



URBAN CURRENT

A voter's view from the Windy City

I am not claiming to be an expert in these matters. However, as a lifelong voter in Chicago and the state of Illinois, I have learned a thing or two about terrible choices when it comes to elections. I'm just sayin' ...

There have been elections I felt slightly better about in terms of the choices. Those would be exceptions to the rule. Most often my trip to the poll is dreaded. I feel like my best option or my best hope is to cast a vote that might, just might, move the mud around in a way that challenges the status quo. At least that's what I tell myself.

You must vote. Bad choices do not let you opt out. The blood of every soldier in every land, of every war and every battle under the red, white, and blue, cries out to you. Too many people have sacrificed too much to preserve our right to go to the polls for you to say, "I'm staying home." Americans facing murderous fire on a foreign battlefield, confronted with snarling dogs handled by our neighbors, and fire hoses wielded by our own civil servants ought to speak deeply to us about the privilege and practice of voting, even if it is only a ritual.

I'm not saying failure to vote is like Colin Kaepernick sitting down during the "Star Spangled Banner," but it is something to think about.

Yes, you must vote.

Then there is the matter of the stewardship of your ballot. Certainly this involves utilizing the privilege. Of course, managing this sacred trust as a believer must be done with scripture, prayer, and reverence.

Is my vote counting in the actual contest? In the spirit of transparency, yes, I have written in candidates. That was many years ago. Maybe I was more stubborn then. Maybe I was more arrogant. I don't know. Now, I want to cast a ballot that counts in the real contest.

No, there is no parallel in scripture. There are some pretty strong principles. Joseph didn't get to vote. He didn't just serve Pharaoh, he served Pharaoh with a great attitude. He

didn't go on Facebook and rant about Pharaoh's unsuitability, moral failures, or bloodletting. He knew God placed him when and where he found himself.

Moses' parents returned him to Pharaoh's house to be raised and educated. Moses didn't get a vote. Moses served Pharaoh, the king who was enslaving his own people.

Nebuchadnezzar would make us happy for Clinton or Trump. Talk about hubris and arrogance! Daniel didn't get a vote. He had no say. Daniel served the king, and yes, with a great attitude. He understood he was where God wanted him doing what God desired.

Oh. Then there's Ahasuerus. A king typical in the ancient world, who withheld from himself no vice or whim, who wielded power out of an unfettered, depraved ego. Esther had no vote. Shall we say euphemistically, Esther served and she did so with a great attitude.

Does it need to be said? This election highlights our social decay and cultural rot. This election serves up exactly what we deserve. Never mind the 1800s. The better part of the 1900s churches ignored Jim Crow and many bashed those who tried to address injustice. Great attention, energy, and money was given to "reach the world" while ignoring people of color and cities in the U.S. The American dream seemed to be equated with the Kingdom of God when it came to "seeking it first." Pulpits across our country have gone soft and silent. We do not tolerate prophets. Churches have become religious, feel-good clubs. We are not very salty and we seemingly have not "let our little light shine."

I know you didn't ask ... but my opinion? We are in the middle of what we helped create.

One of our global partners, Paul Hagelgans, Executive Director of Bible Mission International serving local churches in numerous countries, most of which are in the nations of the former Soviet Union, dropped in unexpectedly to pay us a visit a few weeks

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ago. He lovingly laughed at us referencing what he hears overseas of our consternation over the Trump/Clinton choice. He grew up under communism in the USSR. He is now navigating the reality of the new Russian legal restriction on evangelism. Yes, he laughed at us, saying in his thick Russian accent, "You Americans need to remember, God is in control."

A few thoughts.

1. **God owns the world.** Psalm 24:1
2. **God rules the world.** Psalm 103:19
3. **God manages the world.** Daniel 5:21-23
4. **God works through rulers He chooses.** Romans 13:1-7
5. **God gets done what God wants done,** whether through Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Ahasuerus, Caesar Augustus, Herod, as well as Darius and Cyrus.

So, more often than not, I go to my neighborhood polling place trying to strike a blow against what I discern to be the worse evil. As the cities go, so goes the nation.

In times like these, with choices like these, I read a fascinating perspective. In front of you are two doors. You must choose a door. Behind door number one is a man-eating lion. Behind door number 2 *may* be a man-eating lion.



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