

The Bush Presidency: an evaluation of the first six years in the light of biblical principles

Wayne Grudem, ETS meeting, Nov 15, 2006

[also given Memorial Day weekend, May 27, 2007, at Christian Essentials Class, Scottsdale Bible Church]

[This is a summary outline of notes I used for my presentation. This is not written up as a formal paper and I do not currently have plans to write it up that way.]

Intro

1. The proper application of biblical principles to civil government is an a topic where evangelical Christians have room to differ, and have differed in the past
 - unlike inerrancy of Bible, deity of Christ, justification by faith alone, etc.
 - where I think there is only one acceptable evangelical option
[more like diffs – baptism, spiritual gifts, Bible translations, church government]
2. So this is not “the evangelical position” on this topic, or “the ETS position” on this topic
 - it is my position – and I will seek to show it’s consistent w/ biblical principles
[You may wish that you could be up here giving your evaluation of Pres. Bush.
→ then you should have turned in a paper proposal to do that last March, like I did!]
3. The Bible does talk about civil government – so it is right for us to try to understand what it says, and apply it wisely today
4. Evaluation of a presidency is complex:
So I will not focus on one or two issues, but try to mention a wide array of issues, and then tell my evaluation and give reasons for it in each case.
5. Tell you at outset: my evaluation is going to be fundamentally positive one. I have some disagreements w/Pres. Bush on some specific things (later), but the overall will be much more positive than negative.

A. Protection of life

1. Abortion: Nov. 5, 2003, Pres. Bush signed the partial birth abortion ban law that President Clinton vetoed twice (1996 and 1997), and he has given support to other pro-life legislation. Most significantly, he has appointed to Sup. Court and to other federal courts judges whose judicial philosophy seems inclined to allowing the people of the US, through their elected representatives, decide what laws we will have regarding abortion – rather than justices and judges who will continue to impose their will on the nation re: abortion

I think Pres Bush’s pro-life stance is consistent w/ biblical principles because:

The Bible views the unborn child as a human person who should be protected, since David said to God, “You knitted me together in my mother's womb” (Psalm 139:13; see also Psalm 51:5; 139:13; Luke 1:44), and strong penalties were imposed for endangering or harming the life of an unborn child (Exod. 21:22-23). I think it is right for the government to give protection to the lives of unborn children. If the purpose of civil govt. is “to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good” (1 Pet. 2:13), then I do not think it is right for unelected judges to dictate to the nation that, no matter how many laws the people pass, they are going to force the government to go on allowing people to choose to murder their unborn children if they wish.

2. Embryonic stem cell research:

Pres. Bush has supported restricting federal funding for embryonic stem cell research, and has taken immense criticism for it. (The only issue here is the extent to which US govt. funding should be used, since there is no law outlawing embryonic stem cell research.)

I believe Pres. Bush's stance on this issue is consistent w/ biblical principles because:

Creating more human embryos for their stem cells is making the beginnings of little babies for the purpose of harvesting their parts, and this seems to me to be contrary to the command, “You shall not murder” (Exod. 20:13). (Also the vss. above on abortion: since David said to God, “You knitted me together in my mother's womb” (Psalm 139:13; see also Psalm 51:5; 139:13; Luke 1:44), and strong penalties were imposed for endangering or harming the life of an unborn child (Exod. 21:22-23).

There is significant promise from other kinds of stem cell research that does not destroy the life of the person whose cells are used (adult stem cells). Nobody opposes that (to my knowledge).

3. Euthanasia & physician-assisted suicide

With Pres. Bush's support, Attorney Gen John Ashcroft – filed lawsuit to attempt to invalidate Oregon's physician-assisted suicide law.

Again, because of the command “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20:13), I think this position is consistent w/ biblical principles and I think we should oppose laws that would permit euthanasia.

Objection: not “consistently pro-life” b/c believes there are just wars, and that cap. punishment is right in some cases. (will deal with this below)

4. AIDS: Pres. Bush has initiated huge increases in aid to overcome AIDS in Africa [\$15 billion], along with promotion of abstinence-based programs, for which he has again taken immense criticism. Has supported Fed. govt. funding of over \$18 B / year to help Americans living w/ AIDS.

I agree w/ this b/c it seems to me consistent w/ biblical command “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39).

B. Human dignity

5. Racial justice and reconciliation: Pres. Bush has appointed prominent African-American citizens (Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell – Sec State, Rod Paige – sec. Ed.) and Hispanic citizens (Alberto Gonzales – Atty. General, Carlos Gutierrez, Sec. Commerce) to high government posts.

Has also continually promoted significant education reform (including expanding opportunities for school choice), which would do more than perhaps anything to overcome persistent Black poverty. (unfortunately, the Democrats and the public school lobby have fought this tooth and nail).

I think this is consistent w/ biblical principles b/c Gen. 1:27 (and several other passages: Gen 9:6; James 3:9) implies that all human beings – in “image of God,” deserve equal honor and dignity and respect. Eph. 2-3 teach that the glory of God is seen when racial differences are broken down in the church – this is pleasing to God.

6. Immigration:

Pres. Bush proposed and supported a comprehensive immigration program that included securing the border, some kind of path to citizenship for those who have broken no other laws and have been here working for some time, and also a documented guest worker program.

These were good ideas, to my mind, in line with biblical injunctions to care for the “alien and sojourner,”

^{ESV} Deuteronomy 10:18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹ Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

ESV Exodus 23:9 "You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

but also including measures to punish those who come to this country to do wrong

-- but the Congress would not do much about it. [Here I express my significant disagreement w/ Republican Congress and w/ several conservative talk show hosts who insist on only part of the truth (“enforce the law!”) to neglect of rest of the truth (“love the sojourner”) (“love your neighbor as yourself”) and the truth that vast majority of illegal aliens in US now bring great econ. benefit to the country.]

7. Faith based programs:

By executive order Pres. Bush has ended much discrimination against faith-based social services that actually work in changing lives through the power of Christ, and he had other excellent ideas, but couldn't get Congress to go along,

Christians differ on this: most (not all) think, if these programs really work (overcoming alcoholism, drug abuse, poverty, crime – and they do) then government should support them w/o discrimination based on religious views or components.

Consistent with 1 Pet. 2:14: “to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.”

My argument here is that this does “good” for everybody: person helped, faith-based agency, government, society: if voluntary and if open to any religious or non-religious group, then it does not seem to me to be a wrongful or harmful government promoting of one religion over another.

SKIP:

8. Religious persecution/ freedom of religion in other countries

Pres. Bush has applied some pressure to increase religions freedom in other countries

did much good by publicly visiting a “house church” in China – not approved by the govt also – has applied signif diplomatic pressure to try to stop persecution in Sudan (#need info
ESV **Romans 13:3** For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

ESV **1 Peter 2:13** Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

This seems is consistent w/ biblical principles concerning government.

C. Marriage and the family

9. Same-sex marriage

Pres. Bush has supported a Constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman. Mass. Sup. Court and now NJ Supreme Court have shown that state courts will take diff. positions on this question. I think this shows that – merit in idea of - nationwide const. amendment. (otherwise: courts will decide):

Pres. Bush is consistent w/ biblical principles here:

Gen 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

1 Corinthians 7:2 But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

These imply that marriage should only be between one man and one woman
children should have both a mother and a father for normal, healthy development
and - without a man and a woman being married, there would be no children, human race would die out – homosexual marriages bear no children for the next generation

Bible says homosexual conduct is wrong. It is contrary to God's moral standards.

“Romans 1:26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

Now as Christians we should love people who are gay as well as all other people. We should never act with cruelty or unkindness or mockery toward homosexuals, but with kindness, friendship, and love. We should extend to those who are gay the same offer of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ that we offer to every human being on earth. In fact, Paul noted the fact that there were former homosexuals in the church at Corinth, for after talking about various sins including homosexuality, he said, “and such were some of you” (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

But now someone might say, “What does it hurt anybody else if two people - even two homosexual people – want to live together? Why should the government be involved with this at all? What does government have to do with marriage?

“1 Peter 2:14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

1. God established marriage at the beginning of creation. Therefore marriage is not just for Christians, but for all people. (It is a “creation ordinance” that applies to every culture, every society, all history.)

2. Therefore the civil government regulates marriage. It tells society certain rules about marriage. You can’t just marry anybody you want to marry.

- can’t marry your sister
- can’t marry your son or daughter
- can’t marry a 12 year old
- can’t marry somebody who is already married

Our nation, through our elected representatives, has decided that government should make laws defining and regulating marriage, for the good of society as a whole.

this is not “imposing religion” on anybody. It’s not telling people what church they have to go to, or supporting or outlawing any church.

Marriage is a civil institution, and it’s right that we bring biblical moral principles to bear on it – at least in our own thinking, and then, as it seems appropriate, in our speaking to others about it as well.

→ My conclusion: these laws regulating marriage are good and right.

They use the power of government to restrain evil and to reward good (they encourage marriage between a man and a woman, and give certain legal benefits to protect, preserve, and encourage that.)

Should government approve homosexual marriages? I think definitely not.

Government should not give its approval and blessing to an arrangement that God's Word says is morally wrong, and that is destructive to healthy families and destructive to society.

If homosexual marriage is forced on us by the courts, we do not now sufficiently appreciate the destructive impact it would have in the lives of our children and grandchildren.

and on our freedom to preach from the Bible

Canada: illegal to say publicly homosexual conduct is morally wrong

FOTF

10. Pornography

Under Pres Bush the Dept of Justice vastly increased no. of pornography prosecutions

need stats

and successfully supported policies that made it much more difficult for children to gain public library access to internet pornography

This is consistent w/ biblical principles on government promoting good and punishing what is evil (1 Pet. 2:13-14). Also:

^{ESV} Exodus 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife,

^{ESV} Matthew 5:28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

11. Removing "marriage penalty" in tax code: Pres. Bush supported and Congress passed a removal of the "marriage penalty" in the tax code, so that a man and woman would not have to pay more taxes by getting married than they would pay if stayed single.

I think this is consistent w/ biblical principles because Bible supports marriage as – good thing, as the foundational social unit in any society. As expl. earlier, I think marriage is a "creation ordinance" given by God to the human race.

^{ESV} Matthew 19:4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'?⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

12. Education: Pres. Bush has supported and promoted school choice, and vouchers for parents to be able to choose which school their children will attend,

also: increasing accountability in failing public schools: No Child Left Behind act

This is helping to meet the most significant of all needs to overcome poverty, bec. children who don't learn to read and have substandard education will likely be trapped in low-paying jobs the rest of their lives

These policies seem consistent w/ biblical principles because:

(1) in the Bible God gave human beings work to do (from Gen 2 onward) and encouraged people to work to support themselves and their families (1Thess 4:11-12; 2 Thess 3:10-11; 1 Tim. 5:8) even 2 Thess. 3:10 “if anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat” –

(2) also Bible entrusts parents, not govt., w/ primary responsibility for training their children

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

Deuteronomy 6:6-7:

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

13. Freedom of religious expression in schools

Feb 7, 2003 – Pres. Bush's Sec. of Education, Rod Paige, issued detailed, clear guidelines requiring that elementary and secondary schools to certify each year that they are not hindering or showing hostility to private speech endorsing religious viewpoints, such as student clubs meeting at lunch time for prayer and Bible study, “see you at the pole” activities before the school day, and religious expression in student assignments.

This was a significant step protecting freedom of religion and freedom of speech in schools, and I certainly think it is consistent w/ biblical principles.

^{ESV} 1 Peter 2:14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

^{ESV} Romans 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,

Incidentally, in ID controversy: said he thinks children in schools should be given opp. to hear both views of the origin of the human race. I agree.

D. The courts

14. Supreme Court justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito

Pres. Bush – appointed two outstanding Sup. Ct. justices Roberts and Alito.

Both follow an judicial philosophy of sticking closely to the “original intent” of the Constitution and just interpreting law and not making it. I think this is one of the most significant legacies of Pres. Bush's presidency, and I hope he will still get opportunity to appoint more Sup. Court justices in the remaining two years.

This is extremely significant, bec. in recent decades, a small majority of our current Supreme Court, and lower courts that follow their example, have gone beyond their Constitutionally-defined task of interpreting laws passed by Congress and state legislatures, and have in effect created new “laws” that have never been passed by any elected body. By this process they have imposed on us decrees that allow abortionists to murder unborn babies (contrary to Exodus 20:13 and Romans 13:9, “you shall not murder”), that protect pornographers who poison the minds of children and adults (contrary to Exodus 20:17, “You shall not covet ... your neighbor’s wife; see also Matt. 5:28), that redefine marriage to include homosexual couples (thus giving governmental encouragement to actions that Romans 1:26-28 says are morally wrong), and that banish prayer, God’s name and God’s laws from public places (thus prohibiting free exercise of religion, and violating Romans 13:3 which says that government should be “not a terror to good conduct, but to bad”). In taking to itself the right to decree such policies, the Supreme Court has seriously distorted the system of “checks and balances” intended by the Constitution between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.

It is unlikely that any elected body such as a city council, state legislature, or the U.S. Congress, would have decreed policies like those mentioned above, for such groups are accountable to the will of the people. Not so the Supreme Court, which is appointed for life. And democratically-elected members of Congress and state legislatures are helpless to change those Court-mandated policies unless the makeup of the Supreme Court is changed.

It seems to me that Pres. Bush’s appointments are crucial to any goal of enabling government to function in a way more consistent with biblical principles

15. Appointing about 250 District Court and Circuit Court judges

who are committed to just interpreting laws, not making new laws from the bench, -- lifetime appointments, ¼ of fed. judiciary

For the same reasons, I think it is good that Pres. Bush has followed a consistent practice of appointing judges who will follow the original intent of the Constitution and just interpret law and not make it.

E. The political process

16. McCain –Feingold bill:

Pres Bush signed the McCain –Feingold bill that hinders campaign contributions and I think wrongly restricts freedom of speech. Many commentators at the time thought the Supreme Court would strike it down, so egregious did its restrictions on campaign advertising seem. But the Sup Ct upheld it, and I disagree w/ Pres. Bush’s decision to sign it.

It restricts freedom of speech, one of our most basic freedoms. I could defend this at length if – more time. I think such freedom is a God-given right in imitation of his own attribute of freedom and in exercise of our ability to make thoughtful, willing choices – supported by hundreds of appeals to our will throughout the Bible. (I won’t here take time to support the concept of freedom of speech and freedom to influence the choice of our leaders, but I think that can be argued from biblical principles concerning the nature of good government and the tendency to abuse power by those who have little accountability.

I disagree w/ President Bush here, but I also don't know what the alternatives were at that time, and perhaps McCain would have made any other legislation impossible for years).

F. Defense against terrorism

17. Defense against terrorists w/in the US

Pres. Bush supported and won passage and renewal of - Patriot Act – which gave significant new abilities to law enforcement agencies to share information and to defend against terrorism including wiretapping of terrorist phone calls coming from outside US (I think wrongfully exposed by leaks to press),
& secret tracking of terrorist financial dealings (secret until shamefully exposed by NYT)

one phenomenal statistic: → we have gone more than 5 yrs. w/ no successful terrorist attacks w/in US w/ thousands of terrorists worldwide committed to bringing terrorism to our shores, this is an astounding achievement -I agree w/ this aggressive policy and applaud its success.

Surely defending our country is one of the most basic responsibilities of government and is consistent w/ biblical principles (esp. Rom 13:1-7, 1 Pet 2:13-14)

18. War against terrorists in other countries:

Shortly after the tragedy of 9/11, Pres. Bush determined that the proper response was not to apologize for making terrorists unhappy, not to blame the US for not doing more to listen to terrorist grievances, not to convene a terrorist focus group to ask where we had offended them, not to seek to negotiate w/ terrorists, but to fight them with all the might and power of the US government.

Pres. Bush decided that that the attacks of 9/11, and similar previous attacks on World Trade Center, on USS Cole and on US embassies abroad, were actually acts of war.

Resulted in several new directions in US foreign policy:

(1) Abandonment of language of moral relativism. The perpetrators were not good people to be reasoned with, but were in fact deeply evil. The President's perspective was not moral relativism but that we were in a gigantic a conflict betw. good and evil, betw. freedom and tyranny, between life and death.

I think Pres. Bush saw - deepest cause of this terrorist threat was a powerful minority group among the world's Muslims, a group committed to advancing Islam by violence and conquest. Their goal was ultimately to impose Taliban-like Islamic rule on every nation of the world, and their weapon of choice was the unspeakably evil tactic of intentionally targeting the lives of innocent civilians in countries that resist their will. Their most significant targets are Israel and the USA, and these terrorists will not rest until both Israel and the US have capitulated to complete Islamic rule or have been destroyed as nations.

I believe that a biblical world view (including the existence of evil in the world) gave Pres. Bush the basis for seeing this as a conflict between good and evil. And I suspect that it is Pres. Bush's sense of

moral clarity in this area (that cannot be comprehended by the moral relativists who so dominate European politics and public opinion) that accounts for much of Europe's "dislike" of Pres. Bush. (Plus the fact that the French were on Saddam Hussein's secret payroll, earning millions, and Kofi Annan's helpers at the UN were secretly pocketing millions of \$\$ from the "oil for food" program, so they muddled attempts at European or UN help w/ Iraq).

(2) Decision to treat the problem not as one of law enforcement and prevention but as one of war.

The terrorists we now face pose a unique challenge, because terrorists who will sacrifice their own lives in killing others cannot be deterred by the usual threat of punishing a criminal after he commits a crime. (already dead)

So this is no longer a law enforcement issue and a negotiation issue, but a war issue (attack and destroy the enemy before they destroy you)

-- I think it is a war issue, and can only be won by treating it as a war

But how do you fight a war against an invisible enemy scattered throughout many nations?

(3) Declaring that we would treat nations that harbored or supported terrorists as if they were terrorists as well.

(4) Actively promoting democratic governments esp. in Middle East

bec. democracies in general do not promote terrorism – so this is a long-term solution, an attempt to change the direction of the history of the world

I agree w/ this approach bec., the fundamental responsibility of government is to "punish those who do evil" (1 Pet. 2:14) and thus to protect its citizens and thus to protect its citizens. Rom 13:3-4 (add here).

Romans 13:⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

W/ terrorists in many countries of the world, this is the only governmental approach I know of that can work.

(5) But is it working? or is it failing?

Pakistan has now cooperated w/us in capture or killing of dozens of Al-Qaida leaders

Saudi Arabia has as well.

Lebanon has a functioning government and is an ally, and w/help of Israel has driven Hezbollah out of its southern territory so that it is no longer launching missiles into Israel every day

Arafat is gone from Palestinians (marginalized by Bush, then died), there is a separate Palestinian territory causing much less problem for Israel

The US no longer routinely criticizes Israel for when it defends itself but rather gives support for it's opposition to terrorism on its borders and within its borders.

People of Egypt have had a small taste of democracy and the pressure for it will continue to grow

Afghanistan – now an ally: Taliban no longer in power. It's a functioning democracy – still somewhat unstable but a functioning democracy.

Iraq – now an ally – Saddam Hussein no longer in power, no longer harboring or training terrorists, no longer paying \$25,000 to the family of every Palestinian suicide bomber, no longer operating plants to manufacture anthrax, botulism, nerve gas (which he used against Kurds), no longer developing longer range missiles, no longer seeking nuclear weapons, but sentenced to be hung after an open, public trial.

And Iraq is a functioning democracy. Over 60 % of population voted to approve constitution and over 70% voted in elections – higher participation than in US, and we don't risk our lives by voting.

I do know it's easy to criticize, to second guess. But we are there not against the will of the democratically elected government (as are hundreds of terrorists from Iran, Syria) but at the request of and with strong support of Iraqi government.

So there has been much change in the Middle East – uneven, bumpy, but remarkable change. The roots of democracy have taken hold, and several countries are no longer terrorist havens but allies.

(6) Objection: Pres. Bush is not “consistently pro-life” b/c believes in use of military power to defend our nation.

Resp: this – another way of saying he is not a pacifist and does not adopt Protestant pacifist position

A common mistake in reasoning from Bible is to take one principle (value of life) and refuse to allow other biblical teachings to modify or restrict it (such as role of civil govt to bear sword, restrain evil by use of superior force)

I think Pres Bush is biblically pro-life, in a consistent way.

Or is it contrary to

“Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder?”

→ not talking about killing in war, but personal murder, which is the meaning of the Hebrew word ratsach (see ESV margin for more precise definition)

Matthew 5:39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

→ this prohibits personal revenge, is not a rule for government

Romans 13:4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

Therefore it is right for government to use force to oppose violent evil.

– there is evil in the world that will not be restrained by reason, by foreign aid, by negotiations, by diplomacy

– there is evil in this world, esp. directed against the US today, that can only be restrained by superior force

(7) There is one other force that I hope will be a significant factor in overcoming Islamic terrorism. It does not work by the power of the sword or by force of governments and armies.

It is the supernatural, life-changing power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

G. Economic questions

19. Tax cuts of 2001 and 2003: Pres. Bush won reduction of marginal income tax rates across the board, and sharply cut taxes on dividends Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (June 7 2001), also in 2003.

Result: very positive for economy and actually for increased tax revenues from government (bec. as economy grew, people and businesses made more money, and paid more taxes even at reduced tax rates).

The economy has weathered both 9/11 and the 2001 recession and is now booming, the Dow Jones average is at its highest point in history, and we produce three times more goods and services than any economy in the world (we now produce about 33% of the world's goods and services, and no other nation comes close). Our economy is now growing faster than any other major industrialized nation (acc. to stat's received this week from Dept of Commerce).

I think this is very good, also consistent w/ biblical principles. But why?

Bec. I think that economic productivity is a good thing in itself (everything else being equal). It's a measure of our response to God's command to "subdue" the earth and "have dominion" over it – making the resources of the earth useful for human beings, in thankfulness to God (Gen. 1:28).

^{ESV} **Exodus 20:15** "You shall not steal. (explain: assumes that people own private property)

Also, a growing economy is the most significant thing that can be done to help the poor, in the long run:

^{ESV} **Galatians 2:10** Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

^{ESV} **Matthew 25:37** Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?'³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?'³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

And economic growth in a nation is the one thing more than anything else that helps the poor – provides jobs, provides higher real wages, provides lower prices on everything – and the nation as a whole benefits.

19a. Creation of jobs. The unemployment rate today is only 4.4%, the lowest in years), something again that especially helps the poor, -- but also helps young adults seeking to establish a career (my three adult sons) -- result of economic policies that have given a strong economy so that people who want jobs can find them

I think that Pres. Bush's tax cuts and pro-growth econ policies deserve much credit for this, and think these policies are consistent w/ biblical principles and produce results consistent w/ biblical principles

20. Social Security – he told the truth – that it will go broke, and had plans to rescue it, but the timid Congress didn't have the courage to touch it, and the Democratic party is adamantly opposed to giving an option of private savings accounts, even for a tiny percent of Soc. Security. [There is a fundamental difference here over whether individuals or the government can best be trusted to provide for people's retirement.]

I agree w/ telling the truth and seeking a solution. Rom 13:7-8 again

21. Estate tax: Pres Bush sought to repeal the wrongful “death tax” on personal estates (but the Democrats blocked it in the Senate, because of the foolish rule needing 60 votes to pass anything, never intended by our Constitution),

The Bible gives no indication that property by default “belongs” to the government or to society. It belongs to individuals (ultimately as stewards to whom all that we have has been entrusted by God). So government does not have any inherent “right” to take someone's property just because he dies. The property is his, not the government's.

But the repeal failed. The attempt to get a cloture vote in the Senate only got 57 votes last Aug, and it needed 60, again b/c of the foolish Senate rule that effectively requires 60 votes to pass anything important.

Repeal of the estate tax seems to me consistent w/ biblical principles about ownership of property. Also note:

^{ESV} **Proverbs 13:22** A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous.

22. Government spending:

I do not think that Rom. 13:7-8 “owe no one anything” prohibits all debt. But it does seem to encourage fiscal responsibility, at least for individuals.

And for government: I think – good idea so spend beneath budget, allow for difficult years (war)

So I differ w/ Pres. Bush here. I wish he had played more political hardball with Congress over greatly increased, wasteful spending (but I don't know what the trade-offs were regarding votes for crucial issues of national defense and protection of the country from terrorism, and I know he sought a line-item veto to reign in spending and Congress would not grant it).

I esp. question wisdom of Medicare Prescription Drug plan, with huge increase in projected govt. obligations in future

H. The environment

23. “Global warming” concerns and Kyoto Protocol:

It seems to me that Pres Bush has supported wise use of the environment, resisting the immense pressure to bring us onboard with the foolish Kyoto Protocol that is now harming European economies and helping nothing, and wisely supporting more domestic production of energy (especially ANWR in Alaska), (see Interfaith Stewardship Alliance web site for more info, and go to Cal Beisner's paper this afternoon on global warming):

The Bible encourages wise use of the environment.

^{ESV} **Genesis 1:28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.

^{ESV} **Genesis 2:15** The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

I. Communication skills

24. Effectiveness as a communicator:

Pres. Bush has had mixed results in this regard. Sometimes he is brilliant. His speech to Congress after 9/11 was one of the greatest speeches I have ever heard. But his second inaugural address was long and dragged and lacked punch.

He is not the born communicator that Pres. Reagan was.

^{ESV} **Proverbs 16:23** The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips.

25. Approval rating

Hovering around 40%. Why?

I think main reason is the relentless hostility of the mainstream media. It is to me astounding how biased and negative the press is to almost anything Pres. Bush does.

Also, he started w/ 48% of country disagreeing with him. And then there has been a long war with very little news of progress being given widely to the American people.

With a more sympathetic media I suspect his approval rating would be around 60%. – that's my opinion any way.

^{ESV} **Luke 6:26** "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

^{ESV} **Romans 12:18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

J. Matters of personal character and integrity and faith

26. Telling the truth vs. lying

In spite of many partisan accusations, I do not think Pres. Bush has lied to the American people. He is a man of his word, and he keeps his word. [short talk about Rumsfeld resignation and what he actually said earlier was not quoted exactly but was AP reporter's summary and interpretation]

^{ESV} **Exodus 20:16** "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

^{ESV} **Colossians 3:9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

^{ESV} **Ephesians 4:25** Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

27. Freedom from bribery, scandal

^{ESV} **Exodus 23:8** And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.

28. Personal conduct that is "above reproach." I think Pres. Bush has continually exhibited personal conduct that is "above reproach," giving moral leadership to the nation by example of life and by kindness that amazes me toward those in politics and in the press who continue relentlessly to attack him,

^{ESV} **1 Timothy 3:2** Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

29. Evidence of personal faith: Pres. Bush clearly identifies himself as an evangelical Christian. He reads the Bible and believes it.

^{ESV} **Psalms 111:10** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.

K. Conclusion

My overall assessment: I am so very thankful for an outstanding, I think excellent President.

What more could we ask from a President, the man who has the most difficult job in the whole world?

He has done right. And he is changing world history in a right direction, a direction that will give more freedom for every one to determine their own governments and their own religion, and (of significance to me as a Christian), more freedom for the proclamation of the gospel around the world, so that people would have a fair chance to hear and consider (but never ever be compelled to accept) that good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And he has brought 100's of changes that have done much good for our nation and for the world.