

Divisive Election An Opportunity to Share the Gospel

The morning after the 2016 presidential election, Donald Trump gave a gracious acceptance speech, and Hillary Clinton gave a gracious concession speech. The gravity of the moment and the weight of what is at stake for our country came across in both of their speeches, which served as fitting capstones to an election season tightly wound with the deep hopes and dreams of the American people.

In the weeks leading up to this election, it became apparent that many people were putting great hope (for understandable reasons) in the outcome of the race. There were deep divisions between the candidates, and the core aspirations of many Americans were tied up in one or the other.

Some put their faith in Hillary Clinton. Others put theirs in Donald Trump. Some put their hope in Hillary Clinton because the alternative was Donald Trump. Others are looking to Donald Trump only because the other option was Hillary Clinton. Still others despaired of the presidential election entirely and are already primed to hear a message of hope coming from somewhere besides the presidential election.

It was clear there would be many who, for different reasons, would need to hear a message of spiritual hope, regardless of who would win the race.

We now know who won, and many still need to hear that message of hope—on both sides of the race. Who is in a better place to deliver that message than the Christian who knows Jesus gives greater hope? As Christians, we should seek to remain attentive and be ready to share this message as opportunities to do so cross our paths in the coming weeks.

Many are despairing because Donald Trump has been elected. Their deepest need, if they don't know Christ, is to understand that Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15). Romans 13:13 also tells us God is the one who establishes government authority. At the same time, Jesus came to meet our deepest need—a spiritual rather than an earthly one. He came to earth to die for us—for you and for me. We can trust him to satisfy this deepest need. People who don't know Christ need to understand this. And if a brother or sister in Christ is despairing over Trump's win, this is an opportunity to draw them back to the source of true hope.

Others are joyful or at least contented with a Trump win because it means Clinton lost. For Christians in these positions, it is an opportunity to remind ourselves that our deepest hope does not lie in the outcome of a victorious election but in Christ. And it is also an opportunity to share with those non-Christians who are joyful at Trump's win the ultimate joy of knowing Christ.

On contemplating the recent possibility that Hillary Clinton might win, many shared the message that Christians must not place their ultimate trust in political solutions. That message is true, and is still true even as Trump won. It's true for those of us who know Christ and is something we must seek to share with all who don't know Him.

We are on this earth for only a short time. Whatever gains and losses we may suffer here, though they obviously matter and have real impact on our earthly lives, we must remember we are soon passing away. Those of us who know Christ know where true hope lies. This is an opportunity to grow in that truth and a chance to share it with those who don't yet know it.

As Christians, the election should point us to higher matters. Time is fleeting. If we credit earthly matters with such gravity despite our short time here, should we not credit heavenly matters more?

As Christians, we understand this. Now let us live it. Let us communicate it to those who don't know it. Let us seize this moment to lead more of those around us to God, and let us pray that through the follow-up to the 2016 presidential election, all of us would come to know Jesus Christ more and more. {eo}

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