

Bearing false witness still a sin, even in campaign season

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When a politically volatile email arrives warning Christians about some elected official's action or some candidate's position that sounds so horrible it's hard to believe—don't believe it, some pastors suggest.

And for heaven's sake, don't forward it.

"When an email is forwarded to me, I am skeptical from the start," said David Morgan, pastor of [Trinity Baptist Church in Harker Heights](#). "Assume it isn't true until you check it out. Personally verify it. Be hesitant to forward anything."

Christians have a responsibility not only to avoid bearing false witness, but also to stand up for truth, said Van Christian, pastor of [First Baptist Church in Comanche](#).

"We are horrendously guilty of the urban-legend syndrome. If it sounds good to us and seems plausible, we want to warn everybody about it," Christian said. "To tell something you do not know to be true is a terrible Christian witness."

Failure to check out the veracity of a rumor not only violates the commandment about truth-telling but also demonstrates sloth, he added.

"We need to make a commitment to not be lazy. We need to be good stewards of the truth. We should take the time and make the effort to find out what the truth is and stand for that," Christian said.

Civility should characterize a Christian's conversation, whether that

involves political debate during a campaign or commentary on an official after an election, Morgan said.

"After the election, respect is not a bad thing for Christians to have. Practice truth-telling and respect, whether or not your candidate wins," he said.

"There is not a demon on the ballot—usually. If my candidate didn't win, I would not be happy, but I need to realize the other guy who won is not the bad guy.

"We should take steps not to be polarizing. Find those things we have in common. ... The candidates are all seeking what's best for America. I'm still naïve enough to believe that. They have different visions, but they want what's best for the country."

Christians who like to quote Scripture to back up their already-determined political views should listen to the whole counsel of the Bible, Christian suggested.

"We are pretty selective about which Scriptures we listen to. When we look at the commands of Scripture, we find we are not to bear false witness. We are to control ourselves and tame the tongue. We are to bear one another's burdens. These things receive more emphasis than what we generally tend to quote."

In regard to both truthfulness or civility, Christian offered a question believers should ask: "If we were discussing politics with Jesus, would we do it the same way we do with others?"