

WHAT HAS POLITICS GOT TO DO WITH ME?

I'm here today as a Christian in politics. I'll be talking in generalities most of the time, but there's no getting around the fact that I'm a member of the Liberal Party-but don't take that as some kind of partisan propaganda- it's just a fact about me.

Now, the question 'what has politics got to do with me' is a good one.

And seeing that you have given up a perfectly good Saturday to come along and listen to me, I'm guessing that you already know that even if you want nothing to do with politics, politics wants everything to do with you.

I used to think politics was just for politicians. I had zero interest in political parties and zero interest in politicians.

And I think that's because it didn't cost me anything. I was happy to let other people keep the government ticking over because it simply didn't impact me one way or another. No matter which party or combination of parties was in power, I was still able to enjoy the bounty of over 500 years' worth of stable, biblical principles enshrined in our legal and political system.

I had equal rights with every other citizen under the law, I had the right to vote, I had equal pay for equal work, I had free speech, I had access to a free market where I could earn money, own a business and buy goods at my own discretion, I had the freedom to practice my faith and teach it to my children, I even had the right to single sex toilets and changerooms.

But those were the good old days. Now expressing certain thoughts outside my own mind- through either words or actions- can get me charged with family violence, child abuse, hate speech, incitement to discriminate and direct discrimination. In fact, failing to utter certain words and perform certain actions can have the same legal impact!

I also failed to generate an interest in politics because by the time I was 18, I genuinely had other problems I couldn't ignore, I was a mess of a person- I had PTSD, I had a **debilitating fear of crowds, of men**, of being out in public. I was failing my university degree and had no hope for my future at all. And even when I did try to understand politics, I felt like it was going to be impossible for me to learn to understand all the ins and outs of political parties. It was all too hard. So I had decided to just vote like my parents did. **Which was for Labor.**

So the fact that I'm standing here today as the number one endorsed candidate for the only safe seat in the western metro region for the Victorian Liberal Party, should tell you that lots of things have changed over the course of my life!

In Australia, and increasingly all around the world, governments are finding excuses to cast off all the restraining checks and balances on their power.

1. Politics is unavoidable- we shouldn't get involved just for our niche religious rights, but for the rights of all. It's part of loving our neighbours.
 - it won't happen to my kids
 - What about the other kids?
 - What about other women- yes lesbians?

-loss of freedom of speech & association for others?

2. God made me & He used everything in my life to strengthen and equip me for the task He's given me, including giving me a desire to do it.

Being in politics requires

1. A supportive family

-God gave me [REDACTED] who had vision and grit

2. A thick skin

-bullied in school

-Unpopular at University

-Prepared me for being excluded, lied about, called names, homophobe, transphobe

3. Conviction

-Being a woman, mother, victim- nobody in the whole world could convince me that transgenderism was harmless or that the school curriculums were healthy.

4. Ability & training

- Read, write & I can speak. (God healed me)

-Being a teacher for over a decade- constant loving gentle discussions, gentle persuasion, running discussions,

-Christian psychologist-

-Church & Nation researcher- refused to apply at first, then applied with 10 others.

5. Willingness

-reluctant member

-William Wilberforce dinner- ok Andrew you can do it.

-End of teaching career prayer to God, 'you choose'- run St Albans

-First Upper House run failure- like Jonah- dragging my feet, tried to run away.

-Voice in the wilderness, Council pamphlets &

-Representative- Lockdowns, mandates, rezoning of prostitution, transgender- debates, success

3. Being preselected was a team effort by Christians- I did not win on merit, I did not win because I was popular in the party, I did not win by being part of a faction. I won because God arranged it, and because Christians joined up and voted according to their consciences. We need a flood of ordinary people who don't want to be MPs to get involved (party structure Lib/Lab, minor parties). Politics is a public ministry & a public witness- don't be an inactive member

I honestly believe that **Christians can and should do more than pray and vote when it comes to politics**. Over the last 15 years I've come to the conclusion that giving up some of our time, some of our effort and some of our money to influence politics is one of the most concrete ways that we can love our neighbours.

There are important questions to think about- **how far should we as Christians push to have Biblical morality enshrined in law**- at what point would we become hypocritical crushing dictators? I am still working these things out for myself.

As Christians, we know that humans are sinful- and that is why all our legal principles drawn from the Bible are based on the idea that Government power must be constrained, must have limits put on it because sinful humans will inevitably attempt to seize the full power of the state to oppress individuals, families and churches- everything good.

We have to maintain realistic expectations of political institutions. The government cannot make people good, it cannot make people like each other. Politicians and parties who promise utopias- be they 'right' or 'left', always require that the instruments of the State be used to control things the state has no right to control. **God gave us four interdependent institutions to order our society- marriage, the family, the church and the state.**

I just want to acknowledge that there is no form of government- no perfect political philosophy, that can overcome the problem of sin in order to fix man and society.

I would argue that the **primary role of Government is to restrain what is evil and to commend what is good**- not providing socio-political salvation through technocratic means.

- Politics is unavoidable- it will come for you
- **Increasingly anti-Christian world, including governments.**

Anti-vilification laws, parental rights, public beliefs, association (hiring and firing, membership), definitions of harm- disagreement is discrimination.

- **Make being Christian illegal**
In Victoria it is illegal to pray or counsel anybody, even at their request, even your own children, to embrace **biblical sexuality** and biological sex.
- As Christians we can disagree with each other how to tackle broad issues like the environment and refugees etc But some principles are non-negotiable, rights of family, right to practice faith etc BUT THE WAY WE DISAGREE IS IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY IN FRONT OF NON CHRISTIANS-
- I grew-up in a political family but I was considered not important enough to be informed.
- I knew what I valued: fairness, justice etc and thought I knew which party represented my values but I was challenged by husband

- Got involved reluctantly and then life got in the way, work, family, house, church
- [REDACTED] speech- pregnant with [REDACTED] naming **Wilberforce Foundation** dinner
- School leave > safe schools
- Party positions > supporting 'Christian' MP
- State election as favour
- Council- to challenge them, and to say what I'm not allowed to say. - gay student bullied to suicide over trans drag Q storytime. Didn't expect to win.
- State for 'me' and society- for God, promised to do this one last thing.
- Bad witness Christians who only turn up to vote in internal elections, don't help.
- Not many are called to be MPs, but all are called to pray for good and godly rulers and should be seeking justice to love our neighbours, just laws are loving.
- Good witness Christians who help eg [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
- Temptations to do wrong things for right reasons ([REDACTED] [REDACTED])