

Should Christians Steer Clear of Politics?

“DISARRAY.”

One word on the cover of Newsmax magazine describes America today, as an Associated Press poll says: “82% are pessimistic about politics.”

Christians offer an array of solutions: The pulpit. Voting. Revival. Gospel. Prayer. Church. Awakening. Scripture. Repentance. Second Coming.

We also hear four different views:

1. **God is sovereign.** “Stop worrying and simply trust Him. He reigns! He’ll bring about the outcome He wills. Vote if you want, but remind yourself, He’s sovereign!”
2. **Judgment.** “These are the end times, and we’re under judgment! God’s shaking things, so why polish brass on a sinking ship? Get prepared. Turn off the news. Get ready because Jesus is returning soon!”
3. **Fears of Christian nationalism.** “Watch out for those trying to set up America as a theocracy. They’re stirring up hysteria and rage, saying we’re being invaded at our border and the economy’s collapsing! Their leaders are toxic, making grandiose promises to restore America, but they don’t deliver. They’re extremists!”
4. **Evangelical progressives.** The “Shepherds for Sale” book lies and vilifies compassionate Christians. Andy Stanley has homosexuals speak; Tim Keller’s church has Trump-hater David French, and Evangelicals for Harris has Billy Graham’s granddaughter Jerushah Duford; ministries get bucks from far-Left groups. “‘Love your neighbor’: That’s what open borders, gender care, reproductive

freedom and harvesting organs for redemptive purposes are all about.”

Should we stay out of politics? Allow me, along with some significant historical icons, to share Scriptures, suggestions and what I hope is sage advice to help us navigate wisely.

Going Forward

Is it true that Jesus never got involved in politics, only in preaching the gospel and building the church?

He did say, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36a, NIV) to assure Pilate He was not fomenting rebellion to take over by force, but the reality remains that He was engaged in establishing a countercultural upside-down kingdom to impact the world, not merely provide religious services. “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here” (Acts 17:6b, ESV).

Jesus was not a passive sideliner. He even upended tables and confronted corrupt money-changers in the temple (church).

Jesus did pledge to “build My church” (Matt. 16:18), but He wasn’t speaking primarily about short and sweet, neatly packaged Sunday services. Church refers to “called-out ones,” directed to “make disciples ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you ” (Matt. 28:19–20, NIV).

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Understanding Terms

Politics refers to “the activities associated with the governance of a people.” This includes electing leaders; defense; taxing; initiating programs (such as Social Security); paving roads; establishing schools, police and fire

departments plus hospitals, speed limits, trash removal, safety measures (such as seatbelts) and more.

Politics encompasses many areas of our lives, including growing threats to our national security. We're part of what theologians call the "church triumphant" in heaven, but now we're in the "church militant." As salt, we're to hold back decay; "stand" ((four times) against insidious spiritual forces (Eph. 6:10-18) as a "good soldier" (2 Tim. 2:3) while pastors equip us as captains on a battleship, not a Love Boat designed to keep us happy and entertained. We're to kick in the gates of hell, not sit back passively or be in retreat.

10 Inspiring Icons

"Give me 100 men of God who hate nothing but sin and desire nothing but God and we will shake the gates of hell and see the kingdom of God in our generation!" – John Wesley.

John Wesley (1703-1791) was ousted from dead formal churches in England. He called for passionate preaching, holy living and societal engagement. He addressed slavery, the slave trade, prison reform, free medical dispensaries, establishing schools and speaking out against gambling, drunkenness and other societal ills.

Methodist minister William Booth (1829-1912) inspired Christians to rise as the army of God, bringing "salvation, soup and soap" to humanity. One of my oldest books comes from 1890 and is a blueprint for cultural engagement called "In Darkest England and the Way Out." There are thousands of Salvation Army churches in 134 countries, and they're not just ringing bells at Christmas!

Pastor John Newton (who wrote "Amazing Grace") charged William Wilberforce in political engagement to pray and persevere in ending the slave trade in England. He eventually succeeded in abolishing it, which later impacted America.

Wilberforce told us, "A private faith that does not act in the face of oppression is no faith at all. Scripture teaches, 'Faith without works is dead,'" (James 2:17).

When influential leaders remain silent or discourage political involvement, they need to repent and recalibrate to follow the example of Wilberforce, who said, "You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know."

In the 1930s, Hitler's National Socialist party gained power due to deception, complacency and pastoral cowardice. Germany went from democracy to dictatorship to demise in six years. Pastor, prophet and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer warned us, "Silence in the face of evil is evil itself."

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Preserving Our Heritage

We mustn't take our unalienable rights in America for granted but cherish and protect them when our enemies try to take them away. "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other" – President John Adams.

In the face of injustice and tyranny in America's Revolutionary War, it was the pastors who challenged the 50% of the colonists who sheepishly acquiesced as loyalists to tyrannical King George and his thugs. They were called "The Black Robe Regiment."

In the Civil War era and afterward, it was Christian leaders and abolitionists who championed the cause. Abraham Lincoln, pastors Charles Finney and Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman of the Underground Railroad and others who refused to sit silent and cowardly. Then Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. picked

up the baton. Imagine if pastors and prophets had stayed out of politics in U.S. history!

Here's the Deal

Our nation is in serious peril because we've ignored the warning of Founding Father Ben Franklin, "Passions rule, and they rarely rule wisely." Pastors and God's people can no longer abdicate our assignment for righteousness. It's time for turnaround!

"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, But when a wicked man rules, the people groan" (Prov. 29:2, NKJV). Hear the groaning?

The hour has come for us to rise and reclaim our role as transformative agents in our society, sensitizing the conscience of our citizenry.

King told us, "The church is not the master or the servant of the state but rather is the conscience. ... If it does not recapture its prophetic role, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority!"

For those who think we must maintain the status quo, maintaining peace at any price and never disrupting or bringing disunity, consider the words of Jesus: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and a person's enemies will be those of his own household" (Matt. 10:34-36, ESV).

"Don't rock the boat? When there is deception, I don't want to rock the boat, I want to sink it!" – Dr. Walter Martin.

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