

Aug. 22, 2016

Dear Leonard,

Thank you for sending me your thoughtful letter interacting with my article about Donald Trump.

Here are my thoughts on the main issues that you raise:

**(1) Gender views:** My opposition to Hillary Clinton has nothing to do with my conviction on biblical roles for men and women. I supported and voted for John McCain and Sarah Palin, and I voted for Jan Brewer as governor of Arizona. I think the Bible teaches a leadership role for husbands in marriage and for men as elders in church, but I don't think there any restrictions in Scripture on other areas such as business and government.

**(2) Immigration:** Yes, I believe that we should have a wall or a fence, but I also believe that the wall should have large doors so that we let a lot of people in. But the United States must control the doors.

Maybe you have preached on Nehemiah building the wall around Jerusalem. The wall was to keep people out. But the wall had gates that the people of Jerusalem could open to let people in. Even the heavenly city in Revelation 21-22 has "a great, high wall, with 12 gates" (Revelation 21:12).

Every nation of the world has control of its borders and I don't know of any nation that I could visit today without having a passport and getting permission to enter at the border. So it should be with the United States, in my view. (But I also argue in my book, *Politics According to the Bible*, that I think we should *legally* let in many *more* people than we now do, because immigrants who come legally strengthen the nation and do good for it.)

**(3) Trump as a person or Trump's policies:** I think I agree with you when you say, "Wayne, I wish you had stayed with a full assessment of the political values espoused by both candidates." That was exactly what I was trying to do in the article. When I called Trump a "flawed" candidate I think it was clear that I was not endorsing all of his moral conduct in the past, much of which was morally wrong. I did not say that I think Trump is a morally good candidate (nor would I say that about his opponent).

But I still think that *voting* for Trump is a morally good choice, because I agree with his policies much more than with those of Hillary Clinton. From your letter, I think that you and I might disagree on some of those policies, and we might agree on others, but that is simply what happens in a democracy where people are free to hold different viewpoints on political issues. I'm glad that we live in a country where I have freedom to express my views on these things and

you also have complete freedom to express your views on these things. What a great blessing it is that we can live in a country where this is possible!

**(4) Terrorism:** While I strongly support freedom of religion, the question is more complicated when we have a religious viewpoint (radical Islam) that teaches people to commit terrorist acts in order to advance Islamic law and Islamic religion. Our laws in the United States already outlaw “sedition” and therefore people can be arrested and imprisoned for advocating the overthrow of the US government or for conspiring to overthrow the government. Our laws also make it illegal for people to advocate murder or plot to commit terrorist acts, even if they say that this is a religious view. It is still illegal, and I think it should be illegal.

Therefore I think it would be right to give extra scrutiny to people who want to come into the United States but who have lived for some time in areas where radical Islamic violence has been preached. Do they agree with attempts to advance Islam by terrorism? Then I don’t think they should be allowed into the United States. Others may disagree with me on this. It is a difficult problem to solve.

I think it was wrong for Trump to criticize the parents of a Muslim soldier who had died in US military service.

**(5) Police:** I strongly agree that any policeman who shoots an unarmed citizen in violation of police procedural guidelines should be prosecuted and punished under our legal system. But I also think that is wrong to criticize or cast suspicion on police forces as a whole because of the wrongful acts of a few. We need good police protection in all of our cities, or many more innocent people will be harmed.

**(6) Minorities:** You didn’t bring up this question, but I want to mention it. I think that a shortage of good jobs and a shortage of high quality schools in our inner cities are two of the most harmful things for minorities in our country. And I am convinced that Republican policies offer the only hope of real solutions to these problems:

(a) Substantially lowering taxes on businesses will lead to the creation of thousands of new jobs, and I believe that most people want meaningful, good paying jobs more than government welfare payments. Republicans want to lower taxes on businesses and Democrats want to raise taxes on businesses.

(b) Substantially increasing school choice options in inner cities by letting parents choose whatever school (public or private, Christian or non-Christian) they wanted for their children, and then providing state money that would pay tuition at the school they chose, will lead to a huge improvement in educational

quality, which many inner-city families would welcome. Republicans favor this kind of expansion of school choice, but Democrats oppose it.

**(7) Conservative political views?** Many of the views I advocate in my book *Politics According to the Bible* are in fact “conservative” political views in today’s political situation. But my response is that the Bible held many of these views a long time ago, long before the United States even existed.

Long ago, the Bible was opposed to abortion, and taught that marriage should be between one man and one woman, and taught that judges should interpret and apply laws, but not make laws, and taught that parents should have primary responsibility for raising children, and that nations should have strong military and police forces to defend citizens against evildoers. (I argued for other positions as well in my book.) I hold these views not because I want to support conservative politics, but because I see these views taught in Scripture. Others may differ, and they are perfectly free to do that.

Thank you for raising these issues. I hope that some of my responses have been helpful. But even if we don’t agree about some of them, these are simply policy differences and I think it is legitimate for Christians to have differences on political policy issues. I appreciate that you wrote to me.

Wayne

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