

Millennials Try to Cut Through the Church's Political Divide

It might not be unusual to see a pair of senators face off in front of microphones, but in this case, Republican James Lankford and Democrat Chris Coons sat down to discuss their Christian faith.

The man behind the scenes of this conversation was 37-year-old Justin Giboney.

Giboney and former White House staffer Michael Wear host a podcast called Church Politics, where they are tackling tough policy issues and are working to get politicians, no matter the party, comfortable with sharing their faith.

Giboney, a Democratic delegate, says he's seen the downside of sharing biblical convictions.

"I've been in politics for almost a decade. Running campaigns, doing campaign consulting," Giboney told CBN News.

Attacked by His Own Party

In 2016, Giboney ran on a biblical platform promoting his pro-life and Christian beliefs.

That led to attacks from members of his own party, who even tried to have him removed from the Georgia delegation.

"I came to a point in urban politics where I was thinking, *I enjoy doing this but I'm getting pushed further and further to the left on every issue*," Giboney recalled.

Pushed to the Edges, Away From the Middle

And he's not alone. In this divided society, members of both

parties are feel pushed to the edges, away from the middle.

And it doesn't appear to be the wish of some voters.

According to a recent NBC/GenForward poll, 71 percent of Millennials feel both parties do a poor job of representing the American people and want a third party.

"I think there are a lot of Christians who are saying, "I want to be engaged in politics, but I don't want to go all the way to the left or all the way to the right," said Giboney.

Excluded From Both Democrat and Republican Circles

While Giboney didn't get love from some Democrats, he also felt excluded from conservative circles, thanks to two words: social justice.

A quick YouTube search yields a litany of videos dedicated to "taking down" the so-called "social justice warriors."

"That word has been defiled. Social justice, in some circles, has been defiled to justify anything people want to do," Giboney relented.

Reclaiming the Words 'Social Justice'

Movements from outright socialism to censorship wrap themselves in a social justice blanket, and Giboney believes it's time for that to end.

"We're saying, 'Let's reclaim this word.' Because it doesn't belong to those people who are defiling it. There are a lot of things that have been defiled, but God didn't tell us to concede that," he explains.

His view of social justice means calling for an end to things like abortion and police brutality while supporting criminal justice reform.

"If we're about family, then we have to make sure people

aren't being incarcerated unnecessarily because it breaks up families," he said.

So how do you cut through the fog of confusion?

Through informed conversation and by bringing leaders of both sides together, which Giboney did at the launch of the AND Campaign.

Giboney started the AND Campaign to help young Christians realize the answer doesn't only lie within party lines.

And they don't have to choose between biblical values AND social justice.

"I'm excited about what they are trying to do because they are seeking to bridge the gap between righteousness and justice," said evangelist Tony Evans.

Transcending Partisanship

"Those two have divided the Christian community for far too long, as though God rides that backs of donkeys or elephants," he continued.

Evans believes Millennials have the opportunity to bridge the gap.

"We can have a generation that brings those together and gives a full understanding of God, not the partial understanding of God, then we can get the holistic nature of God operating in our midst," he continued.

"We want to make sure that Christians are transcending the partisanship we see today," said Giboney.

He also wants young people to really know the issues and the candidates, not just the party.

"Low information advocacy and low information civic engagement is dangerous. It is more than reading an article here or there

or parroting your favorite talking head,” said via the church politics.

So Giboney will remain focused by spurring the conversation, informing his listeners and providing a platform where believers, left and right, get a seat at the table.

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