

# FBC TODAY

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# FBC

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For Ages 3 to 12  
(Preschool to std 6)  
Physical Classes  
8:45am / 11:15am

# The Christian and Politics

(repost from 2nd May 2018, modified)

The election is gearing up next week. As Christians, we are in a unique position as we live in this world but are not of this world. How do we understand and operate in the political landscape in a meaningful and godly manner that will be a blessing to the nation?

### Our Dilemma:

Christians are torn between the two positions. One of activism being totally immersed, working, praying, and moving with a political party to enact change and on the other end of the spectrum, there are those who believe



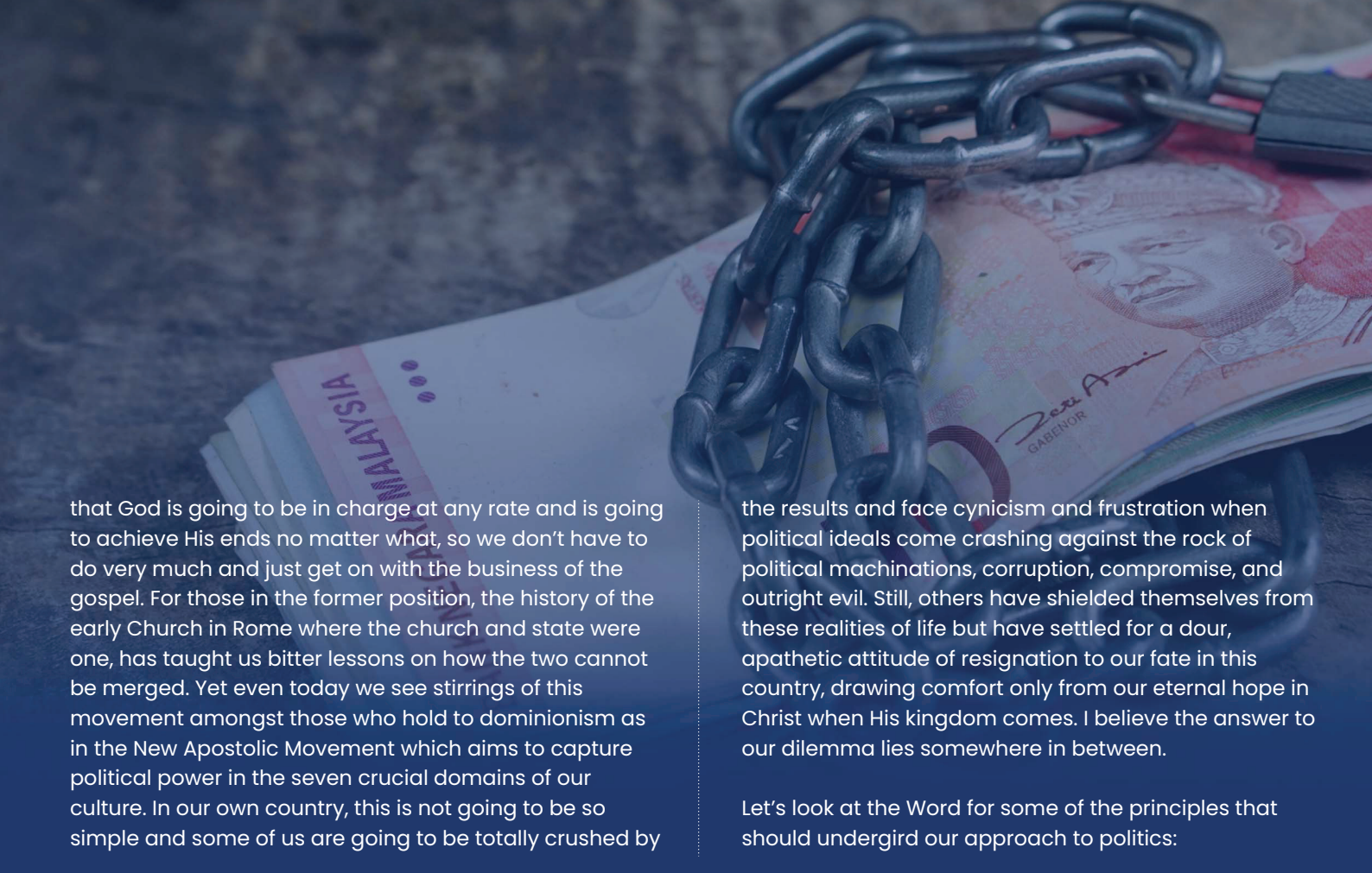
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that God is going to be in charge at any rate and is going to achieve His ends no matter what, so we don't have to do very much and just get on with the business of the gospel. For those in the former position, the history of the early Church in Rome where the church and state were one, has taught us bitter lessons on how the two cannot be merged. Yet even today we see stirrings of this movement amongst those who hold to dominionism as in the New Apostolic Movement which aims to capture political power in the seven crucial domains of our culture. In our own country, this is not going to be so simple and some of us are going to be totally crushed by

the results and face cynicism and frustration when political ideals come crashing against the rock of political machinations, corruption, compromise, and outright evil. Still, others have shielded themselves from these realities of life but have settled for a dour, apathetic attitude of resignation to our fate in this country, drawing comfort only from our eternal hope in Christ when His kingdom comes. I believe the answer to our dilemma lies somewhere in between.

Let's look at the Word for some of the principles that should undergird our approach to politics:

### #1. The Principle of Separation:

Christians are uniquely separate from the state. Look at 1 Peter 2:11 (ESV) *"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."*

We **do not really belong** to any state because our first allegiance is to the kingdom of God. Jesus states this more clearly in John 18:36-37 (ESV). *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose, I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."*

It is clear from the passage that Jesus' emphasis is not on the political process. Yes, He is king, but his kingdom is not "from this world" meaning it does not derive its processes and goals from the templates that normally apply to earthly kingdoms. We see their differences here:

#### Earthly kingdom

Earthly kingdoms derive their dominion from political, physical, and military power and their goals are prosperity and advancement of their physical borders and expansion of the temporal resources of their kingdoms.

#### Jesus' kingdom

Jesus' kingdom works on a whole different dynamic. His kingdom is about truth. It is about the truth about us, our sins, and impending eternal death and separation from God. It is the truth that Jesus is God's Son and His death upon the cross will provide a way for people from every nation to be saved and enter fully into an eternal kingdom one day when Christ comes again.



### Earthly kingdom

All about hard power and dominion bounded within the constraints of time.

About gaining the power to compel obedience and exact tribute to run a temporal society.

About the transformation of society in order to change the individuals.

### Jesus' kingdom

About Jesus's truth and his eternal rule in an eternal kingdom beyond the constraints of time.

About reaching the hearts and souls for an eternal future.

About the transformation of the individual to change society.

Hence for the Christian, our focus must mirror that of our Savior, and our primary attention is to our commitment to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must not be sucked into the naïve belief of political activism and place all our efforts on the secular restructuring of society as our end goal. Our ultimate aim must always be the truth. In many ways, our paths may run parallel with political activism but ours must always transcend politics and have the bigger goal in mind.

### How do we operate in a manner that will reflect our separation?

Mark 12:17 (ESV) Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." When he said to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, he was brandishing the common denarii which bore the image of Caesar. It was right to give back to Caesar that which already bore his image. There is no betrayal of the Jewish nation as they lived in a Roman world and were only giving back to Rome that which belonged to Rome in the first place.

Hence, we can draw the same inference in our own society that we too must give back to our society that which belongs to society. We pay taxes, contribute to our pension funds and participate in a political process that keeps our communities functioning. In other words, we give back to society for what is required to keep society afloat.

On the other hand, we are to give back to God what belongs to God and that is an even greater responsibility than giving back to Caesar his coins. When Jesus commanded conformity to state laws, he subtly undermined its final authority with this phrase. Hence our responsibility to society is limited and temporal. At a much deeper level, we all bear the image of God, created to reflect who He is, resemble Him, and represent Him.

Ultimately our commitment is to remain true to our original purpose of being imprinted with the image of God in our souls to commit our lives with integrity and purpose for the furtherance of His kingdom through our ministry of the gospel.

## #2. The Principle of Engagement:

**Although Christians are to be separate they are also expected to be engaged with society.**

We are obligated to participate in society no matter how cruel or unfair the system is. In fact, few governments today can even come close to the violent corruption and evil of the Roman government of the day. Hence, we need to vote, pay our taxes and even participate in government by standing for elections because Christians have an obligation to render to our government what is theirs by divine mandate.

We seek the welfare of the state through our prayers believing that it is God in the end who is responsible for upholding these leaders of the state. The reason for our support in engagement is that we will have a society that works, with peace and freedom. People can live without oppression, and under these conditions, we have breathing room for the gospel to proliferate.

The engagement of Christians is both subject to the authority of the state and yet to hold the state accountable for the way it rules. Governors are sent by God “to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good”. Hence the Christian engages in society as its conscience reminding the state of its divine responsibility and holding the state and its stewards accountable to the truth.

We see all across the bible examples of believers speaking truth to power and holding kings accountable. Hence when we vote in elections we participate in the process of holding governments to account.

In the book of Esther, we read that she was the only person who stood between the people of Israel and genocide. Her uncle Mordecai rightly pointed out that it was God who put her in this special position to act to save their people. After all, what were the odds of a Jewess being chosen in a beauty contest to be the queen of Persia over all the rest of the native Persians?

History has shown us the example of Christians like William Wilberforce whose lonely voice in the British Parliament persisted as the conscience of the nation always reminding them of their corporate sin of slavery.


Only after only more than 40 years was slavery finally overturned by an act of Parliament. He wrote, “A private faith that does not act in the face of oppression is no faith at all.”

True faith is one that works, and the one that works engages in society in which we are ultimately strangers and aliens. Hence the Christian in society and in politics is both separate and yet engaged. An alien and yet the best citizen.

Our engagement is to be based on a platform of truth which is integrity hence the rule of law, fairness, and purpose, for the betterment of society. **As a church, we should never be aligned with any particular political party even those who claim the mantle of even our own faith.** Faith-based parties will always use religion to achieve political aims with the former always subservient to the latter and that’s when the wheels will fall off the wagon at some stage.

**Our values will transcend political parties. We are to vote for candidates that most closely resemble our own commitment to the truth yet wisely recognize that all humans are flawed and sinful so all too often it might be the case of choosing the lesser of two evils.**

We engage in the political process for the betterment of society and to be the conscience of the state trusting that it is God who is behind our efforts. We will never for a moment believe that using the levers of power is the only way to save society or further the interest of God’s kingdom. Our engagement is the blessing of common grace God has bestowed upon society and the effects of the state will necessarily always be limited and temporal and never ideal.



Whether we are involved in the political process by running for government or voting at the booth we do so trusting that it is ultimately God's sovereign power that will overrule in the end. God is the one who is intimately involved in the political process as we see in Daniel 2:21 "He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings;"

We need to believe that it is, in the end, God who will re-establish perfect justice and peace in the full consummation of his kingdom and whatever small victories we might savor on this side of the second coming is just foretastes of the real justice that is yet to come one day.

**Like Esther, we have come into this kingdom for a time such as this... Let's all make our voices heard, and our votes are counted next week.**

Link to full article:

<http://fbc.com.my/the-christian-and-politics/>



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## PrayerSpotlight

### Prayer for Elections

1. Pray for righteous candidates to seek God's guidance. Send them godly wisdom and good counselors. And give election candidates the strength to choose integrity in both their campaigns and their terms in office.
2. Pray that candidates running for election would speak out about poverty and listen to the voices of the vulnerable. Give our leaders the wisdom to create solutions that empower people living in poverty to survive and thrive. Help them to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly in fear of God.
3. Pray that our leaders would commit to working together (and that we would too). Help our leaders be willing to walk alongside each other, their constituents, and especially the marginalized. Our leaders have different opinions and priorities; give them the wisdom to navigate differences and work together to strengthen our country.
4. Pray for wisdom for voters and a safe and fair election. Ask God to remove any who might try to unjustly or illegally change the outcome of the voting. Pray for good weather on election day so that there will be a large turnout.
5. Pray for courage born of wisdom will be given to Christians in places of leadership in government, courts, businesses, and entertainment so that they will shine for Jesus.