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Not An Easy Path – But the Right One

Sep 30, 2020 | Arkansas United Methodist



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I am a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ who is a bishop in the United Methodist Church. I am also an American citizen who loves my country. Both of these are realities in

my life. How do I appropriately embrace both in a time of deep polarization and division in our nation, especially during a contentious election season?

This is a haunting question. It's also a challenging one. Yet as I have prayed and reflected at length about this, I have come to the realization there are things I am compelled to do that simply are non-negotiable.

I will put everything in the larger perspective of my faith, and so will continue to proclaim that regardless of what happens God is still God, Jesus is still Lord and the Holy Spirit is still at work.

I will talk about how the Kingdom of God – which will fully come and yet is also here right now – is my ultimate home.

I will live in the reality of our world as it is, and not the way I would like it to be; and therefore speak out against the sin of racism, in support of our precious gift of democracy by voting and call all of us to love our neighbors in all we do, especially those who are most vulnerable.

I will demonstrate through my own attitude and behavior a basic respect for every human being as someone who is created in the image of God – even if my initial impulse is to rail against them because of the way they are behaving.

And most importantly, I will pray seeking to understand God's will and where the Holy Spirit wants to lead me.

I'll be honest, this is not an easy path to walk because it would be so much simpler to just retreat from the nastiness of the political process into my faith or jump into the political process as if it were the answer to all of our problems. But I cannot do that. Indeed, God will not allow me to do that. So I will do the only thing I can do – continue to walk this path as Jesus' disciple with as much humility, discernment, trust in the Lord and integrity as I can.

Of course, I will stumble more than I would like, make too many mistakes and wish I had some do-overs – but it's still the right path. And as I keep walking, I will do so with the confidence that comes from knowing nothing that will ever happen can possibly separate me from God's love in Jesus Christ.

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