



Post-Election 2016: Where do we go from here?

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It's been an interesting week to say the least.

How do we stay faithful in this moment?

What are we learning through this experience?

We remain a divided nation. Obviously we're divided along political lines, but it's also clear we're divided along other lines as well. We're divided along racial lines, we're divided along geographic lines (particularly urban vs. rural) and we're even divided along generational lines. These same divides can be seen in our families and our church bodies as well.

Many of us live in the world of social media, for better or for worse, and it's been enlightening to watch the different reactions to this week's election. While some have grieved me, more than anything else, I'm trying to listen deeply. I'm reaching out to friends who don't necessarily share my own convictions and viewpoints – seeking to understand their emotions right now and just demonstrate that I care.

Our posture and response in this moment is critical. We live in a culture where 42% of our fellow citizens believe "people of faith" are part of the problem and reject the idea that religious individuals could be part of the solution (Good Faith: Being a Christian When Society Thinks You're Irrelevant and Extreme, David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, 2016, p. 13).

This week Pew Research released *How the Faithful Voted: A preliminary 2016 Analysis* (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/>). They report that white born again, evangelical Christians fell into the following breakdown: 16% voting for Clinton and 81% voting for Trump (with my apologies to my African American and Latino brothers and sisters as they did not report the breakdown for African American Evangelicals or Latino Evangelicals – I know that in those communities, the voting breakdown is very different from what's represented here). The religiously unaffiliated (the "nones") broke down this way: 68% voting for Clinton and 26% voting for Trump.

Here's why our posture and response in this moment is so critical. We're evangelicals; we believe that Jesus calls us to take His Gospel into the world and make disciples. This is just one snapshot, but the fastest growing demographic of our culture is the "nones". Politically, we're at polar opposites of the spectrum. If we'd take a look along racial lines, particularly with our African American or Latino friends, we'd find similar disparity. We're called to reach people who do not share our political values or aspirations, we're called to reach people with whom we share little common ground. In moments like this, individuals on both sides of these divides are seeing the opposite side as the enemy. It's hard to

love, much less disciple, someone who you see as the enemy or vice versa. It's hard to love when you view the other with fear or disdain.

I'm praying that by God's grace, He helps us stay on mission in this tumultuous moment. I'm praying that God empowers me and my brothers and sisters to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness rather than the things we're prone to make our priority or focus. There's a danger in winning a battle if it causes you to lose the war.

1. Let's be quick to listen and slow to speak right now. There's a lot of fear and frustration which rarely produce good fruit in our lives. Let's listen to those who do not share our convictions or viewpoints and show them the respect that any image-bearer is due.
2. Let's stay on Mission! Jesus calls us to seek the Kingdom first. The Kingdom of God will not be ushered in through any earthly political party, they all fall short. Let's make sure we're putting our hope in the only King who is able to deliver the Kingdom that we long to see and experience.
3. Let's reach out to those who are different than us with compassion, grace, humility and a desire to understand before being understood. There's not a political solution to the problems our society is facing and I'm convinced that most of our challenges have a local solution. Can we show hospitality to those with whom we may not agree with? Can we show grace to those who see us as part of the problem? Are we going to love our neighbors the way Jesus calls us to love our neighbors?

Jesus has placed us in this moment of time to represent Him. I'm praying that we as His church respond in obedience and live as citizens of the Kingdom of God. Let's take seriously the call to be ambassadors of His kingdom and to engage in the ministry of reconciliation that is our response to His love and grace.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21:

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Christ's Peace,

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