

Evangelical Christians and the Quandary of Politics

Politics can get very dirty. Christians try not to get dirty (in the moral sense of the word).

Politics is always divisive. Christians try to unify around Jesus.

Politics demands party loyalty. Christians give their ultimate loyalty to the Lord, not a party.

Politics is filled with compromise and mixture. Christians are called to avoid both.

Politics is sure to disappoint. Christians are accustomed to look to One who never disappoints.

How, then, do we sort this out?

Over and again, we work hard to get a candidate elected, then that candidate lets us down. We labor and pray for the right court appointees, only to see them change their views.

Maybe we should just drop out of the whole political system? Maybe we should just give ourselves to spiritual work and let the world take care of worldly matters? Maybe we should just live like modernized Amish?

I remember hearing a pro-life leader talking on the radio shortly after the Reagan presidency.

He said that he and his organization worked day and night to elect Ronald Reagan. They helped rally other evangelicals to the cause. They fought for pro-life legislation.

But after 8 years of effort, he saw little change in the overall social and political climate, especially when it came

to abortion in our country.

In the end, he felt used. Maybe he should just drop out?

I was once asked my radio listeners to call the show if they claimed to be committed followers of Jesus and yet voted for pro-abortion candidates like Barack Obama.

I didn't want to argue with them. I wanted to understand, since, from my perspective, a committed Christian cannot vote for a pro-abortion candidate.

This would parallel my understanding of a Christian's voting responsibility in the days of slavery. That one issue would come first when it came time to cast my ballot.

One caller raised an interesting perspective.

He said, "I'm pro-life, and I don't like abortion at all. But I don't think the president will be the one to change our abortion laws, even through the courts. Reagan didn't change things. George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush didn't change things. So, I vote for the president based on other issues, and that's why I voted for Obama. It's up to the church to change the abortion laws."

Now, you might disagree with his perspective, as I do. But I also understand his sentiments. It's akin to the quoted attributed to Einstein, namely, that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Are we doing that with politics?

The problem is that we can't drop out, even if we wanted to. It would mean chaos for the nation and calamity for the church.

Of course, there's always the question of whether we have a God-given responsibility to vote and be involved.

But there's something more fundamental still. If we don't cast

our votes, we will quickly lose our voice—not just politically but in other ways. We will quickly find our rights disappearing. Hostility to Christians will become the national norm. We will be silenced on many fronts.

Why? Because those who hate us won't stop voting. And those who despise our morals won't stop campaigning. And the activists who feel a sacred calling to oppose us will be empowered.

Recently, a young mother contacted me, terribly grieved and deeply frustrated. Her teenage daughter has decided she is transgender and now wants to identify as a boy. And her school is very supportive.

The mom and dad met with a school counselor and were shocked at what they heard. Not only was the school about to announce to the students and faculty (that very day!) that “she” was now “he” and that “he” had a new name. But the school was going to do this without even informing the parents, let alone getting their consent. How on earth can this happen?

Not only so, but, the mom told me that “the school was giving her [meaning, her daughter] info, if we were not accepting of her new identity, that she should get us to sign away our rights as a parent, and she could live in a group home with other children who have been kicked out of their homes, who may also be gay (which she says she is bi). Can you believe she was getting counsel like that at 15 years old?? ... All this was supposed to ‘go down’ today without our knowledge!!!”

Well, I hate to break the news to you, but if we don't vote and get involved politically, we won't even have the ability to fight things like this. The state will take over, and we will have no one to blame but ourselves.

So, what do we do? In the closing chapter of *Donald Trump Is Not My Savior: An Evangelical Leader Speaks His Mind About the Man He Supports as President*, I lay out seven principles to

help us navigate these difficult waters.

For the moment, let me share some other, related ideas. 1) Put gospel service, prayer, and evangelism first. 2) Then involved in politics without compromising your principles. 3) Always put your hope in God, not a politician. 4) It's true that we're only passing through this world, but we should do our best to make it better for the next generation. 5) Incremental change is better than no change at all, not to mention much better than negative change. Every little bit helps.

This, too, is part of being salt and light. This, too, is in harmony with our calling as believers. Let's just keep our priorities straight. As I've repeated over and again, the Savior gets my life. The president gets my vote.