigs, the Republican Party nominated Abraham Lincoln as their presidential candidate in 1860. Stephen Douglas, his opponent, was defeated largely because of his stance on slavery, but anti-Catholicism played a significant role in the campaign, and probably in the outcome. Douglas was accused of being a Catholic (he wasn't, but his wife and children were), which at that time was analogous to later accusations of being a Communist. The Chicago Tribune ran an editorial on July 17, 1860, that said in part, "as Catholicism and Republicanism are as plainly incompatible as oil and water, it is the right of the American people to refuse to entrust [Douglas] with the power whereby Protestantism and Freedom may be beaten down, and Popery and Slavery built up."

The Republicans won the election of 1860 and, as the Civil War progressed, came to see themselves as the party of abolition and general righteousness. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was a Republican song. But what does a party do when it has accomplished its main goals, in this case preservation of the union and abolition of slavery? It finds new goals. After the war the Republican Party turned to the task of industrializing the nation and became the party of business and private property. But it also remained the party of righteous reform. Having vanquished slavery, Republicans turned to the evils of alcohol. Prohibitionists, widely and enthusiastically led by Protestant churches throughout the nation, became the core of the Republican Party. There was much truth in the wry observation that the Episcopal Church was the Republican Party at prayer.

These twin Republican supports of business and prohibition clashed head on with the rising tide of immigrants, overwhelmingly Catholics from Ireland, Germany and Italy. The immigrants were the laborers who filled the mines and factories, struggled for living wages and safe working conditions, and drowned their sorrows in prodigious amounts of whiskey, beer and wine. Efforts to deny them good wages and cheap booze did not endear Republicans to the growing Catholic community.

To their credit, many Republican leaders saw the need to help immigrants become loyal, productive American citizens, and they worked to establish universal, free public schools. Unfortunately, on the local level and over the strenuous objections of such clear-sighted Republicans as Horace Mann, this usually meant blatant efforts to convert immigrant children to Protestantism. Intransigence on this issue triggered the development of a separate Catholic school system and further alienated Catholics from the dominant Republican Party.

By the 1880's it became clear to Republican leaders that they could not win national elections without at least some Catholic support. In 1884 James Blaine, the Republican candidate, made a concerted effort to win over Irish Catholics. He insisted on removing all anti-Catholic references from the party platform and

even had a priest speak at the convention. His efforts came to naught, however, when an enthusiastic supporter, the prominent minister Samuel Burchard, publicly derided Democrats as the party of “rum, Romanism and rebellion.” Republicans never garnered a majority of Catholic votes until President Nixon made his concerted effort in 1972.

Even after that initial breakthrough and further successes in the 1980’s, there has somehow never been a blending of spirits; suspicions linger. Despite many common interests, Catholics rarely reach the inner circles of the Republican Party. Republican leaders still make occasional gaffes like George W. Bush’s speech at Bob Jones University and the initial rejection of a priest to be the first-ever Catholic chaplain of the House of Representatives. And why, Catholics might wonder, did Mr. Bush choose Dick Cheney of Wyoming (a state with only three Electoral College votes) as his vice-presidential running mate over Tom Ridge, the popular Catholic governor of Pennsylvania (23 electoral votes)?

The Democratic Party has its own long and tumultuous history. Democrats trace their roots to the election of 1800, when the Jeffersonians, also known as the Democratic-Republicans, beat the Federalists in the nation’s first truly competitive presidential election. Andrew Jackson, a populist elected in 1828, appointed the first Catholic to a major office, when Roger Taney became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The real relationship between Democrats and Catholics began after the Civil War. As immigrants and outsiders—the target of Republican reform efforts—Catholics had no political choice but to join the other outsiders, Southern whites, Jewish immigrants and laborers, in the Democratic Party. Will Rogers’s later comment, “I don’t belong to an organized political party; I’m a Democrat,” was a shrewd observation.

This looseness left room for the building of political machines among city immigrants, a skill at which the Irish proved particularly adept. This became a basis for Catholic political power, where the extent of morality seemed to lie in the distinction between honest and dishonest graft. In 1928 Democrats nominated the Catholic Al Smith for president, who lost when many Southern Protestants couldn’t stomach voting for a Catholic and either stayed home or voted for the Republican Herbert Hoover. In retrospect, Catholics can count their blessings; Smith would have been blamed for the Depression. Later, Roosevelt’s New Deal solidified the Catholic base in the Democratic Party. The Second World War reinforced Catholics’ confidence and sense of belonging in America, and of course John F. Kennedy’s election in 1960 seemed to assure that Catholics would be forever Democrats. It wasn’t to be.

In the 1970’s the Democratic Party in large measure abandoned Catholic voters. Anti-war protests alienated labor; pro-choice court victories alienated more traditional Catholics; and of course the civil rights movement played havoc with many urban Catholic neighborhoods. But Catholics were also abandoning Democratic ideals. The Democrats remained the party of labor and of the new outsiders, African-Americans and feminists. As many Catholics climbed the socioeconomic ladder, tax cuts became more attractive than minimum wage hikes, and property values more important than union membership. Catholics became more culturally conservative. A majority voted Republican in 1972, 1980, 1984 and 1988. But as noted above, somehow there was never the spark to unite kindred spirits. In 1992 and 1996 a majority of Catholics voted Democratic. Even so, as the 2000 election shows, it has been a fragile and uncertain homecoming. Democrats dared not nominate a pro-life Catholic as a vice-presidential candidate for fear of alienating their feminist constituents, nor could they nominate a pro-choice Catholic for fear of conflict with Catholic bishops.

In a sense Catholic voters are now a looming presence on the fringe of both parties. But ironically, if the last 24 years of presidential elections teach us anything, it is that Catholic voters will provide a winning margin for the next president.

<http://www.americamagazine.org/articles/weber-catholic-vote.htm>