

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT IT?

You probably know the old “rule” about never talking about religion or politics (or money or sex, but those are different Brewed Theology topics). The problem with *not* talking about these subjects is that it’s made us *unable* to talk about them. How often have you heard or said, “We’re just so divided right now?” How often or recently have you (or your church) done something about that?

Among many of the United States’ founding principles is the idea of a “wall of separation” between the church and the state. Yet, for centuries, pastors, politicians, pundits, and people have blurred the line between the two.

Today, some churches tell their congregants whom to vote for, while other churches take definitive stances on issues like abortion, homosexuality, social justice, voter rights, and anything else. Others churches

CHURCH & POLITICS

Is Jesus a Republican or a Democrat?

**a Brewed Theology
conversation starter**

avoid anything that smells “political” (a challenge, when everything seems politicized.) Christians seem to commonly flee churches that don’t match their politics, but less commonly adjust their politics to be informed by their churches.

Jesus says we can’t serve two masters, and divided houses fall. So, we should probably talk about this.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What does “political” mean? How about “partisan”? What role does your faith play in your politics? What about how your politics inform your faith? Which should inform which? Did you know that the phrase “separation of church and state” doesn’t exist in the Constitution? What does separation of church and state mean to you? Should churches talk about politics? Should Christians be involved in the political arena? How should government treat different religious traditions? Was Jesus “political” or “partisan”? How would Jesus vote? What would Jesus’ politics look like today? What would he say about ours?

BIBLE BASICS

The Bible is rife with politics. Check out these stories from scripture that deal with political realities:

- **Mark 12:13-17:** Jesus answers a tricky question about paying taxes to the government.
- **Matthew 6:19-24:** Jesus talks wealth, sight, and divided allegiances.
- **Galatians 3:26-28:** In Christ there are no divisions. But in society there are. How do we reconcile these?
- **Romans 13:1-7:** Paul encourages the church to respect the authorities who have been instituted by God.
- **1 Samuel 8:** Israel wants a king so they can be like the other nations. God is not a fan of the idea.

ESSENTIAL READINGS and LISTENINGS* (click the **headings** for links to knowledge)

THREE REASONS NOT TO PREACH POLITICS FROM THE PULPIT

A 2012 article by Daniel Darling offering reasons why politics should never be heard from the pulpit.

WILL PEOPLE LEAVE YOUR CHURCH OVER POLITICS?

Dean Inserra outlines two “outrages” about church and politics that lead people to confront their pastor(s), or leave their congregation. Written for pastors, but good for anyone.

ELCA SOCIAL STATEMENT ON CHURCH AND SOCIETY

An Evangelical Lutheran Church in America statement exploring the ways in which the Church interacts with politics. From 1991. Long; feel free to skim. Note sections, “The Church ‘In’ But Not ‘From’ the World” and “The Church’s responsibility in society.”

VIDEO: THE (WRONG?) QUESTION: WOULD JESUS BE A DEMOCRAT OR A REPUBLICAN?

Dr. Michael Kruger from Reformed Theological Seminary discusses this question in a 2-minute video.

Then [read this thorough and helpful article from his 2017 blog article on the subject.](#)

IN CHRIST THERE IS NO DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN

Amanda Tyler argues in 2018 that churches should remain spaces of unity amidst the divisions in society.

TONY CAMPOLO AND SHANE CLAIBORNE: DIALOGUE ON POLITICS

Two best-selling authors and friends dialogue in 2012 on what Jesus has to say about politics and what our role should be.

BONUS READINGS:

LUTHER’S QUOTE ON THE TWO GOVERNMENTS

A dense but important insight by Martin Luther. The “two kingdoms doctrine” helps define roles of faith and politics more clearly.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AMONG MAINLINE PROTESTANTS BY DENOMINATION

Pew Research Center’s data on how Mainline Protestants identify. From 2014. How might it have changed?

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