

June 27th, 2016

SPIRITUAL LEADERS AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN THIS ELECTION SEASON

America, Join the Movement, Leadership



I give my full and complete endorsement to Jesus Christ. My 100% trust is in God alone, our Sovereign King.

I agree with the late Adrian Rogers, who said, “We dare not identify the Christian faith with the Democrat or Republican party. We need to be free to tell both parties to repent and get right with God.” [1] In fact, I would add what I shared on June 14 with the Southern Baptist Convention, “The church cannot call America to repent until the church repents.”

The Tension Is Real

Christians have dual citizenship. Our citizenship is not only in the Kingdom of God that is eternal and superior to all, but we are blessed, active citizens in the United States of America. Our Sovereign God not *only* determined the *period of time* He ordained us to live, He also determined *where* we would live.

I love the United States of America and still believe it is the greatest country in the world. Yet, I feel an enormous tension in my spirit about how to operate in our nation effectively, even though my ultimate allegiance is to the Kingdom of God that has no end. We live *for* one Kingdom while we live *in* another kingdom. Often, the decisions within our own country increase this tension and we have never lived in a time in our generation when this tension has been any greater.

Spiritual Leaders Are Wrestling Through This Tension

Spiritual leaders are wrestling *through* this tension. While this is real and challenging for each of us, in Jesus’ name for the sake of gospel testimony, we need to cease wrestling *with* each other through this tension. This does not honor God in any way.

Questioning the motives of other Christian leaders is not in your purview, but God’s alone. He is more than capable to take care of His God-called leaders. *For those who are acting like they are spiritual policemen in the evangelical world, it is time to put the whistles away and cease the demeaning of other Christian leaders.* God has called us to love, trust, and honor one another.

In this presidential election season, some are acting like we have had pure choices before and now we do not. Let’s get real: we have *never* had pure choices to select from. *We live in a fallen world and all of our systems are less than perfect.* It was failed when some of our greatest presidents have been elected or when some of our greatest presidents have emerged through the fire of leadership. Perfection

will not occur until we die and our residency changes from here into heaven, and ultimately when Jesus comes again in His coming eternal, sovereign Kingdom.

Besides this, our trust needs to be in our Sovereign God, not in people or our processes. Think on and stand with confidence upon these words:

- Daniel 2:21, “He changes the times and seasons; He removes kings and establishes kings.”
- Daniel 4:26, “...Heaven rules.”
- Proverbs 21:1, “A king’s heart is like streams of water in the Lord’s hand; He directs it wherever He chooses.”

Our trust is in the Lord and His word.

A Precedent That Is Undeniable

As many of you know, I have been navigating through this difficult terrain as President of the Southern Baptist Convention. When my two years of service concluded on the evening of June 15, the terrain did not become any less difficult, but in all reality, may have increased in difficulty in the last few days.

As the volatility increased in this year’s United States presidential election, I prayed, searched, and became convicted in March that there was one biblical character God wanted to use in my life who would become my mentor and model while navigating through these tumultuous waters.

Daniel was a statesman and a prophet. This is what I want to be in my life and leadership. Daniel lived in Jerusalem. In 605 B.C., some say at age 15, Daniel was taken captive along with others and exported to Babylon. He lived there for at least seventy years, where three times each day, he would open his window, kneel facing Jerusalem, and pray. John MacArthur noted this about Daniel: “*He quickly rose to the role of statesman by official royal appointment and served as a confidante of kings, as well as a prophet in two world empires.*”^[2]

Daniel was a godly, praying and fasting man whom God used powerfully. He was entrusted with favor from God and had favor with man. Daniel was entrusted with influencing the King and the future of the country, as well as given the authority to lead. Daniel 1-4 speaks of his relationship and influence with one of the most wicked leaders of all time, King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 5-10 speaks of his relationship with King Belshazzar, King Darius, and King Cyrus.

America is like a modern-day Babylon: sinful, wicked, and godless. God raised up King Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon to exercise God’s judgment upon the people of God. Daniel and the people of God being exported into this godless, wicked nation gives us a living example of where we are as Christ-followers. We need to go to school on how God used Daniel and others in this season of judgment.

Daniel determined he would honor God whatever the costs. Daniel received God’s favor and was given leadership and influence. Each spiritual leader should aspire to be like Daniel.

Throughout Scripture, we see men and women of God who had a voice with leaders of nations. Some examples of these God-called spiritual leaders speaking to a nation’s leader:

- *Moses to Pharaoh*
- *Eliezer to Jehoshaphat*
- *Elijah to Ahab*
- *Elisha to King Ben-hadad of Aram and also to the King of Israel*
- *Nathan to David*
- *Esther to Ahasuerus*

- *Jeremiah to Zedekiah*
- *Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus*
- *John the Baptist to Herod*
- *Peter and John to Annas and Caiaphas*
- *Paul to King Agrippa*

There are others I could list. This is a biblical precedent that is undeniable.

What If

What if Daniel had refused to acknowledge King Nebuchadnezzar and acted like he was too righteous to relate to him? What if Daniel had not answered the request to come interpret his dream? When you read the book of Daniel, you find him relating to these leaders continually, oftentimes entrusted with great influence upon the nation and even property; but at other times, being put in prison or ending up in a lion's den. *Daniel was not for sale.* He even told King Belshazzar, "keep your gifts."^[3] God always prevailed. Daniel was always faithful.

Why would we not want godly spiritual leaders to be influencers upon national and global leaders today?

Spiritual Leaders Need Tact and Discretion

Daniel 2:14, "Then Daniel responded with tact and discretion to Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, who had gone to execute the wise men of Babylon." This is a pivotal verse that we need to go to school on in 2016 as spiritual leaders. In this day of social networking and endless opinions, Christian testimony is being destroyed and people are being hurt continually.

Daniel's tone and words were flavored right, proper, and wise. Daniel's counsel was sound, careful, and sensible.

As Christians and Christian leaders, we need to make sure our tone and words must never eliminate our ability to win someone on this earth to faith in Jesus Christ. *We need more tact and discretion with our words or we automatically forfeit our statesmanship and prophetic voice in America.*

Billy Graham, Daniel, and Spiritual Leaders Today

In Billy Graham's book, *Just As I Am*, he writes about the tension he walked in during the 1996 election season. Two of his friends, Bob Dole and Bill Clinton, were running against each other for the office of President of the United States. While pressure was on him to endorse one of them, he did not do so. Yet, when Elizabeth Dole attended Graham's crusade, some viewed this as an implied endorsement, just as others would do so when he was seen with President Clinton.

Yet, Billy Graham writes these words which so resonate with me today: "*My own prayer was that God's will would be done, and that He would grant wisdom, compassion, and integrity to whoever was elected to our highest office.*"^[4]

Just think what social media would have done to the great Billy Graham, who had an ongoing, personal spiritual relationship with multiple politicians and presidents who served our nation. Just think what social media and modern-day Christianity would have done to Daniel, the statesman and prophet.

Let me set the record straight today: *I want Daniel, the statesman and prophet, and the life, leadership, and legacy of Billy Graham and their relationships with national and global political leaders to be my model rather than sitting on the sideline, critiquing every political candidate and anyone whom God would raise up to influence them.*

Now is the Time to Lead,

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[1] Dr. Adrian Rogers, “Christian Citizenship”, Love Worth Finding Ministries

[2] <https://www.gty.org/resources/bible-introductions/MSB27/daniel>, accessed June 26, 2016

[3] Daniel 5:17

[4] Graham, Billy. *Just As I Am*. Zondervan, 1999. p. 657



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Online: http://www.ronniefloyd.com/blog/10706/leadership/spiritual-leaders-and-their-influence-in-this-election-season/#_ednref2 [Accessed 6/29/2016].