

- Mr Morrison attended a Pentecostal Church at Easter. Mr Shorten attended an Anglican Church at Christmas. Mr Morrison spoke of his beliefs in his first speech as an MP in 2008, but insisted his faith in Jesus "is not a political agenda". Yet, says journalist Jonathan Pearlman, "...religion appears to have guided the Mr. Morrison's views on social issues, such as his opposition to same-sex marriage despite it being at odds with the public (Same-sex marriage was strongly endorsed by Australians in a public vote)." Does it matter how Christians in politics apply their faith in Jesus to their policies? What's your view of how they should go about it?

3. **PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES FOR ACTION**



CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. **Warm Up**

Are you someone who hides away from the media during election campaigns? Or, do you scan all media sources to get as much info as you can on how you'll vote or on what the results will be?

How do you feel when (even if it's a rarity) a representative of the Church speaks up about politics in the media and presents a "Christian" point of view? What's it like for you when they don't say what you would say?

2. **Our democratic opportunity**

- A. In the old worlds represented in the Bible, people had little or no influence to change the governing of nations or even provinces. Given our opportunities in the now to vote and to collectively influence the public discourse on important topics, let's think about how our Christian faith and understanding might impact our choices and concerns come election day.

Discuss—What do politics and Christianity have to do with each other?

- B. **Look up** ABC Vote Compass on-line and take the survey to see how your responses to social and political topics aligns with policies of the major parties in our coming Federal Election

Go to

<https://votecompass.abc.net.au/>



You are welcome to keep the results of the survey private, but you may like to **share some of the**

policy preferences that you made during the survey and why they are important to you as a Christian.

- C. Christians differ widely about policies and politics. What to do? Here are some examples to **chat about**:
- Mike Frost (Author and Principal of Morling College) recently tweeted in a comment criticizing our current PM...
 "...what no politician should do while also claiming to follow Jesus: 1. Support capital punishment 2. Turn away refugees 3. Foster fear of the outsider, the vulnerable 4. Limit the rights of a select group of people 5. Withhold healthcare from people 6. Let people go hungry 7. Cut funding that hurts the least of these 8. Favour the rich over the poor 9. Advocate for war 10. Force your religious beliefs and practices on others."
 - Andrew Hamilton, (Jesuit Priest, UFT), reflecting on how to choose the right party to vote for, said: 'I have always sought to align with those who best depict the kingdom of God (as I see it). I reckon that is all we can do and then choose to respect one another's differences.' What are the pros and cons of this approach?

- In the American political scene, two previous Republican presidential candidates — Pat Robertson and Mike Huckabee - former Southern Baptist preachers, and Ted Cruz, the son of a conservative evangelical pastor— on repeated occasions tied the Christian vote to the Republican cause, with one saying: "If Christians will simply show up and vote our values," Cruz told the Christian Broadcasting Network in 2015, "we'll turn this country around." This year, a Democratic presidential candidate, Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind., is making the same argument, with a twist: "A vote based on Christian values", Buttigieg suggests, would indeed turn the country around, but in a 'progressive' direction." Buttigieg says protecting the poor and welcoming immigrants is a Christian obligation that is inconsistent with Republican priorities. Who is "correct"? How could Christians navigate these big differences in the name of God?

- Brian Houston, leader of Hillsong – the group that generates those cross = love symbols at Easter – spoke to the Sydney Morning Herald in favour of presenting the love of God to the world in contrast to recent tweeting controversies. Brian went public with some unsolicited counsel to people like Issy Falou and Franklin Graham who were both outspoken in defense of the Bible last week. Brian said... "As Christians it is... important to look at ourselves and our own failings and imperfections... If you look at the list of sins that Izzy (Falou) listed there's not too many people he's left out, including Christians. There isn't a person on earth who hasn't told a lie or put something ahead of God (idolatry)." Brian continued..."In 40 years of telling people about... Jesus, I have seen that the 'turn or burn' approach... alienates people. Scaring people doesn't draw them into the love of Jesus. The world doesn't need more judgmental Christians." Do you agree? What can be done?

