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Making sure your vote counts

Ethel A. Baker

It must have been a remarkable moment. No campaigning, no long lines or voting booths, no exit polls. Instead, as a large group gathered to cast their votes for one of two candidates, personal opinion gave place to prayer.

The book of Acts in the Bible tells the story of the 11 apostles along with more than one hundred other followers of Jesus gathering to elect a replacement for Judas Iscariot: "And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship. . . . And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" ([1:23-26](#)).

It might seem that praying before voting is something only religious people would do, either as a quaint practice or, at times, as a willful mental plea for particular candidates or policies to win the day. Yet, many people pray with great humility and a truly listening heart when they're in trouble or have an important personal decision to make. Would this kind of prayer and politics mix?

Globally, politics have grown more divisive and political beliefs more entrenched, and it can be tempting to simply vote along party lines, let strong human opinion dictate choices, or not vote at all. (Today, on average, 30 to 40 percent of eligible voters in national elections don't go to the polls.) But what if we allowed prayer that seeks God's guidance to lead our political decision-making?

Those early followers of Christ Jesus learned firsthand that healing prayer involves just such humility and spiritual listening. Unlike the religious leaders of his day, whose prayers were typically public, lengthy, and often meant to impress, Jesus instructed his students to shut the door and pray to God in secret. Christian Science elaborates on this in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: "To enter into the heart of prayer, the door of the erring senses must be closed. Lips must be mute and materialism silent, that man may have audience with Spirit, the divine Principle, Love, which destroys all error" ([p. 15](#)).

It is evident from Jesus' teachings and healing works that this kind of praying is effective. Christly prayer wasn't and isn't about having a conversation with God, asking Him to bless our personal preferences or outlining outcomes. According to Jesus, it is a time for listening—for quieting self-interest, opinion, pride, and human will in order to hear God's thoughts and discern divine wisdom and truth.

One moment of such humble, spiritual seeking—even in a voting booth—can elevate thought and purify our desires, trusting God's good will to "be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10), as stated in the Lord's Prayer given by Jesus. What we feel guided to do as a result may or may not line up with our political leanings. But a willingness to trust God, divine Spirit, more than human practices and intents will always be a victory for all involved and lead to progress for citizens and governments.

Though we have no knowledge of Jesus ever voting in an election, it could be said that he cast a ballot often—daily, hourly—and always for the truth of what God is and what God creates. He recognized everyone's individual spiritual, Godlike identity and the universal unity of all as God's children, each of us one with the divine source of goodness, honesty, love, equity, justice, and peace, which exclude division, loss, or alienation. He understood government to have always been in God's hands. His prayer in Gethsemane before his crucifixion was his life's prayer: "Not my will, but thine, be done" ([Luke 22:42](#)). This ultimately resulted in his resurrection, bringing freedom, harmony, unity, and good to generations of others.

This points to the powerful impact of such heaven-anchored deference to mankind’s divine Principle, God—and encourages us to have confidence that our prayers can not only help ameliorate fears about the fairness of the electoral process and whether our vote truly matters but also help throw light on solutions to these issues. It can also aid in bringing clarity and orderliness to the process and moderating emotions, enabling us to recognize and support those willing to serve. Mrs. Eddy once wrote, “Of two things fate cannot rob us; namely, of choosing the best, and of helping others thus to choose” (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, [p. 165](#)).

“Choosing the best” is choosing unselfed prayer that takes a stand for the demonstration of good government, beyond person or party—placing confidence in the infallible divine Mind, universal Love, to unfold God’s way. This spiritual way will always transcend merely human ideals and bring progress for all.

Whatever part of the world you live in, may your voting on election day begin with a quiet moment—in prayer (outside or in the voting booth) that transcends personal opinion and bears witness to God’s power to harmonize, energize, and unite. This is why your vote counts.

Ethel A. Baker, Editor

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