

3 Things You Can Do to Bridge the Political Divide

I didn't plan to write this post. In fact, as it began to come to me, I didn't want to write it. But then the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and reminded me that I have often tackled social and moral issues. And so I surrendered.

I woke up Wednesday morning, Nov. 9, 2016, eager to find out the election results.

I opened Facebook and un-hid my timeline to see what my friends were posting.

Yes, I hid my timeline for two reasons: one, because of the abundance of posts either listing all of the reasons why I shouldn't vote for Hillary or telling me what a scumbag Trump is.

Fact: I have rarely been convinced to change my opinion because of something I've read on Facebook.

It was too much. But the other reason I hid my Facebook timeline was because after reading something that set my teeth on edge, I'd end up posting my own rant. Truth be told, I stand behind everything I wrote, yet wisdom knows when to speak and when to hold her tongue.

I was not wise.

So to teach myself some discipline, I hid my timeline. Until 7 a.m. Nov. 9, 2016. As I scrolled, I quickly realized that the results hadn't yet been called. But I really enjoyed scrolling down and reading people's posts: anxious to know who our president-elect would be, posting funny presidential memes. It was not hateful, it was not mocking, it was all in good fun.

Then somewhere around mid-afternoon it all took a nasty turn.

Let me pause here and say that many of my friends and family members are Democrats. Most, if not all of them, voted for President Obama the past two elections and then voted for Hillary this year.

I have never given this any consideration; I haven't questioned their salvation or spiritual integrity. I have never once wondered how this has affected their testimony. In my eyes, their identity doesn't lie in the fact that they are registered Democrat anymore than my identity lies in the fact that I am a registered Republican.

But suddenly the fun and innocent memes turned into hateful mockery of Trump, Hillary and President Obama. First one post bashing those who dared to vote for Trump, then another post hinting that Trump supporters don't care about racism. Posts spewing out the words "white evangelicals" like it's a dirty phrase.

And it hit me square in the gut.

I have never in my life tolerated racism. I was raised in a home where skin color was celebrated. It was beautiful—all colors. Like a rainbow, it was God's gift to us, and we embraced it. I never bought into "color blind" because I *wanted* to see the beauty of God's creation in technicolor!

Then I married my husband.

My husband is a minority and is often subjected marginalization because of where he was born and raised. He often bears the brunt of jokes and experiences prejudice.

I no longer have a bird's eye view of prejudice; it is now right on my own front doorstep and has even, at times, walked right into my home, sat at my table and dared to utter it's poison.

And yet, there are three things my husband and I bear in mind

that have everything to do with this election and something the church needs to remember today.

1. Don't settle disputes in public. In 1 Corinthians 6:1, Paul rebukes the Corinthian church for taking their brothers and sisters in Christ to court. And I see what's happening right now on social media in a similar way. Christians are questioning other Christians' salvation and testimony out in the open for the whole world to see. Some are making outright accusations while others are taking to name-calling. As Paul said, "This is to your shame." It is divisive and hurtful to the body.

Anytime the human body starts to turn on itself, we say it is a disease. And by the look of things right now, the body of Christ is fighting a disease.

2. Your identity is in Christ. My husband doesn't take the jokes and prejudiced jabs to heart. Why? Because he knows that his identity isn't wrapped up in the fact that he was born and raised in Bosnia. His identity is in Jesus Christ.

Your identity is not in your political party, skin color, heritage, past failures or traumatic experiences. Your identity is in Jesus Christ!

3. There will always be differences in the body. We all come from various backgrounds, family structures and worldviews. While our identity is in Christ, we are all in different stages of growth and maturity; and some will have a greater battle with their emotional and mental defaults than others.

Grace enables us to extend a hand of love and acceptance to our brothers and sisters *despite* those differences. Grace enables a Democrat to look a Republican in the eye and see a child of God (and vice-versa, lest you think I'm picking on one side).

The body will have differences, and Christian maturity demands

that we accept that, even embrace it. Rejecting those differences, throwing up defenses and walls to protect ourselves from it, brings division to the body. The body of Christ is a beautiful spectrum. How boring it would be if all Christians thought and acted the same!

Here are three ways we should respond in light of these truths:

Pray for America, the body of Christ, President Obama and President-Elect Trump. We must pray. Our nation has once again exploded into rioting. Police officers have lost their lives today. Innocent citizens have lost personal property today. Wives will have an empty space in their bed tonight, and children will no longer see the faces of their fathers. We need peace.

Turn off the noise. Politics will not bring peace. Obama did not bring peace anymore than Hillary could have brought peace. Trump will not bring peace. A Reagan incarnate could not bring peace. Man cannot bring peace! There is only one Prince of Peace, and His name is Jesus! When we realize this, we'll stop looking to politics as our hope.

Dear friend, if I could urge you to do one thing it would be to turn off talk radio, turn off the 5 o'clock *blues*, close your favorite news website, and even hide your timeline if you need to (Chrome has an extension called "Kill News Feed"). Detox from it, and then turn your eyes upon Jesus!

Learn to love the body. First Corinthians 13 is all about loving the body of Christ, faults, foibles and idiosyncrasies included. We must learn to love the body with God's love that refuses to be offended, refuses to keep track of wrongs, and extends patience and kindness.

I have a whole Bible study on this chapter called *14 Days to Agape*, and it focuses on the church and how we can learn to love the church God's way.

Dear friends, I beg you, I implore you, I plead with you—let us set aside the gloating, the anger, the dancing and rejoicing, and the weeping and mourning because of this election.

We shouldn't ever rejoice or grieve too much.

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; He turns it to any place He will" (Prov. 21:1).

It is God who makes rulers rise and fall.

Let us look to Him. Let us trust in Him.

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" (Ps. 20:7).

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