

Voices: The revelatory election for U.S. churches

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Revelation is not, as my students use it sometimes, a private vision God gives, but a public event God does.



Myles Werntz When God is made known as Jesus Christ, this is a revelation of God's own nature and works, such that any speculation of who God is has to pass through what God has done in this most public of ways. Our guesswork about the nature of things is through, and, in the words of Jesus, everything which is hidden is laid bare in the daylight. In the light of God's act, God's promise is made clear, and the depths of our sin are made known.

Put simply, revelation shows us what is already the case, both for good and for bad.

This election has been, in no uncertain terms, revelatory not only for the American people, but also for the American church.

Not as we thought

As a nation, America has been shown to be not as gentle with each other as we profess, nor as generous with outsiders as our monuments hold, nor the land of promise for all members of society. As a political process, this election has shown us our electoral process is not a rational event, but a gut-level feeding frenzy, informed by passions and memes more than policy or argument.



But this election has been damningly revelatory for the Christian church.

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We have been shown to be far more susceptible to promises of power and influence than we hoped. We have been shown to be more informed by party lines, which grind the meat of the gospel down to gristle and fat, than by a gospel that is comprehensive in nature and is not contained in full by any platform. We have been shown we are a people far more interested in our self-interests than in our neighbors. And we have been shown we are willing to divide ourselves en masse from other Christians for the sake of donkeys and elephants who never will love us back.

Revelation & hope

But revelation is not only for the sake of judgment; revelation is for the sake of hope, that out of the dust, there might rise a penitent people,

disciplined by their failures and renewed for a different vision.

This election has shown us other ways and candidates are possible, as candidates like Evan McMullin, and the newly formed American Solidarity Party begin new work for a different public life. This election has brought long-standing theological leaders down to the dust by their endorsements, so that new and fresh leaders might emerge. And this election has—hopefully—called the churches back from seeking their safety from political candidates and toward seeking the good that is the kingdom of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

We sit weeks away from a long electoral season finally ending, and by God's grace, the church has been shown to be weaker than it thought and more divided than it imagined.

But by God's grace, this also may be for our churches a new season of renewal, hope, charity and fidelity to a gospel that is not constrained by party platforms, but transgresses them in the name of Jesus Christ.

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