**Election Day Reflections and Perspectives**

Election Day USED to signal a welcomed end to:

* Incessant political ads on television, radio, and alongside roads, homes, schools, and businesses. Oh there might be the occasional follow-up “Thank-you for your support” ad or two afterwards, but typically we were back to our “regularly scheduled program” later in the week. Somehow I don’t foresee that happening this year.
* Phone bank calls and knocks at your door in the evenings from people vying for your vote, at least until the next election cycle.
* Political bickering and posturing both on the airwaves and as the common topic of conversation EVERYWHERE.
* A “Now let’s get “back to work” attitude in both the political governance and private-life realms. More recently, it seems the next election cycle begins (or has already begun) as soon as the hands on the clock surpass Election Day.

**But additionally, it saddens me greatly that:**

**The American Flag has become a political statement-** either the banner of one political party, or its absence being the *standard* statement of the other. A flag is supposed to be a banner indicating unity, solidarity, loyalty, and fidelity. I understand that many don’t feel this way about our country *now,* but can we not at least honor the nation (and its ensign) as well as those of the *past* whose dedication and devotion enabled us to have the “right” protest and voice our displeasures under its pennant of protection? (cf.1Sam.7:12, *“Ebenezer”* means *“Thus far the Lord has helped us.”*)

**That Election Day has caused some metropolitan areas to board up their businesses in preparation for post-election riots and vandalism.** Those who *believe in God* neither participate in nor condone unruliness and violence. *“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor* (a *crying out*) *and slander* *be put away from you, along with all malice,”* Eph.4:31. Whatever the outcome of the election, violence, vandalism, and rioting is neither the answer nor the means to a solution. Breaking, burning, looting, and abusing/hurting others is actually detrimental rather than beneficial to whatever “cause” they are perpetrated to promote on every level.

**That *“giving offense”* has become the goal rather than a thing to be avoided.** Though Jesus was actually *“exempt”* (literally, *free*), He went beyond the obligatory to avoid giving *“offense,”* cf. Matt.17:24-27. Currently, and particularly in our *highly politicized climate,* it seems that even a point of logic, principle, or reason can’t be conveyed unless punctuated with ridiculing *“offense.”* Indeed, it appears that *offending* is more the goal than *persuasion* (cp. Acts 19:8-9 where *reason* and *persuasion* were the proper tools of apologetics). Cursing, ridiculing, and verbal (and physical) bullying are the weapons of weak logic, reason, and principled discourse; and perhaps more importantly, less effective means to change anyone’s mind.

**That more people don’t recognize the principle of “Divided we fall.”** Though true in other areas including nationally, it is a biblical dictum. Jesus said that *“Any kingdom divided against itself shall not stand”* relative to those who were either **spiritually** *“with Me”* or conversely *“against Me,”* cf. Matt.12:25-30. The principle holds true in households, families, local churches, and nations: **Divided we fall.** So those that seek to *divide* rather than *unite* us, knowingly or not, seek our destruction.

**That caring** **for our nation** **has been divorced from caring for** **the individual citizens of it.** Everything seems to “me” and “my cause” or “my group” and those affiliated with it. “Others,” and how they are or may be affected by “my” visions and goals are but fodder to be either used and discarded when no longer useful to “my” objectives or abused to accomplish them. Caring for “our” nation means caring for ALL people of it. Please read carefully Rom.12:14-16, *“Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.”*

**That *politics* and *patriotism* have become the “religion” of so many.** I realize that “church” and “state” cannot be completely severed since the freedoms to worship God can be, and certainly are being, increasingly infringed by the governments of men. However, think carefully about the following: Are you a *citizen of the kingdom of God* or *of the state* first and foremost? Which do your conversations and other interactions with people reflect as being your priority? (Scan through your last month’s worth of social media posts and comments if your unsure.) Which *kingdom* occupies your greatest interest, passion, devotion, and promotion? Are you *seeking “first His kingdom and His righteousness”* (Matt.6:33), or has *love of* (our) *country* become your idol of worship?

Finally, please remember a couple of things REGARDLESS of what happens today. 1) God and His kingdom come first, everything else follows distantly. 2) People are still people and need to be respected and treated as such regardless of what they believe and how they vote. 3) Even if our country should descend into chaos (and I, like you, pray that it doesn’t), Jesus is still reigns as *King,* and *“… we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God,” “every knee will bow… and every tongue shall give praise to God”* when *“each one of us shall give account of himself to God,”* Rom.14:10-12. So, 4) remember these things and act accordingly. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)