

## *Pk's Perspectives ... Discernment Needed*

*Discernment: "the ability to judge well; (in Christian contexts) perception in the absence of judgment with a view to obtaining spiritual direction and understanding."* More than anything else, I have prayed for discernment during this election cycle. Not just discernment about which candidate should receive my vote but also discernment about the social/cultural issues of my country, the role of my country on the world stage, and the spiritual condition of my country.

I've encouraged you to move beyond consideration of each party's candidate and educate yourself on the Party Platform the candidates represent. I often find myself wishing for a viable third party that combines the best parts of the two major political parties and flushes everything else. Maybe a Democratican Party or a Republicratic Party. Other than among political party loyalists who have seemingly abandoned rational thought, an objective study of the party platforms would reveal some good points on both sides of the political fence while also exposing some nonsensical solutions for issues facing our nation. I've been seeking discernment as to which party platform is most cognizant and honoring of the foundational pillars on which the USA was built. Our democracy has never been perfect – will never be perfect – but the guiding principles on which our democracy was founded have, in times past, served to make ours a strong, influential nation.

Though undoubtedly a significant part of the equation, the sum of our nation has always been greater than the personality of the individual occupying the White House. The heart of America has survived, albeit not unscathed, some disastrous presidencies and tumultuous seasons in her history; I believe this is owing to the strength of the foundational pillars on which our nation was founded and our acknowledgement of the Divine truth from which many of those pillars were crafted. Any political party that aims to loose our nation from its foundational moorings is a party I cannot support. One last time: If you are not drawn to the "top-of-the-ballot" candidate, you ought to at least consider voting for the candidate attached to the best party platform.

Both presidential candidates are flawed: we all know this and we are exasperated. When the question you ask of yourself is "Which candidate do I dislike the least?" you know the pickings are slim! I read something in a fellow pastor's blog that snagged my attention. He wrote, "As a pastor, I would rather deal with a church attendee who is blatant and brash in their sinning than one who is devious, lying, cunning and deceptive. Both are problematic, but one is easier to deal with than the other. If I were a pastor bringing correction to a parishioner, I would prefer dealing with a 'blatant/brash-type' any day over a 'devious/cunning-type.' The chances of making progress with the first type are many times greater than the second type." In the Bible, some of God's harshest language is reserved for those who knowingly practice deceit. God says in Proverbs 26:23-24 that "Insincere talk that hides what you are really thinking is like a fine glaze on a cheap clay pot. A hateful person disguises himself with his speech and harbors deceit within." Christ called the Pharisees hypocrites and described them as people who clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Discernment indeed. Abstain from CNN, FOX News, MSNBC or any other news outlet between now and Election Day. Refuse to follow the plethora of political links posted on Facebook; turn-off your favorite talk radio program. Exit the heated rhetoric at your favorite watering hole. Instead - still your soul, bow before your King and humbly ask for discernment. Cya in Sunday School & Worship, PK.