

How might Finney's words (above) be fitting for, or clash with our social, religious and political climate in Australia today?

D. BRINGING FAITH AND POLITICS TOGETHER TODAY

Dorothy Day was the subject of one of our "God's Justice League" sermons recently. She once said, "they cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time."



How does Day's "Little works" philosophy sit with you? How does her "ripple effect" (one pebble in a pond) encourage you to be active as a Christian in your community's issues and needs?

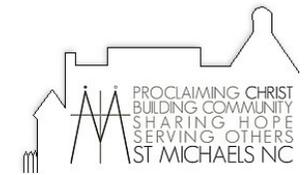
E. POLITICS AS LOCAL MISSION TODAY

Read the handout by Alan Nichols(AM) and discuss ways among his suggestions that you and other members of the church are, or could be involved in local action that makes a difference today?



F. PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer in your discussion group for wisdom, guidance, grace, and energy for the matters we've thought about today.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

Christians & Politics

1. Warm Up

POLITICS, SEX & RELIGION

Were these acceptable topics of conversation in your household when you were younger?

Where and when are appropriate places and times, according to your preferences, to speak about pressing issues in our nation or community?

Has political polarization affected your life negatively? How?

2. Politics and Religion

A. SEPARATION OF STATE AND RELIGION

The prevailing view in Western Europe is that religion should be kept **separate** from government politics. For example, in Sweden, 80% surveyed favour separation of religion and government; 72% in Belgium. Yet, substantial minorities in the UK and Switzerland say govt. policies should support religious values and beliefs, a view popular among church-goers. As expected, religiously unaffiliated adults are less likely than Christians to support church-state ties.

What are some of the pros and cons of separation of State and Religion in your view?

B. GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY AND RELIGION

Do you think the government should have the ability to “manage” religious expression. Why/Why not?

Do you think the government should be guided by religious principles? Why/Why not?

C. QUIET SUBMISSION VERSUS RADICAL ACTION

We heard the early church’s instructions given by Paul in a different era and political environment to ours. In other eras, Christian leaders have called Christians to radical action that stands up to irresponsible or unjust governments.

For example, Archbishop William Temple Archbishop of Canterbury, was the head of the Church of England worldwide from 1942-1944. Temple was an unusual archbishop, who had joined the Labour Party in Britain in 1918. His leadership skills were noted, despite his socialistic leanings. His dedication to socialistic ideals and commitment to bettering the lot of the working class in Britain. Temple even had an influence on the Student’s Christian Movement and called out the “White Australia Policy” and rampant materialism.



Doris LeRoy wrote: “... the reactionary does not want social change, the conservative does not expect it, the liberal only hopes for it, cautiously, and the radical expects it, and looks forward to it, then in such a typology (William) Temple was all his life a radical.”

Which of these categories in the quote do you see yourself best described regarding political engagement?

Fit the following **famous Christians** involved in politics into the typological categories below: Fred Nile, Bono, Hugh Evans, Lyle Shelton, Tim Costello, (Theresa of Calcutta), Nikki Haley, Ann Voskamp.

Conservative _____

Liberal _____

Reactionary _____

Radical _____

What makes each one fit for your chosen typological description?

D. CHRISTIANS AND POLITICAL ACTION/ENGAGEMENT

Presbyterian church leader Charles Finney is remembered as the engine room for a great revival in America in the 19th Century.

A portrait of Charles Finney, a man with a full beard and long hair, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a high collar.

POLITICS & CHRISTIANS

"The time has come that Christians must vote for honest men and take consistent ground in politics or the Lord will curse them. . . . Christians seem to act as if they thought God did not see what they do in politics. But I tell you He does see it – and He will bless or curse this nation according to the course they Christians take in politics."

Charles Finney (1792-1875)

How does his statement above compare to Paul’s guidance in Romans 13:1-7?

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