

# Editorial: It's the week before Christmas, and we've work to do

December 18, 2019

It's the week before Christmas, and what's there to do?

Congress is stirring. What about you?

For the second time in my lifetime, a U.S. President stands to be impeached. Let me unpack that statement.

To readers who remember Nixon's impending impeachment, yes, I am barely that young. To readers who don't remember Clinton's impeachment, yes, I am that old.

For those who are unclear about what impeachment means at this point, we are in the middle of one step of a [process](#) allowed by [Article II, Section 4](#) of the U.S. Constitution. If the U.S. House of Representatives votes to impeach President Trump—which forecasters indicate is a given—then the U.S. Senate will vote to keep Trump in office—which forecasters also indicate is a given.

In fact, by the time you read this, the House vote may have been cast.

Impeachment during the Nixon Administration was a response to clearly problematic conduct on the part of President Nixon. The impeachment of President Clinton was more political in tone. The current impeachment process clearly is political in tone—to the point of bitter partisanship.

While so many are blistering one another rhetorically—like the old “sticks and stones” rhyme in reverse mixed with imprecatory prayers—followers of Christ must not feed into this bitter partisanship. We must remain above it.

Followers of Christ need to be partisan, too, but in a different sense.

Followers of Christ need to be partial to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, whose apostle exhorts us to “live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18).

## **Living at peace is hard to do**

We live in a hard time for peace. We live in a time when some professing Christians call other professing Christians “[godless](#)” and other professing Christians respond with, “[Hypocrites](#).”

Some of us think the “godless” are right, and others of us think the “hypocrites” are right, and we all think Jesus is right.

*Pause for a moment to reflect on what you just read.*

We are singing “peace on Earth, goodwill to men” in our politically segregated worship services only to condemn one another on social media as we walk across the parking lot to our cars.

Oh, yes, it’s a hard time for peace.

Followers of Christ, we need to be partisan, but not in the way some of our politicians are. We need to be partial to bearing the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, not to wielding rhetorical sledgehammers and cleavers against each other.

It’s hard not to congeal into opposing sides, though, when we expect to decide along party lines such important questions as what to do with a president.

Yes, the Democrats have the majority in the House and very likely will vote to impeach President Trump. Much ado will be made of this.

Yes, the Republicans have the majority in the Senate and very likely will

vote not to remove President Trump from office, and much ado will be made of that.

Amid all the ado, what will followers of Christ be doing? Will we be clamoring for political war, or in the peace of Christ, will we be the glue that holds when so much of our society seems to be fraying?

Politicians and talking heads have an interest in defining “Christian” to suit their purposes, even when those figures profess to be Christians themselves. If we allow them to set the terms, we will be tossed on the waves.

By contrast, followers of Christ live in his peace when they don’t allow politicians and talking heads to determine who the true Christians are but instead define themselves in Christ, the Crucified One. Only then do they live in peace, and only then do they become the glue that holds and thereby serve their world well.

## **It’s the restless week before Christmas**

It’s the week before Christmas, and we’ve work to do.

Congress is stirring. What about you?

When the votes are counted, and the gavel falls,  
will you follow people or Jesus when he calls?

Jesus said: “The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled” (John 14:26-27).

We no longer proclaim peace when there is no peace; for we live in the time after Jesus rose from the dead and gave us his Spirit. Now, we proclaim peace because there is peace, even if we can’t see him. His Spirit

produces peace in us, even in the midst of such divisive times.

Follower of Christ, in your going, proceed in peace, so the “godless” and “hypocrites” in our midst will see Christ’s goodness in us and, rather than crying “pagan” and “fraud,” they will cry, “Glory to God in the highest,” and you know the rest—peace on Earth, goodwill to all.

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