

# Faith Report

## A Sacred Duty: Why Christians Must Vote By Chuck Colson

*This article, which originally appeared in Breakpoint magazine, is recommended for your reading and application by Pastor Craig and Pastor Stan. Chuck Colson is the founder of Prison Fellowship and author of numerous books.*

I've been surprised by the number of Christians who have given up on politics this year. "I don't like either candidate, so I'm staying home," I've heard all too often.

Okay, I get fed up with the vain posturing and empty promises of politicians as well. But, as I note in this month's *Christianity Today*, voting is never an *option*—it's both our civic duty and sacred duty. Voting is required of us as good citizens and as God's agents for appointing leaders.

So how do we go about choosing the best candidate? Not by pulling a partisan lever—that's knee-jerk ideology. Christians live by revealed truth, never captive to any party. The best place to go for wisdom is not the candidates' websites, but the Bible.

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, for example, advised Moses to appoint as rulers "able men" who "fear God, men who are trustworthy and who hate a bribe." The

standard is competence and integrity.

Later, God ordered Samuel to pick Saul, who "shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines." This passage reminds us of Paul's teaching in Romans: Government's role is to wield the sword to preserve order and restrain evil.

Today, God no longer chooses our leaders directly (although some of us wish He did, if only to avoid the two-year-long political campaigns). But we live in a democracy, so God entrusts us with the job of choosing leaders He will then anoint. Instead of a prophet, we are to commission leaders of competence, virtue, and character. That's why not voting, or rejecting candidates because they're not perfect on some biblical score sheet, is a dereliction of our trust.

Ultimately, in casting a vote, our judgment should be guided by what we perceive to be the common good. Our Founders understood this, which is why they used the term *commonweal*, or commonwealth for the state. But today's politicians pander to special interests, as we saw this year with \$18 billion in earmarks, paying off the special pleaders.

But God has a deep and abiding interest in *all* people being treated fairly. If God favors any "special interest," it is the poor, the

hungry, the prisoner—those with the least access to political power.

In the *City of God*, Augustine introduced us to the idea that we live in both the "City of God" and the "City of Man." He reiterated Jesus' teaching that while Christians live in the City of Man, we do not belong to it. We are like sojourners in a foreign country; our true home is in the City of God.

But Augustine also taught that we must assume the obligations of citizenship. Instead of doing our civic duty out of compulsion, the Christian does it gladly, out of obedience to God and love of neighbor.

Some of us are going to be jubilant over the outcome of the election, others bitterly disappointed. But remember, regardless of who wins, the City of God endures.

So on Election Day we should be the best of citizens, voting for the candidate best for *all* the people. And then, the next day, after indulging in your celebration (or pity party), get busy working to advance God's Kingdom in this earthly society. ♦

*Some trust in chariots and some  
in horses,  
but we trust in the name of the  
LORD our God.*

*Psalm 20:7*



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*United that the  
world would  
know*

<sup>18</sup> Where there is no  
revelation, the people  
cast off restraint;  
but blessed is he  
who keeps the law.  
Proverbs 29: 18

**BALTIMORE URBAN  
PROJECT**

**By Justin Tibbles**

Coming into the InterVarsity Baltimore Urban Project (BUP) as a lifelong city resident, I was already well aware of the brokenness of the city. In southwest Baltimore, that brokenness is perhaps more readily apparent.

Just walking down the street, I would daily see people trapped in cycles of homelessness, drugs, and prostitution. At the summer day camp that I was leading, the children were starving for love and attention. They weren't finding it in their families and most of them had never even heard of God's love. The theme of the camp and of BUP was shalom, which means 'peace' in Hebrew and is something that those children were aching for. Coming in from the outside, it was obvious to us that things were not as they should be.

On the other hand, because I lived there for the entire summer, I began to develop new eyes that allowed me to see through the trash, the graffiti, and the drugs to the beauty that is already present in that neighborhood. I began to notice flowers, murals, architecture, and even children – hopeful glimpses of what the city perhaps more fully once was and should be today.

Through God's Spirit in the name of Jesus, we joyfully and obediently ran the camp, pouring God's love into the children. We witnessed God bring shalom to those children on all different levels – peace within the individuals, peace between them, peace with their surroundings, and peace with God. I'm so thankful to have been a part of that story of God's healing and to have witnessed it in action!

One thing that was made abundantly clear to me from all of my experiences is that God loves the city

and actively brings His kingdom even to the darkest corners when His people go to those places. While it's no quick fix, I am fully convinced that God not only has the power, but has a strong desire to break the cycles of homelessness, drugs, prostitution, and broken families that seem to have a death-grip on this city. I'm not sure what my role is, but I am excited to further explore and follow God where He leads me.

*"Let justice roll down like the waters,  
And righteousness like an ever-flowing  
stream"*  
Amos 5:24

*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me  
Because he has anointed me to bring good  
tidings to the afflicted;*

*He has sent me to bind up the broken-  
hearted, to proclaim liberty to the cap-  
tives and the opening of the prison for  
those who are bound."* Isaiah 61:1

*Justin Tibbles is a junior at Johns Hopkins University. He grew up in the city. His parents were members at Faith, and his father Gary Tibbles was our youth minister in the early 1980s.*



**Dates For Your Calendar**

- Nov. 3-7** Advanced Prayer and Fasting
- Nov. 7** Concert of Prayer
- Nov. 12** Faith Leadership Night
- Nov. 15** MOSAIX Multi-racial church conference, Lancaster Bible College
- Nov. 27-28** Office closed for Thanksgiving