

How Partisan Politics Is Devastating the Church in America

Do you remember when President Barack Obama informed the world that America was no longer a Christian nation?

Our nation was never 100% Christian, though America was founded on Christian values.

Christianity is not as popular as it once was. Our nation once bragged that certain cities were Christian cities, like Tulsa, Oklahoma. One saying about Tulsa was that it was not cool to live there unless you were a Christian.

We are far from that now.

So, what's changed? The last 30 years revealed how politics invaded the church scene. Now more than ever, politics are infecting the churches of America.

Partisanship is creating churches with one-party views. It is also creating division among believers.

Partisanship limits thought, steals tolerance and creates division

Baby Boomers and Church

The Baby Boomers created a surge in church growth and in Christianity. The Boomers were the largest generation ever born in American history and provided the greatest impact on churches in America.

Christian churches, particularly denominational churches, reached their high water mark in terms of size and market share during the years of the Baby Boom or shortly thereafter.

Ross Douthat points out that the church-going rate in 1940 was around 40%, while by the late 1950s it was nearly 50%. Church membership was growing at a rate nearly twice that of population growth. Surveys show that 95% of the Boomers took part in traditional religious services during their childhood years.

The statistics are enlightening. "95 percent of the Boomers took part in traditional religious services during their childhood years."

Baby boomers exploded church growth from the 1950s to the early 1970s.

In the early 70s the decline in church attendance went unnoticed. The decline shifted into a new gear from 1991 to 1993 and has continued to the present.

The Negative Effect of Politics on Churches

Derek Thompson, a writer at *The Atlantic*, reported:

According to Christian Smith, a sociology and religion professor at the University of Notre Dame, America's nonreligious lurch has mostly been the result of three historical events: the association of the Republican Party with the Christian right, the end of the Cold War, and 9/11.

Trace the timeline and the cause: Can you see it? The mingling of politics and church has contributed to the decline in church attendance.

This is true in both parties.

When churches stress political morality, Christian values, it conflicts with the genuine purpose of the church.

It is understandable to carry strong political views, but those views should never take precedence or supersede the

commands of Scripture.

Politics or People?

Have churches become partisan? Sad to say, but yes. Have we formed our churches more around politics than around the gospel? Some churches have.

Is it possible for Republicans and Democrats to worship in the same church? Yes, if the church is gospel-centered and not centered on politics. Partisan pastors create partisan church members.

Both political views and gospel views have places that intersect, but they also have points of division and conflict.

We must place our value on God's Word above our party affiliation or party values.

Some people believe that Democrats cannot be a Christian. This is alarming.

We do not judge anyone by the color of their skin or the party they align their political values with. This goes both ways. Right?

One-Party Churches

Churches and pastors that are prone to politics over the gospel are off-base.

The church is also not to respect one certain person or another.

"Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality'" (Acts 10:34, NKJV).

Pastors with a partisan crowd talk about partisan views.

This is a detriment to the church. No matter what church you attend, if everyone in the room is the same color, with the

same values, we are doing something wrong.

There is little difference in sectarianism and partisanship.

Partisan comments only attract members with partisan values. This is just another way the church body suffers division. Our political views expressed in partisan style are detrimental in building up the body of Christ.

The poorest sign of genuine tolerance is to assume or know that everyone in the room carries the same political view.

It is an oversight to know that everyone in the room is a Republican, and we do not know if everyone in the room is a follower of Christ.

Which one is most important?

True Love Is Not Partisan

Is God's love partisan? No. Absolutely not.

God said "love your neighbor." What if our church neighbor is of the opposite party? Or our next-door neighbor does not accept our political views?

Can we love one another?

The Word says yes. The current political opinion says otherwise.

The church is facing many challenges, and partisan politics is one of the major challenges we face.

Let's get it right. And that means not accepting what's wrong.
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