

Evangelicals Can Disagree on Trump and Still Be Family

Given the volatility of today's political climate, it may surprise you to know that, on Judgment Day when we give account to God, His main question to us will not be: What did you do with Donald Trump? Yet for many of us who profess to be followers of Jesus, that's the big issue: Where do you stand with Trump?

This cannot be the basis of our fellowship.

This cannot be the basis of our love for one another.

This cannot be the basis of our commitment to work together for larger gospel purposes.

Put another way, we can be family without full agreement. We can be united without having total harmony on all points.

This is not only possible. It is essential.

Jesus said to His followers, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

And He uttered these incredible words in prayer shortly before His crucifixion: "I have given them the glory which You gave Me, that they may be one even as We are one: I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfect in unity, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (John 17:22-23).

Did you grasp the significance of these words?

As Francis Chan writes in his important book *Letters to the Church*, "Jesus' prayer was not that we would just get along and avoid church splits. His prayer was that we would become

‘perfectly one.’ He prayed this because our oneness was designed to be the way to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus said the purpose of our unity was ‘so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them.’”

Our unity is that important, not just for our good, but for the good of the world. As they see our unity, they will recognize that the Father sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world. But is this what the watching world is seeing?

Far from it. We swipe at each other publicly, and often without any grace. We are nasty, mean-spirited and judgmental—to one another, within the body. Some of our social media pages are so ugly that they sound like political attack ads.

We bash more than we bless. We tear down more than we build up. We scatter more than we gather—and again, I’m talking about how we treat one another as brothers and sisters in Jesus.

As a committed pro-lifer, I can’t imagine how another follower of Jesus could vote for pro-abortion candidates like Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton.

But that cannot be the basis of our fellowship.

In the same way, there are committed followers of Jesus who cannot understand how any of us could vote for Trump.

Yet we cannot allow our opinions about Trump (or Obama or others) to be the basis of our unity in Jesus.

This simply cannot be. It is contrary to Scripture, which never makes our political views the foundation of our unity. It is contrary to God’s heart, who longs for His children to be one. And it is contrary to wisdom, since we know that to the extent we are divided, to that extent we fail and fall.

And here’s the thing about family. We can express our

differences and still be family. We can say, "I totally disagree with your decision," and still be committed.

Melania Trump can teach us here.

While traveling to Egypt, she was asked by reporters if she always agreed with her husband's tweets. She responded, "I don't always agree [with] what he tweets, and I tell him that. I give him my honest opinion and honest advice. Sometimes he listens, sometimes he doesn't. I have my own voice and my opinions, and it's very important to me that I express how I feel."

That's what faithful wives do. That's the language of love. That's what commitment requires. "I love you, but I differ with you here."

That's being family.

Melania was even asked if she sometimes tells her husband to put down his phone. She replied, "Yes!"

There is no person on the planet closer to me than my bride of 42 years, Nancy. She is my best friend and the greatest gift the Lord has given me in this world. And no one—absolutely no one—tells me I'm wrong more than she does. No one offers me (unsolicited!) correction more than she does. And no one on the planet is more committed to me than she is.

In my new book, *Donald Trump Is Not My Savior* I call on evangelical supporters of the president to be more nuanced in their support. You can vote for him and support him and do what Melania did. You can say, "I voted for him and support him, but I wish he didn't say that."

Why must it be 100 percent support or 100 percent opposition? Is that even realistic?

In the same way, we can say to our spiritual family, "I can't see how you could vote for Hillary (or, for Trump), but can we

agree that Jesus is Lord? That the Bible is God's holy Word? That we need to love one another and love our neighbor? That there's far more that unites us than divides us?"

You might say, "But no genuine follower of Jesus could vote for Hillary!"

To be candid, I strongly warned against such a vote, saying we would have the blood of the unborn on our hands. Yet I know sincere Christians who did vote for her, although I passionately disagree with their vote.

Others would say, "No genuine follower of Jesus could vote for Trump!"

And around and around the circle goes, to the point that we break off fellowship over political issues.

To repeat: This cannot be.

I have counseled pastors with multi-ethnic congregations to have a public meeting where articulate church members who had totally disparate political views could take a few minutes to explain why they vote the way they do.

Even if they don't change anyone's mind, at least they foster understanding. Then the pastor can give biblical guidelines for voting, and the congregants can respond accordingly.

This much is sure: If we allow politics to divide us, the devil wins, and all of us—meaning, both the church and the world—lose.

Unfortunately, our current church divisions are massive. Let's not make them any bigger. Let's unite around the essentials of the gospel and work together to make Jesus known to a lost generation. And we can do while respectfully expressing our differences with each other.

Are you with me?