

Christian Faith and Politics: Faith is Public but not Partisan

Isaiah 42:1-4; Psalm 82:2-4

1. Why this matters—according to Scripture—Faith has a public dimension
 - a. We must nurture our private life of faith, but our faith can't simply be a private matter.
 - i. Isaiah 58:6-7
 - ii. Jeremiah 22
 - b. If Christ is Lord over all of life, then our faith has a public dimension.
 - i. Our faith has something to say about moral issues.
2. Reading the Bible accurately on political issues
 - a. The Bible doesn't give us specific policies or specific means to accomplish the ends for which we all agree
 - b. Not a manual for economics or politics, or even theology
 - c. Bible gives us:
 - i. A worldview
 - ii. A way to frame our politics
 - iii. General moral principles
 - iv. Ends for which our political system should aim
3. Founders on the place of religion in society
 - a. In our history, religion was imagined to be crucial to the flourishing of our country
 - i. Benjamin Franklin
 - ii. Thomas Jefferson
 - iii. George Washington
 - iv. James Madison
4. To what degree was the US founded as a Christian nation?
 - a. Yes and No
 - i. Neither God nor religion is mentioned in our Constitution
 - ii. However, there is an appeal in the Declaration of Independence to Natural Law

1. Protestant tradition was the air that people breathed at the time the Constitution was drafted, and the Government was established.
 - iii. The notion of checks and balances in government is rooted in total depravity
 - iv. The notion of individual rights is rooted in human dignity because humans are made in the image of God
 - v. The founders believed the American experience was unfolding under God's providence
 - vi. The founders established a system that allowed religion to influence our governance
5. So what do we make of today's intersection of faith and politics known as Christian Nationalism?
 - a. The term Christian Nationalism is often used as an epithet to describe a political view you do not like.
 - b. Christian Nationalism, in the theological definition, takes a particular nation as equivalent to and assumes the place of Old Testament Israel.
 - c. No nation can claim to replace Israel
 - d. Our primary allegiance is the Kingdom of God, then to our country, and then to our political party
 - e. Neither political party wrote their charter with biblical fidelity as their goal
6. This matters because the Church has a Prophetic Role in the Culture
 - a. We should be able to criticize and resist our political party when it opposes a biblical teaching
 - b. The cross is often marginalized by politics
7. Conclusion
 - a. Primary allegiance is to the Kingdom of God, above nation and political party
 - b. All party platforms are mixed—since no political platform was written with biblical fidelity as its goal
 - c. Regardless of how the election this time around goes, God is still on His throne, His kingdom is still moving forward, and His Spirit is still at work bringing people to Himself. That's what we celebrate as we go to the Communion table.

Discussion Questions

- If our faith has a public dimension, how would you articulate a Christian's responsibility to engage in politics?
- How does a Christian engage politics in a distinctly God-honoring way?
- Where do you feel the conviction to grow in your political engagement?
 - Perhaps you spend too much time consuming political media
 - Perhaps you are disengaged and resistant to the public dimensions of our faith
 - Perhaps you engage in a manner that does not reflect the character of Christ
 - Or something else?
- Consider your honest response: Is winning in politics more important than biblical faithfulness?
- How does the perspective that God is still on his throne, and his kingdom is still advancing, affect your response to election results?