

# letters...

## editor,

'Obama: change for good?' (*Nucleus*, April 2009) was a challenging read. Van Mol put forward a convincing case supporting the positive legislation that came out of the Bush administration. There is a great variation in how the two leaders are presented by the world's media - Obama, the man of powerful rhetoric and great personal credibility, is portrayed in contrast to Bush, the great buffoon or performing monkey. However, setting aside the ill-advised foray into Iraq, we see that the Bush administration was responsible for a number of positive initiatives in healthcare, especially with regard to ethics. Whatever our views about Bush's other political decisions we should have some appreciation for these policies, which are influenced by and support Christian principles.

I find it concerning to see the Obama administration already starting to unpick many of these Acts. Obama is known for his liberal views but, as is the case in UK, such views may not in fact promote liberty: his moves to restrict rights of conscientious objection for medical staff who object to carrying out certain procedures on ethical grounds, strike me as illiberal.

I have to confess that I do not avidly follow political developments. However, as Van Mol reminds us, we are exhorted to pray for our leaders. I was challenged to look beyond the media presentation of our political figures and know more about their policies in order to pray in a thoughtful and informed way.

*Lizzie Groom is a third year medical student in Cardiff*

## managing editor Laurence Crutchlow comments

What a difference a few months can make! Andre Van Mol's discussion of Barack Obama led to lengthy debate both at *Nucleus* editorial committee and in the CMF office. We received it only a month after President Obama's inauguration, not long after a *Daily Telegraph* cartoon had depicted the White House Lake with a sign banning the new President from walking on the water! We wondered if we were the only publication in the world considering publishing something less than adulatory about him.

Now nearly 45% of Americans disapprove of his record to date, nearly matching the 49% who approve.<sup>1</sup> It took until well into George W Bush's second term in

2005 for his poll ratings to fall consistently to this level.<sup>2</sup> Healthcare reform (as detailed in *News Review*), along with the financial crisis and the situation in Afghanistan have all proved stumbling blocks.

Lizzie Groom's comments above about praying for our leaders are brought into much sharper focus when we know that they are in difficulties. Yet how many of us remembered to do so when it was thought that Obama could 'do no wrong'? Paul instructs Timothy to pray for those in authority, stating that it pleases God, and linking it to 'peaceful and quiet lives' for believers.<sup>3</sup> Liturgical prayers for the Queen and politicians were once common (especially in Anglican circles), but how many of us include these in our worship now? With an election imminent in the UK, we should consider our response to Paul's instructions.

1. [tinyurl.com/9kholt](http://tinyurl.com/9kholt)
2. [tinyurl.com/yd3kp9l](http://tinyurl.com/yd3kp9l)
3. 1 Timothy 2:1-2