

Hatfield tells Christians faith, politics don't mix

By SALLY HODKINSON
Of the Emerald

Christians who dabble in politics shouldn't measure faith with a political yardstick, says Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore.

"The Christian community is not a monolith. We can't even agree on the mode of baptism," Hatfield said, speaking Friday

night at a meeting of FISHPAC, a local Christian political action committee.

"The body of Christ is centered around Jesus Christ, not the political positions we may take. He (Christ) bids us today to take up the cross, not the cudgel.

"When everyone is thinking

alike, no one is thinking very much."

Hatfield said he opposes conservative religious groups such as Christian Voice not because of their views but because they take political issues and "baptize them with religion."

"I scored 23 percent on their (Christian Voice) Godly quotient quiz. I flunked the test.

"Whatever you make the issues, you make the idols. The most corruptible thing in the world is power. Sometimes we do not read our history enough — our political history or our church history."

Hatfield said Christians are among the least politically informed in the nation because they've isolated themselves from "worldly" issues. When he first ran for public office, Hatfield said "one-third of my



Sen. Mark Hatfield

Photo by Ken Kromer

church thought I had lost my salvation."

Christians need to band together on the basis of faith, not politics, Hatfield said, adding that he attends a weekly prayer meeting with three other senators — including Sam Nunn, D-Ga., one of Hatfield's arch enemies on defense issues.

"I think Sam Nunn is an idiot on the issues of military spending, but Christ is universal."

Hatfield said one of the prayer

meetings was held during his filibuster against draft registration — a fight Nunn opposed.

"The last person I wanted to see that Wednesday was Sam Nunn. To make it worse, the meeting was in his office that week."

But Hatfield said he and Nunn talked about Christ — not registration — during the meeting.

"I left with a greater and deeper love for Sam Nunn than when I walked in. That's the beauty and unity of Christ."

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