

Political Mudslinging Is Un-Christian

Apathy is the surest way to enable tyranny. We should welcome and embrace a spirited political discourse. Yet during the course of that discussion, we should never forget the distinction between the opposition and the enemy.

America's enemies seek to destroy this country, but those patriots with whom we may intensely disagree still share our goal of a brighter future for all Americans. We may view our political opposition as misguided and flat wrong, but we should always recognize that the push and pull of **American politics** is the single most important element of our strong and vibrant democracy.

Too often we have allowed the loudest and most reprehensible voices to monopolize the debate. For example, some have questioned the legitimacy of President Barack Obama's election on the basis of his birth. This is ludicrous and shameful. So is the charge that members of the Tea Party are deficient in their patriotism or motivated by bigotry. **Freedom of speech** was never intended to fuel the vitriolic mudslinging present in today's politics.

If you disagree with the president, debate his policies; if you think the Tea Party is wrong, explain why. Ultimately, the demonization of one's political opposition, aside from eroding public trust in the political process and producing confusion, has the deadly effect of generating a level of polarity and animosity that makes the exercise of our collective American will impossible. Our real enemies—such as our present economic chaos, national security threats and a rapidly diminishing moral standard that makes it increasingly difficult to even discern right from wrong—remain unaddressed, while instead the primary focus is on demeaning and destroying political

opposition.

Clearly, our greatest enemy is a polarity or divide so great—fueled by animosity and even hatred—that it can no longer be bridged. The truth is simple: “a house divided against itself cannot stand.”

It is past time that we stop rewarding the dirtiest campaign with our vote and begin praying for and seeking leaders who understand the bigger picture: focusing American will, and mobilizing our great national potential, on defeating our true enemies.

Politics does not have to be a dirty business. All four GOP contenders, and the president, profess belief in God. They say that their faith guides and inspires them. One of the basic tenets of that faith (James 1:19) is that we be “... quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” Certainly good advice, if building consensus is really a goal.

Debates about the governance of the United States should always inspire passion, but their devolution into mudslinging is bad for the country, its people and the political process. Spirited discussion of contrasting viewpoints is the cornerstone of our democracy, but the red line between discourse and vitriol is too often crossed. Perhaps the next time a candidate is advised to sling a little mud, he’ll consider what his faith teaches about doing unto others.

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