

Why Christians should be involved in Politics?

By Bill Muehlenberg

Real biblical Christians should be interested in everything God made, and that includes politics. The state is a creation of God (see for example Romans 13:1-7). To ignore or minimise what God has made is not showing respect to our Creator and Lord.

Yet countless millions of Christians in the West take absolutely no interest whatsoever in politics, and don't know anything about political matters. All this means is that they will allow any and every evil and godless government to rule. Ignorance of political matters is not a virtue – it is in fact a sin.

Contrary to what some uninformed believers might think, God very much cares about such matters. The Bible tells us heaps about political issues.

Consider just a few texts from Psalms and Proverbs:

Psalm 47:9 The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.

Psalm 75:6-7 No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another.

Psalm 94:10 Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches man lack knowledge?

Prov 14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.

Prov 28:2 When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a ruler with discernment and knowledge maintains order.

Prov 28:12 When the righteous triumph, there is great elation; but when the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding.

Pro 29:2 When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, they groan. (NLT)

Pro 29:4 By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.

Pro 29:12 If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked.

Pro 29:14 If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will be established forever.

If God is concerned about such matters then so should God's people. At a minimum, we need to be aware of what is happening politically and vote prayerfully and carefully. As Wayne Grudem puts it in his important book, *Politics According to the Bible*:

“I believe that every Christian citizen who lives in a democracy has at the very least a minimal obligation to be well-informed and to vote for candidates and policies that are most consistent with biblical principles.

The opportunity to help select the kind of government we will have is a stewardship that God entrusts to citizens in a democracy, a stewardship that we should not neglect or fail to appreciate. That at least means that Christians are responsible to learn enough about the important issues to be able to vote intelligently”

Yet far too many believers actually exult in their wilful ignorance – they celebrate the fact that they are politically illiterate, and even seem to think it means they are somehow better Christians as a result. But they are simply digging their own graves. All believers must be aware of and involved in politics, or those who don't like Christianity will be, and with sobering results. Thus our faith and politics must co-exist. As Gary DeMar has written in “You've Heard It Said”:

“The objection that religion and politics do not mix can be answered in at least three ways. First, it is true that the Bible's primary concern is not politics. Of course, the same could be said about the Bible's emphasis on family, church, and education. And yet, there are few Christians who would maintain that Christians should not be involved in family, church, and educational issues, all areas of vital concern where politics has a direct impact. The political system invades each of these areas, often leading to excessive control. Political restrictions on private and home schools, for example, put families at the mercy of a bankrupt public education system and a despotic state.”

Indeed, whether we like it or not, politics impacts us and our faith in countless ways, both for good and for ill. We dare not be ignorant of what is happening around us, especially if various political parties or political policies are directly impacting our ability to be church, to evangelise, and to follow the dictates of our conscience.

And when there are major differences between the parties or between candidates, it is not only foolish in the extreme, but in fact sinful to just blissfully state that there is no difference, and it doesn't bother me anyway. In both America and Australia we see very real battle lines being drawn on key issues.

Broadly speaking some parties and politicians are virulently anti-faith, anti-freedom, anti-life, and anti-family. These are very important issues indeed and every Christian should be concerned about such matters. Simply having a party with abortion on demand as official party policy (as the US Democratic Party and the Australian Labor Party) is a huge dividing line between where the parties are at.

We saw in the US just a few days ago half the Democrats at their convention booing God not just once but three times. This certainly never happened at the Republican National Convention. So here is just one more area where very real differences exist – differences which believers should be aware of and concerned about.

But so many believers are completely clueless as to what is happening around them in the political and social arenas, and if they do vote, they will vote in a reckless and uninformed manner. God will not hold them guiltless of such gross irresponsibility and lack of Christian duty.

Another book you should get is Neil Mammen's *Jesus is Involved in Politics*. In it he examines all the usual lame objections against Christian political involvement, and reminds us that if we want to lose it all – our religious, political, and social freedoms – just keep on with this head-in-the-sand approach.

He asks how it could have been wrong for Christians like William Wilberforce or Martin Luther King Jr. to be involved in politics. They did so much good for the world and the gospel, and shined the light of Christ so brightly with their political involvement; surely we need more of this, not less.

We would all be so much worse off today if they had heeded the advice of their evangellyfish friends and stayed out of politics. And we have just as important battles today which must be fought, and that will include fighting them in the political, social, intellectual, and judicial arenas.

The battle over marriage and family, the battle for religious freedom, and the battle for the right to life are just three of these hugely important battles every single Christian should be involved in. Yet tragically the majority of believers are not. They seem to neither know nor care about these matters.

That is why some of us put together the Canberra Declaration to address these key issues. If you have not yet done so, please sign it: www.canberradeclaration.org.au/

Yet if believers do not snap out of their sinful slumber and apathy real soon, they will simply find that it is too late. Bible-believing churches will be closed down, the proclamation of the gospel will be greatly restricted, and Bibles may well be burned in the streets. I kid you not. That is exactly where we are headed today in the West. Yet most believers are blissfully unaware of all this and couldn't give a rip.

They will one day stand before their maker with heads bowed and mouths closed, as they are asked to give an account. They will be asked why they could not get themselves off their lousy TVs or their stupid Facebook games for just a few hours to do something worthwhile for Christ and the kingdom.

I for one don't want to be one of those people. I want to hear these words from my Saviour: "Well done, good and faithful servant." And that includes being salt and light in the political arena.