

Should the Church be involved in Politics...by Dr. Dan Coflin

I have had several pastors ask my opinion regarding the local church and whether or not the church should be involved in politics. I know some churches have chosen to not make mention of political parties or candidates believing that doing so somehow compromises the message of the gospel. The following is my response & the actions I have taken as a pastor of a local church.

The Bible is a very political book. It is all about kingdoms and nations and governments. The scriptures compare the kingdom of God with the kingdoms of this world and shows us, I believe, how we are to be involved and participate in the affairs of the world. The “end game” is for the kingdom of God to “cover all the earth” so that the “kingdoms of this world would become a part of the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ...” Isaiah prophesied that the “increase of his (Jesus) government and peace there shall be no end...” In the Old Testament the prophets anointed kings of nations, not just Israel. The assignment God gave Elijah was to anoint Jehu as the new king of Israel & Hazael as the new king of Syria. The prophets and priests were counselors to the kings and very much involved in political affairs.

Even when the people of God were carried off as captives to other nations God’s directive for them was to “seek the peace of the city...and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall you have peace.” Even in a foreign land God raised up leaders of the captives to stand before kings as counselors and rulers such as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Nehemiah, Mordecai, and Esther. The New Testament gives us instructions to pray for government leaders, kings, & all those in authority.

Jumping ahead to more modern times and the history of the political involvement of the church in our own country we find some remarkable facts. During the days leading up to the American Revolution it was the pastors and sermons they preached every Sunday that informed congregations of their civic responsibilities given by God. The involvement of pastors and churches went beyond prayers and scripture reading.

The Black Robed Regiments was a reference to many of the clergy that rallied the men of their congregations and led them into battle against the British. One such pastor was John Muhlenberg, who in January of 1776, after preaching a sermon from Ecclesiastes 3, declared: “There is a time to fight, and that time has now come!” He removed his clerical robes to reveal the uniform of a military officer and led 300 men from his church to defend their liberties.

Political sermons, reminding people of their responsibility, continued many years and were not just preached but published and circulated throughout the communities. One such sermon was entitled, “A Voice of Warning to Christians on the Ensuing Election of a President of the United States.” All over America, pastors would stand in their pulpits and call out political parties and candidates by name and compare their positions with the scriptures. Our Founding Fathers were overtly Christian, even though many revisionists of American History say otherwise.

Now, as then, we have a duty as Christians to stand for those policies, candidates, and political platforms that best represent the will of God for our nation as described in the Bible. Our church takes the fourth Sunday of every month and during the service we pray for our leaders and we compare political parties, candidates and their positions to see which stand for biblical truth and righteousness.

We distribute voter guides and help inform the community of the different candidates and their party's platform. Jesus said that we were to be salt and light to the world around us. How different our political policies would be if it were committed Christians on the School Boards, County Commission seats, City Council, Mayors office, and every level of government.

I believe we have a mandate from Heaven to get involved and be a loud voice in every realm of society. Churches are not to be an institution on their own, but to transform society with the truth and love of God until God's will to "cover the earth with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the seas" is fulfilled.