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Redeem the Vote 'Gold Bus Tour' Plans Stop in Central Florida

As the Florida presidential primary approaches, voters in the state are wondering: *Will my vote really make a difference, particularly when—as some pundits claim—it doesn't really count?*



According to Dr. Randy Brinson, chairman of the nonpartisan organization [Redeem the Vote](#), and Dr. Joel C. Hunter, senior pastor of [Northland Church](#) and author of the just-released book [A New Kind of Conservative](#) (Regal), the answer is a resounding yes.

Dr. Brinson will team up with Pastor Hunter when “The Redeem the Vote Gold Bus Tour” makes its stop in Central Florida early this Friday. The goal: to mobilize young people of faith to vote their values regardless of party affiliation, and, to encourage those who are not registered to vote to do so.

They will also encourage people of faith, especially the next generation, not to sit out Florida's primary.

Florida's legislature moved up the state's primary to Jan. 29. As a result, both parties have limited the state's convention delegates, the deciders in the nominating process. The Republican delegation was cut in half, and the Democratic delegation eliminated entirely. As a result, some have written off Florida's primary as meaningless.



That shouldn't discourage Floridians from voting their values, say Drs. Brinson and Hunter.

"It still is important, since people of faith have an opportunity to put their mark on the election in the fall," Dr. Brinson explains. "If we are felt in the primaries, then the issues that are of concern to us including traditional marriage, life issues, the environment, and health care will come to the forefront of the candidates."

Pastor Hunter agrees, adding, "Historically, primaries have had their victors determined by new, emerging voters who have been discounted by some (college students, etc.). In the same way, some are discounting Florida's vote. But this primary *does* matter, and the results will resonate nationwide."

The Redeem the Vote Gold Bus has been touring the country, showing up at rallies for Democratic and Republican candidates, visiting churches and holding independent events to show people how to participate in the caucuses and educating them about the positions of the candidates.

Are these grassroots efforts making an impact? According to Dr. Brinson, the organization's two-week bus tour and Internet campaign in Iowa helped motivate faith-based voters, particularly young ones who had never participated in the political process.

Dr. Brinson pointed out that Mike Huckabee and Barack Obama were the only candidates who took time to meet and pray with his organization's crew.

"It's fascinating they ended up winning," he said.

The Redeem the Vote Gold Bus will stop in front of the Supervisor of Elections Office in Seminole County, 1500 E. Airport Blvd. in Sanford, on Friday, January 25, at 10:30 a.m. Drs. Brinson and Hunter will be available for interviews, along with several young voters from Seminole County.

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DR. RANDY BRINSON of Montgomery, Alabama, is the founder and chairman of [Redeem the Vote](#). Dr. Brinson and his wife, Pamela, founded the nonprofit organization in 2003 to improve voter registration and participation among young people of faith.

During the 2004 election, Redeem the Vote registered over 78,000 people, outpacing all other faith-based voter outreach efforts combined. Subsequent data compiled by the Pew Foundation and *USA Today* confirmed that participation among people of faith significantly influenced the election. *USA Today* cited Redeem the Vote as one of the top 10 events involving election year entertainment. A total of 2,500 radio stations broadcast public service announcements for Redeem the Vote.

This year, Dr. Brinson formed Redeem the Vote Alabama to enhance and educate young people of faith on issues dealing with education and promoting education, including public, private and parochial.

Dr. Brinson is a licensed lay minister and board certified gastroenterologist. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from Valdosta State College and Doctor of Medicine from the Medical College of Georgia. He completed his internship and residency at the University of Florida College of Medicine and Gastroenterology fellowship at the Medical College of Georgia. He served as staff gastroenterologist at Maxwell AFB, AL from 1987-89 and has been in private practice in Montgomery since then.

Over the last 10 years, he has served on the state board of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Board of Trustees for the University of Mobile, and served as health care advisor for former Governor Fob James of Alabama. He has been involved in Christian music since 1999, bringing WAY-FM to Montgomery.

Dr. Brinson and Pamela have been married for 24 years. They have three children, Christopher, a recent graduate of Samford University, recent White House intern for President Bush and law student at University of Alabama; and twin sons, Daniel and Philip, who are high school seniors.

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DR. JOEL C. HUNTER is senior pastor of Northland, A Church Distributed. Started by 11 people in 1972 in the “north land” of Orlando, Northland has grown from 200 faithful souls to a congregation of 12,000 that worships at several physical sites throughout Central Florida and at hundreds of “virtual” sites around the world via the Internet.

Northland is “A Church Distributed,” arranging the church around the relationships of the congregation and partner ministries, rather than around a physical church building.

Before bringing his family to Northland, Dr. Hunter served as a United Methodist pastor for 15 years in Indiana. He and his wife, Becky, have been partners in the ministry since their marriage in 1972. The Hunters are parents to three married sons; two are in full-time ministry, and one is a physician.

A longtime bridge builder who seeks common ground for the common good, Dr. Hunter approaches today’s issues in a biblical and balanced manner. He has become an internationally known spokesperson for “Compassion Issues” outlined in Scripture: Sanctity of Life, [Creation Care](#), Justice, Poverty, and Marriage and the Family, and has been featured in national publications including *Newsweek* and *The New York Times*, as well as programs such as *The Early Show*, *Nightline* and *Anderson Cooper 360* ([interviews](#) available online).

Cooperation and partnership are hallmarks of Dr. Hunter's ministry. Together, he believes, we can accomplish more because of our differences than we would on our own—without giving up our unique identities. A respected leader in the Evangelical community, he serves on the board of the [World Evangelical Alliance](#) (420 million constituents) and the [National Association of Evangelicals](#) (30 million members).

Dr. Hunter is also partnering with other groups to accomplish common goals. He is working with respected members of the scientific community to protect the environment. Additionally, as a delegate to the US-Islamic World Forum held in Doha, he is seeking to build a dialog between Muslim and Christian communities. *Grist* magazine named him among the top 15 religious environmental leaders in the world, along with the Pope and the Dalai Lama.

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A Handbook for *Today's* Conservatives

What if "conservative" did not just mean emphases on traditional morality, small government and lower taxes? What if conservative also meant doing the right thing in compassion issues like Jesus did: healing the sick, feeding the hungry, freeing the oppressed and caring for creation?

A New Kind of Conservative offers an intriguing alternative to the angry rhetoric associated with the extreme religious right. While Dr. Hunter is uncompromising on issues such as abortion and the redefinition of marriage, he urges conservatives to expand the agenda to include other biblical concerns: poverty, social justice, AIDS and the environment.



Early in the book, Dr. Hunter discusses frankly his resignation as president-elect of the Christian Coalition of America. He also addresses some tough questions about Christians and politics including:

- Is America a Christian nation?
- Is it possible to be a believing evangelical and vote democratic?
- Can a Christian vote for a Mormon, Muslim or atheist candidate?

Rather than endorsing any particular party or candidate, the book includes a voter's guide that teaches readers how they can evaluate issues or candidates for themselves. Perhaps most refreshing, *A New Kind of Conservative* devotes two chapters to the art of discussing politics, without becoming disgusting. This book is a must-read for anyone willing to consider that cooperation doesn't have to mean compromise.

Learn more and read a sample chapter at www.northlandchurch.net. For a complimentary copy, contact [Robert Andrescik](mailto:Robert.Andrescik@northlandchurch.net).