

A WORD FROM THE ELDERS CONCERNING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

In all our years, we have never seen anything in the political realm like the 2016 presidential election. Within our congregation, there are both those who strongly desire the Elders to speak about the election issues and candidates, and those who adamantly believe that pastors should “keep quiet about politics – no exceptions.” In our congregation, most of the disagreement is not over whether to vote for Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton. The most heated conversations concern whether one should vote for Donald Trump, vote for a third party or lesser known candidate, or just not vote at all in the presidential election. Obviously all sides have their particular reasons for voting one way or another and each side feels strongly about their reasons.

As elders of the church, we are not going to come down publically on one side or another of this controversy. Some may interpret this as cowardice, but we believe it is the position God would have us take. When it comes to moral issues, we have spoken clearly multiple times. Just recently, we presented a lengthy series entitled “Here We Stand,” speaking on issues such as abortion, homosexuality, homosexual marriage, transgender issues, and many other moral as well as doctrinal issues being dealt with in our culture. The issues of this election (especially the issue of whether to vote for Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, a third party candidate, or a write-in candidate) do not merit a “Here We Stand” declaration from the elders.

Our counsel to the congregation is two-fold. First, seek the Lord through yielded prayer. Do not go to Him with your mind made up asking Him to endorse what you have already decided. James 1:5-6a says, “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting...”

As a part of your prayer for wisdom, seek the Lord about what would be best for the spread of the Gospel and what would be best for our children. Consider the words of Dr. Frank Page, the President of the Executive Committee of our denomination, *...let's approach the election with the 'greater good' in mind. Why not ask the Lord to guide you to cast your ballot for the greater good for the nation; for the greater good for our Christian liberties; for the greater good for our children and their children and their children's children; but, most importantly, for the greater good for God's will and purposes for our nation and for us as His people? In the Old Testament book of I Kings we read that the Lord instructed Elijah to anoint two kings. Why would Elijah anoint wicked Hazael as king of Aram, who would later afflict God's own people? Because God directed him to. Why would Elijah anoint Jehu, who would carry spiritual reform so far and no farther? Because God directed him to. Regardless of who sat on the throne then — or who sits in the seat of power now — God is still in control.*

Dr. Page goes on to say, *Each of us must do what we [are] led by God's Spirit to do. But, we are neither unspiritual nor unscriptural if we choose to cast our ballot, bathed in prayer, and exercised with the earnest desire that God's ultimate and unfailing purposes be fulfilled, whether for redemption of our sin-sickened society or for the rightful judgment of a nation that forgets God. At the end of the day, we confess with those gone before that we are merely strangers and pilgrims on the earth, for our citizenship is in heaven. Our hope rests not in political parties, powerful personalities, or prestigious positions. Our hope is in God.*

A second area of counsel from the elders to FBC members is that we do not allow differing views on this election to cause us to lose what Ephesians 4:3 calls “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The unity of His people is precious to our Lord, and it should be precious to us. Guard your words. Control your temper. Do not elevate personal opinions to the level of God's will for all.

In closing, we quote Bruce Ashford's timely reminder, *Our hope isn't in an elected president, a nominated SCOTUS [Supreme Court of the United States], or a sitting Congress, but in a coming King. His name is Jesus.*