

Pk's Perspectives ... Walk Differently

Did you watch any of the Republican National Convention that convened last week in Cleveland? Have you been watching the Democratic National Convention taking place in Philadelphia this week? I have...but only in short snippets. I can't take a large dose of either convention without developing severe gastritis.

My biggest takeaway from what I've witnessed so far is that both parties are focused on tearing down the candidate of the opposing party. Can you say negativity? It seems I heard more about Clinton than Trump while watching the RNC and I've heard more about Trump than Clinton while watching the DNC. I guess I'm just enough of a Pollyanna to hope that the RNC/DNC would go to great lengths to elucidate their respective party platforms. I long for someone to rise above the retaliatory volley of verbal missiles and express in positive, clear, honest dialogue both the substance of where he or she would lead this great nation and by what means they would make the vision a reality. Although I disagree with most of his dystopian ideas, I feel that Bernie Sanders has tried (at least some of the time!) to rise above the fray and practice a measure of honesty when communicating his vision for America. Bernie, however, is the exception to the general rule of modern politics; demeaning a political opponent has become the standard in politics while the exercise of communicating a concise, achievable vision for America has fallen into abject disregard.

My gut tells me that a "Person on the Street" survey posing the question "What is the Republican/Democratic party platform?" would mostly be answered with emotional diatribes about what this party or that party opposes. "The Republicans are against..." or "The Democrats are against...". And most of this rhetoric would not be based on an examined analysis of either party's platform but rather on the mind-numbing media repetition of the vitriol spewing forth from every political faction. Reasonable thought seems to have been removed from the political discourse; it's no wonder so many of the reasoned populace have resigned from the decaying cavalcade of national politics.

Yes, our political process frustrates me. But it has only been in these last few months that I have come to understand why my soul is on edge...why my response to politics has become so visceral. I see reflected in the political dialogue a mirror image of what the church in America is well on the way to becoming.

My gut tells me that a vast majority of people unfamiliar with the Gospel of Jesus can only identify Christianity by what we oppose. The voices of Christianity that are most familiar and heard most often by people unfamiliar with the tenets of a Christ follower are the voices of condemnation, judgment, and conditional love. The winsome beauty of our Father's love, the transforming power of mercy and grace, the restoration and healing found in relationship with Jesus – these are strange ideas for the person watching from the fringes of Christian community. Why? Because we talk about these things primarily in our church caucuses and hesitate to live them out in the marketplace.

Republicans promote themselves by ripping apart and rendering Democrats as lacking in substance. Democrats promote themselves by ripping apart and rendering Republicans as lacking in substance. Satan promotes his agenda by ripping apart and rendering the Gospel of Jesus as lacking in substance. Followers of Christ are called to walk differently. Christ is not promoted when we rip apart, condemn, and disparage the very ones for whom Christ endured the agony of the cross. Cya in Sunday School, Pk.