

A BIBLICAL VIEW ON  
**AMERICAN  
REALIGNMENT**



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# AMERICAN REALIGNMENT



We are witnessing some dramatic changes in this country. Some are political changes, some are economic changes, and some are geographic changes. If you are building a business, planting a church, or just trying to understand some of these fundamental changes, you need to pay attention to these changes in America.

First, we need to understand the times in which we are living. 1 Chronicles 12:32 says that the sons of Issachar were “men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do.” Likewise, we need to understand our time with knowledge of what we as Christians should do.

Second, we should also plan for the future. Isaiah 32:8 says that “the noble man devises noble plans, and by noble plans he stands.” You, your family, and your church should have plans for the future based upon some of the things we will be discussing.

Proverbs 16:9 says, “the mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.” So, we should not only plan for the future, but commit those plans to the Lord and be sensitive to His leading in our lives.

One place where we see a dramatic shift in both attitudes and behavior is marriage. America has been in the process of redefining marriage. Some of these redefinitions are taking place in the legislatures and courtrooms. But marriage is also being redefined through cohabitation.

Over the last few decades, the US Census Bureau has documented the increasing percentage of people who fit into the category of “adults living alone.” These are often lumped into a larger category of “non-family households.” Within this larger category are singles that are living alone, as well as a growing number of unmarried, cohabiting couples that are “living together.” According to the US Census Bureau, there are more than 17 million Americans living with another partner.

## Geographic Realignment

Another realignment in America is geographic realignment. If you haven't noticed, people move around quite a bit. We aren't just talking about your neighbors who drove off the other day in a U-Haul truck. We are talking about the realignment of America.

We have all heard that the US population is flowing from the Snow Belt to the Sun Belt. But Michael Barone, in an article in *The Wall Street Journal*, explains that the trends are a bit more complex than that.<sup>1</sup>

Let's start with what he calls the "Coastal Megalopolises" (New York, Los Angeles, Miami, etc.). Here you find that Americans are moving out and immigrants are moving in with a low net population growth.

Contrast this with what he

called “the Interior Boomtowns.” Their population has grown, and this means that the nation’s center of gravity is shifting. Dallas is now larger than San Francisco. Houston is larger than Boston. Charlotte is now larger than Milwaukee.

Another section would be the old Rust Belt. The six metro areas (Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Buffalo, and Rochester) have lost population since 2000. And you also have “the Static Cities.” These eighteen metropolitan areas have little immigrant inflow and little domestic inflow or outflow.

Social scientists say: “Demography is destiny.” That is a simple way of saying that demographic changes alter our future. But you don’t have to be a social scientist to see the impact. We all know that people move around, and that changes the political landscape.

For example, there are seven states that will lose a representative in Congress (California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia). There are six states that will gain one or more representatives in Congress (Colorado, Florida, Montana, North Carolina, Oregon, and Texas-2).

## **Political Realignment**

This geographical realignment also shows some of the political realignment. But another factor is merely the differences in fertility. Does fertility affect voting patterns? Apparently, it does, much more than we realize. And this has been a topic of discussion for both liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans.

Arthur Brooks wrote about the "Fertility Gap" in a column in *The Wall Street Journal*.<sup>2</sup> He said, "Simply

put, liberals have a big baby problem: They're not having enough of them . . . and their pool of potential new voters is suffering as a result."

Brooks noted that "...if you picked 100 unrelated politically liberal adults at random, you would find that they had, between them, 147 children. If you picked 100 conservatives, you would find 208 kids." That is a "fertility gap" of forty-one percent.

We know that about eighty percent of people with an identifiable party preference grow up to vote essentially the same way as their parents. Brooks says that this "fertility gap" therefore "translates into lots more little Republicans than little Democrats to vote in future elections." He also points out that over the past thirty years this gap has not been below twenty percent, which he says explains to a large

extent the current ineffectiveness of liberal youth voter campaigns.

Brooks also points out that the fertility gap “doesn’t budge when we correct for factors like age, income, education, sex, race—or even religion.” Even if all these factors are identical between a liberal and a conservative, “the liberal will still be 19 percentage points more likely to be childless than the conservative.” This fertility gap is real and will no doubt affect politics for many years to come.

## **Economic Realignment**

In addition to political and geographical realignment in America, there is also economic realignment.

A survey by United Van Lines uncovered some interesting patterns of movement in America.<sup>3</sup> An average of twenty thousand Americans relocate across state lines

each day for a record eight million Americans each year. The general pattern is for people to move from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and West. But the details are even more interesting than the general trends.

The survey found that the most reliable indicator of movement was income tax. People tend to move from states with high income-tax rates to states with little or no income taxes. Families are leaving Michigan, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. Now consider the eight states that have no income tax, Florida, Nevada, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming.

For many years now, demographers have noted the flight of upper income, educated families from California. One of the major reasons

is the fact that California has the highest state income tax in the nation. Where are many of these people going? They are moving to neighboring Nevada, which has no income tax. "High income Californians can buy a house in Las Vegas for the amount they save in three or four years by not paying California income taxes."

An old adage says high taxes don't redistribute income; they redistribute people. People vote with their feet, and taxes are one of the reasons they leave one state for another state.

## **Income Realignment**

A final realignment is economic, especially regarding family income. If you turn on a television or open a newspaper, you are certain to hear or read someone say that the rich are getting richer, and the

poor are getting poorer. But would it surprise you to know that other governmental data says just the opposite?

The latest data from the US Census Bureau does seem to indicate that the rich are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer. But these numbers do not reflect the economic improvement of individuals and families.

Economist Thomas Sowell reported that data from the Internal Revenue Service showed something different.<sup>4</sup> They found that people in the bottom fifth have nearly doubled their income in the last ten years. It also found that the top one percent saw their incomes declined by twenty-six percent.

Why do these two sets of governmental statistics differ? That is due to the fact that the IRS tracks

people over time. People don't always stay in the same income brackets throughout their lives. Millions of people move from one bracket to another.

The IRS tracks people each year and thus reflects real changes to real people while the Census Bureau merely creates the illusion of tracking people. The best way to follow people is to actually follow people. That's what the IRS statistics do, and so they are more accurate.

What about the claims that family income has stagnated? First, we need to make a distinction between household income and per capita income. Household or family income can remain essentially unchanged for a decade while per capita income is increasing.

The reason is simple: the number of people per household and

per family is declining. If annual household income is \$60,000, the per capita income for a family of six would be \$10,000 but for a family of three would be \$20,000.

The difference in the number of people also affects economic statistics for different ethnic groups. Hispanics have higher household incomes than African Americans. But African Americans have higher individual incomes than Hispanics. The reason for the difference is family size.

Second, we should also take another look at the statistics that say income has stagnated. If we go back to the IRS numbers, we find that the average taxpayer's real income was increasing. But over the last year or so, all of these statistics have been affected by the pandemic and lockdowns.

The point to all of this is that economic statistics can sometimes be misleading. They may be true, but they lead to misleading conclusions. We are dedicated at *Point of View* to tell the truth and clear up so many of these economic misconceptions.

We are seeing some dramatic shifts in the social, political, economic, and geographic nature of this country. A wise and discerning Christian will pay attention to this realignment and make wise plans for the future. As we said earlier, Isaiah 32:8 says that “the noble man devises noble plans, and by noble plans he stands.” As Christians we need to plan wisely for the future.

## **Additional Resources**

Kerby Anderson, *Christians and Economics*, Cambridge, OH: Christian House Publishing, 2016

Kerby Anderson, *Technology and Social Trends*, Cambridge, OH: Christian House Publishing, 2016

George Barna, *Futurecast: What Today's Trends Mean for Tomorrow's World*, Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2012.

Michael Barone, "The Realignment of America," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 May 2007.

## **End Notes**

<sup>1</sup>Michael Barone, "The Realignment of America," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 May 2007.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur C. Brooks, "The Fertility Gap," *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 August 2006.

<sup>3</sup>"States of Opportunity," *The Wall Street Journal*, 12 February 2008.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Sowell, "Income Confusion," 21 November 2007, Townhall.com.







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