

# Bush Labels Gore as 'Extreme' on Abortion Issues

by MARY CLAIRE KENDALL  
Register Correspondent

DULLES, Va. — In the wake of Super Tuesday victories, GOP candidate George W. Bush and Democratic candidate Al Gore began sparring with one another.

Just before Super Tuesday, *Register* correspondent Mary Claire Kendall spoke with Bush about the 2000 election.

**Mary Claire Kendall:** At the end of his life, Republican campaign strategist Lee Atwater converted to Catholicism and apologized to Michael Dukakis for the rough tactics he employed against Dukakis on behalf of your father in 1988. Will you seek this kind of healing after this primary season?

**George W. Bush:** I have nothing to apologize for. I stand by what I've campaigned on. I've campaigned in the way I believe is right. And that's why so many people are pouring out ... to support me.

**What will you do to reach out to Reagan Democrats, a large number of whom are Catholics?**

I think one of the reasons Ronald Reagan got the Catholic votes and Reagan Democrats was because he wanted to cut taxes. I want to cut taxes. The tax burden on the people is high. Secondly, the life issue matters. But, thirdly, the reason why many Democrats are going to vote for me in the general election — not Gore Democrats but Democrats in the general election — is because they know I'll bring honor and dignity to the office.

**What would you most like to say to the readers of the *Register*?**

I want their vote. And, when they vote for me, I'll be a person that leads our country in a way that is positive and hopeful — that I will bring out the best in America.

**Do you believe in the sanctity of human life from conception until natural death?**

Yes.



Texas Gov. George W. Bush

**Can you tell *Register* readers about a time in your life when your faith made a major difference in helping you to accept suffering or a disappointment or in overcoming an obstacle?**

Yes. I accepted Christ in 1986 and quit drinking shortly thereafter. I haven't had a drop of alcohol since 1986. That's 14 years. And I'm a better person for it. I would not be running for president had I not quit. I was not clinically an alcoholic, but alcohol was competing for my affections and my time.

**What would a President Bush do to encourage strong families and the values that support strong families?**

Well, first and foremost, remind people of the importance of family — honor my oaths.

Secondly, remind people on a regular basis that being a mother or dad is the most important thing we can do in society.

Thirdly, give people a tax cut so they've got more money in their own pockets to be able to dream and save for their families. Fourthly, you should have education savings accounts so that families can make more choices.

**Theodore Roosevelt said it's better for the government to help a poor man make a living for his family than to help a rich man make a profit for his company. How relevant is that statement to today's politics?**

I think it's very relevant. And I come from the school of thought that [says] by cutting the taxes it will help encourage economic growth. The taxes are the highest they've been since World War II on people and these people are working really hard and they're paying a lot of tax. And I come from the school of thought that says government ought to be limited in its scope, and that people ought to be allowed to put more money in their pocket the harder they work.

**Analysts say the three most important issues to Catholics are the life issue, school vouchers and reversing the moral decline of our country. What would your Administration do to work on these issues?**

Well, I'm a pro-life candidate. I've been a pro-life governor. I'm going to set the goal that all children born and unborn ought to be protected in law and welcomed to life. I will sign a ban on partial birth abortions. I will encourage adoptions. I understand the hope and promise of crisis pregnancy centers. In terms of [school choice], in my state of Texas, I supported vouchers particularly when it was tied to an accountability system. At the federal level, since I believe in local control of schools, the best policy will expand what I call education savings accounts from \$500 to \$5,000 per filer per year so parents can save tax-free for their children's education no matter where they want to send them.

**How can a president help improve the moral climate of the country?**

It's a matter of having a president who goes into office who brings honor and dignity to the White House and then works to lift the spirit of America — to call out the best. I believe we ought to have faith-based initiatives that encourage people of faith like the good Catholic charities and other groups to help people in need. The government ought not to fund churches but we ought to fund people who are trying to help or programs that can make a difference in people's lives.

**Al Gore and the Democrats have positioned themselves in favor of abortion on demand. Are they or are you and the Republicans more in tune with the voters?**

I'm pro-life and they are extreme. I would sign a ban on partial birth abortion and they would not. That shows the difference of opinion.