

Should Christians shy away from Politics?

Greg Northrup and Robin Dugall

How do you feel about politics when it comes to how it intersects with your faith? It shouldn't come as a surprise to you that some Christians have historically tended to shy away from politics. Many who feel that getting involved in anything "political" would be too controversial and might do more harm than good especially in the context of their relationships with fellow Christians. However, we are now living in what many people are calling a "post-Christian world", It doesn't take a keen observer to note that our world is one that is very different from what it was even a few years ago. Most of us used to think that the "post-Christian" culture meant simply that a smaller percentage of the population of our country was Christian. But over the past decade, especially, it has become much more serious than that. In many parts of our culture, Christians (in fact, any person of any faith system) are considered the "bad guys" and are more thought to be part of the problem in our society than part of the solution to the pressing issues we are facing.

Here's some rationale on why I feel it is important for all of us who profess the name of Jesus as Lord and live as His followers in contemporary culture to be engaged politically: first, we are citizens of a great nation and, as citizens of the United States, we have the obligation to educate ourselves about the critical issues of the day. Not only that, but we have the hard fought and costly right to vote and to engage in political discussions. We also have the responsibility to do what we can to make our communities safe, prosperous, as well as to provide opportunities for everyone in accordance with the Founding Principles of our nation. Add to that our call as disciples of Christ to help those who are struggling and falling by the wayside, and you have comprehensive commission to be intentionally active in the public square.

As citizens of the United States who are decisively Christian, it behooves us to do everything we can to protect our freedoms to express God's truths, to live God-honoring lifestyles, worship freely, and practice our faith. It should also be foremost on our hearts, minds and, that which inspires action, to protect our ability to identify and use the unique gifts and talents God has given to each of us to our full potential without interference from others. We should consider the plight of our most cherished freedoms that may be impinged upon if some group or even the government itself were to become too big or powerful.

It doesn't take much effort to come to a shocking awareness that there has been a rise in vocal, political opponents to people of faith in recent years. These individuals and groups have, in fact, become much more aggressive and active. Many of us have witnessed the hostile taking over of most of the points of influence in our culture, such as education (at all levels), much of government, the arts, and most predominant media outlets. What is especially critical and alarming, in my opinion, is primarily how people who have embraced a political and quasi-

religious philosophy of secular progressivism have dramatically altered the social discourse of our country making almost every single aspect of society “political.” Even things like morality, gender and sexual activity that really weren’t considered overtly political issues in the past, are now at the center of public discourse. There are individuals and political activists pushing for abortion up to the point of birth. Here in Colorado, activists and even state politicians are beginning to attack people who speak out against them, and pass laws that silence or restrict pro-life actions by Christian churches and crisis pregnancy centers. There are many who are also actively trying to censor speech that they are opposed to by using labels such as “offensive,” “phobic,” or “nationalistic.” There are, in some instances, even attempts to get people who disagree with them fired from their jobs, including Christians when we attempt to stand up for and articulate God’s truths.

We believe in what the bible calls, “spiritual warfare.” Thus, Satan, his minions, and people who consider themselves to be faith opponents must be beside themselves with joy because it appears that the tide of battle is tilting in their favor. As everything is deemed “political,” significant numbers of Christians are sitting on the sidelines, hesitant to get involved in political issues that may become controversial. Unfortunately, because nearly everything is now political and controversial, Christians are often avoiding the most critical issues of our day. In essence, we have laid down our “weapons” of truth, virtue, righteousness and faithfulness to our God and His created order.

As Christians, we believe that God’s truths are the truths about reality, all of reality. It is that broad claim that we need to make to the culture. That is the truth on which we stand. We welcome challenges to that comprehensive claim, and we are confident that the power of God’s truth will prevail. We have lately, unfortunately, been losing more disciples than we are making. In our silence, more and more of our fellow citizens are tuning us out as irrelevant because we do not engage on the great issues of our time. Let’s engage and be relevant.

Let me simply say this clearly considering all I’ve shared to this point - we need to get off the sidelines and get engaged! We have been blessed to live in the most exceptional country in the world. The United States, thanks to our significantly Christian and biblically based founding principles and freedoms, has been the greatest force for good the world has ever seen. Our leadership on the world stage has resulted in increasing standards of living for billions of people around the globe. Our leadership, love of our neighbors, and even our enemies and our citizens’ willingness to make sacrifices for the benefit of others, has enabled us to free billions of people from oppression. Has the United States been historically perfect? Far from it. Are we as a nation above reproach? No, there are many things that can and need to be changed. We are all flawed individuals. Probably the worst thing we have done in our history was to enslave Black people as well as discriminate against them in a variety of ways for hundreds of years. We, as Christians must step forward and acknowledge the hurt, pain, frustration even anger that many Blacks are understandably dealing with. We need to acknowledge them as individual children of God, help them identify the unique gifts and talents God has given to each of them, in addition

to helping them learn how to use their gifts to their full potential. Of course, we should proactively stand alongside them to fight any discrimination they may be faced with. But we should also stand against those who are telling people to judge each other by the color of their skin or are trying to convince many minority people and groups that they are victims and need to be dependent on them or some government entity to fix their lives. It is very incapacitating to people when they are told that they are victims. Some may get angry and strike out. Others may feel hopeless and stop trying. The opposite is our task, to tell people that they are free, challenge them to achieve their God given potential, and to help them do just that.

That is just one example of how we, as Christians, can engage and carry out the missions God has given us to do such as make disciples, to bring God's truths as salt and light to our increasingly troubled culture. What we can't do is sit on the sidelines while our secular opponents force their "truths" onto our culture through their political takeover of our culture. We must do what we can to conserve, keep, and continually improve the greatest force for good in the world. We must do everything we can to stop those who want to take away our precious freedoms and turn our country onto the kind of secular leftist culture that has failed miserably wherever it has been tried. The stakes are high and yes, they are challenging us as followers of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to not put blinders on while pretending all is safe and good but to "proclaim His truth" (1 Corinthians 14:1). It's time to get involved in politics.