NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Another bishop electioneering

Maureen Fiedler | Nov. 6, 2012 NCR Today

The bishop of Green Bay, Wis., David Ricken, had joined a chorus of Catholic bishops (and others) trying to tell Catholics how to vote. Ricken's most recent pastoral letter [1] warned the faithful of his diocese that some voter choices could "put your own soul in jeopardy."

After listing the issues of abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, human cloning and homosexual marriage as "intrinsically evil," he goes on to say:

> Some candidates and one party have even chosen some of these as their party's or their personal political platform. To vote for someone in favor of these positions means that you could be morally "complicit" with these choices which are intrinsically evil. This could put your own soul in jeopardy.

Guess which party and/or candidate he's talking about? Although the letter does not mention any candidates' names (thus keeping IRS scrutiny at bay), it's plain that Ricken is campaigning for the Republicans.

And Catholics don't have a corner on this type of behavior. On Sunday, in a number of major daily newspapers such as the *Washington Post*, the evangelical equivalent of a bishop, Billy Graham, was up to the same thing. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association ran full-page ads [2] with Graham's picture encouraging people to "Vote biblical values." Funny thing: Again, it's abortion and traditional marriage that are cited as biblical values, along with support for the nation of Israel in this case. Graham didn't threaten anyone's soul, but he did suggest that the United States would not remain "one nation under God" with the wrong vote.

I keep wondering: Since when are those five issues listed by Ricken "intrinsically evil" in all circumstances and "not negotiable"? And since when are those issues the ultimate basis for "biblical values"? Whatever happened to the biblical values of economic justice, concern for the poor and vulnerable, care of planet earth and peace in the world?

We need to call this what it is: Nothing more than pro-Republican electioneering. These gentlemen certainly have a right to their own opinion and their own vote, but to suggest that their choice is the only "godly" choice -- or Jesus' choice, or the only possible "biblical" choice -- is absolutely unconscionable.

Source URL (retrieved on *09/05/2015 - 01:38*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/another-bishop-electioneering

Links:
[1] http://www.gbdioc.org/images/stories/Front_Page/An-Important-Moment-Article-from-Bishop-Ricken-10-24-2012.pdf
[2] http://www.billygraham.org/vote-biblical-values/index.asp