



Pastor's Page

“Politics for a change”

Well it looks like it's going to be a two-horse race after all - the blues or the reds? –I just hope its Man. United and not Chelsea who triumph! But what of politics - well as Tearfund say “Its important for Christians to vote as voting is one part of how we engage with the country that we live in, and the people who are in charge of it. We are called to meet the human needs, both spiritual and material, of the community around us. We are charged with being salt and light to the world (Matt. 5.13-16). In an imperfect world, political activity is a necessary means of deciding how we organise society, use resources and live with one another – things that God cares deeply about. As Christians, we are called to be in the world and not of the world - voting gives us the chance to reflect on the Kingdom of God, on how things should be, and to think about how we can apply the principles of justice and mercy to decision-making on earth today. No political programme will be perfect but the democratic process, including voting, allows Christians to participate and share in some of the responsibility for our stewardship of God's creation.

Political engagement is also an opportunity to prevent harm, as well as to do good. If we choose not to vote, then we are rejecting the opportunity to have our say in the way in which things are run. Whilst this might not seem like a big deal, disengagement and apathy on a large scale will create a politics which is unaccountable and unrepresentative, and make it easier for politicians to take bad decisions. We are in a massively privileged position in this country where we are able to speak out against the injustices that we see in the UK and around the world. It seems irresponsible to enjoy this position, which still evades millions of Christians around the world who are persecuted for their faith, and not use it to seek change. Daniel and Esther are two examples of people in the Bible who had the opportunity to engage with the political rulers and structures of their day and change the course of history in the process -. They were able to be relevant, without compromising their own faith. they were (in the Psalmist's words), ‘singing the Lord's song in a strange land’ (Psalm 137:4).

Jesus himself challenged the politic thinking of his day. When he said (in Mark 12) ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's’, he was making a strongly political point about the lordship of God over all the Earth – even Caesar, who was regarded by the Romans as ‘The Christ’, or anointed one of God. The overturning of the tables in the temple courtyard (Mark 11) sent a strong political challenge about how society was living in a way that was corrupt, hypocritical and unjust. Surely Jesus has set us a good example to follow in that we too should challenge our government to act on issues that don't conform to God's plans for the world. Where we see injustices, we should use all available avenues to see them redressed.” We should speak out for those who have no voices and prayerful voting this Thursday is a vital part of that process.

So, if you still haven't made up your mind, come and hear our local parliamentary candidates this Tuesday at Selly Oak Elim church. You never know, some of them might be seeking God's agenda for a change!

2nd May 2010