

A higher calling than your party's convention



by Greg Baker

Over the next two weeks, Americans will be inundated with news from the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. The 2016 general election will officially begin, and a partisan divide will roar across our nation, invading even our church walls. But as this election season heats up toward important decisions on Nov. 8, let's make sure it is not at the expense of tearing the church down.

"Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many" ~ Hebrews 12:14-15.

I am for the first time in a long time an undecided voter who looks forward to hearing multiple points of view as I prayerfully work my way towards my own conclusion. *I can, however, tell you what I am for.* I am #ForTheChurch. I am #ForTheGospel and the lost getting saved. I #SupportTheSaints. I am for my new heavenly family. As this election season heats

up, I encourage all my brothers and sisters in Christ to be for one another above all things.

Over the next few weeks and for months to come, it is going to be difficult to follow social media and read the blogs. So many dear brothers and sisters in Christ are so upset with each other. Some are not even friends anymore. But let me be blunt: **This is not right.**

Don't get me wrong, I believe the presidential election is extremely important. I also believe the Bible has a lot to say about government, and we should be passionate and motivated in our engagement with it. So many brothers and sisters have been serving the Lord so faithfully in this arena.

Government, however, is not more important than the church. No candidate, regardless of public office, is more important than the saints. We are a family. The church is not only an institution of the Lord's, it is God's only eternal institution. Nations will rise and fall. Presidents will come and go. Laws will pass and be overturned. Supreme Courts will perish. But the people of God will live forever.

There is room for disagreement in this presidential election. There is room for the #NeverTrump and #OnlyTrump in the church of Jesus Christ. There is room for the #NeverHillary and #OnlyHillary as well. We must offer each other grace in this election. Please, share your disagreements with one another. Sharpen each other. But watch how you speak of one another. Pursue peace. Pursue love. Pursue unity.

For so many years, America has been a beacon of hope to the rest of the world. But it's not America that will reign with Christ; it's the church (Rev. 20:4). The only eternal hope in this world is available through the church of Jesus Christ. It trumps any nation or person. It is through His church that God will redeem the world.

Brothers and sisters, let's challenge each other this election

season to keep our eyes on the big picture. Keep our eyes on the gospel of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-19). Let's live for the church's mission. Let's lay down our lives for the saints. Let's strive to outdo one another in this verse: **"Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor" (Romans 12:10).**