

Political involvement a matter of Christian stewardship

August 8, 2018

ARLINGTON—Since United States citizens have the right to participate in the nation's political process, American Christians should be good stewards of that privilege, said Kathryn Freeman, director of public policy of Texas Baptists' Christian Life Commission.

The Bible includes the stories of the people of God such as Joseph, Moses, Esther and Daniel who interacted with individuals in powerful positions and guided them to help others, Freeman said during a session at the Texas Baptists' Family Gathering in Arlington.

She also pointed to African-American civil rights activist Septima Clark and British statesman William Wilberforce as examples of Christians involved in the political process.

In a time of partisanship and political division, she emphasized the healing Christians who are involved in politics must bring to their communities.

"Some Christians have placed their hope in political leaders when they should remember those are not the ones who will make everything right," Freeman said.

Since politicians and governments only have some control for a brief time, Christians must remember to give their ultimate allegiance to God, whose power will never end, she insisted.

Christians should interact with politicians and governments to advocate for the vulnerable and marginalized, not for their own self-interests, Freeman asserted.

To serve their communities effectively, churches need to be knowledgeable, she noted. To learn about current events, Christians should access a variety of news sources so they can have a more objective perspective, she added.

Maintaining communication with elected representatives can go a long way toward influencing government for good, she said, noting only about 9 percent of Texans contact state officials.

If governments do something to hurt or abuse others, Christians may need to engage in civil disobedience, Freeman said, keeping in mind a Christian's primary responsibility is to follow Jesus.

"Ultimately, our citizenship is in heaven," she said. "How we engage others should be reflected in that."