

Pastors Undecided Who To Vote For

by

Phil Rasmussen

For the past few years there have been a lot of discussions among churches and their parishioners on whether to accept or decline the many social changes that have taken place in our society.

In a 2016 [Pew Research survey](#) on “American views on Religion in public life,” there is a decline in the number of Americans who believe that churches contribute to solving important social issues. The same survey also indicated a decline in Americans who believe that a president should have strong religious beliefs.

These results, including others in the survey, point to a serious problem facing churches today. Just like the 7 Gentile churches (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea) [[The seven letters](#)], churches today face many of the same issues.

In the past, churches were a cornerstone and central to a community’s well being. However as communities grew, the role of the church has become less valued over time. With the values of a changing society, churches are questioning their role in the lives of people in their community. The problems John described in the 7 letters are returning as our society becomes less educated, increasingly indoctrinated with false thinking, and more liberal in both thought and action.

Christians today face many issues. They are questioning their faith and how to apply it to daily life. They and the churches are also questioning the purpose of the church and its role in changing social issues. Let’s look at the issues John wrote about in the letters to the seven churches.

Ephesus – This was an orthodox church that held to a strict doctrine of not accepting those who were not fully in love with God. However, over time its members, while keeping busy, forsake their “first” love.

Smyrna – Suffering hate and persecution, God found nothing wrong with the church as held steadfast to his teachings.

Pergamaum – Located in the center of worship to pagan gods, this church started out with a strong belief in God and his teachings, but soon fell the pressures of the pagans. The church, like some churches today, started

compromising its faith. It allowed intermarriage between its members and pagans, placed the clergy above its members, and led its members that the clergy to “forgive” sins. Corruption within the church led to more departures from the faith.

Thyatira – Known as the “Papal Church,” this church was well organized but centered on externalism rather on faith. The church allowed the sexual immoral and idolatry teachings of Jezebel to creep into its church, This was the time when the Roman Church with all its idolatry - statues, holy water, worship of Mary, etc. - came into power.

Sardis – With a reputation for being alive, the church was spiritually dead. Like the Thyatira church, it was well organized with committees and festive celebrations, its services were well attended. However, its membership exhibited hypocrisy in their faith. Many never truly believed in Jesus.

Philadelphia – Despite being located in a den of pagan worship, the Church of Philadelphia, like the Church of Smyrna, kept its faith in God. Known as a missionary church, many of its members would spread the Gospel throughout the world.

Laodicea – This church was indifferent t the Scriptures. Church members were lukewarm in their devotion to God and were more impressed with the church’s material wealth. Socially and spiritually it was like being a member of the “right” golf club where wealth and associations with its members were more important than their faith in God.

[\[Letters to the Seven Churches\]](#)

The problems that the Church, its clergy and members face today are not new. The major problem is not cemented in current social issues. The problem lies in the interpretation of the Bible and our faith in God.

Of the seven churches, only two found God’s grace in holding to the faith. Today, there are very few churches that can be called a church of Smyrna or Philadelphia. Social pressures and the weakness of sin in man have allowed most churches to falter in their faith, especially with regard to so-called “social justice.”

Joe Carter, [The Gospel Coalition](#), discusses the origin of the term “social justice” and its history and changing meaning. There is a distinct difference between social issues and social justice. [Simplicable](#) provides lists of what they call social issues and social

justice. There are three major problems with the lists that Simpllicable provides. First is lack of defining what each issue listed entails. Second is that almost issue that someone can think of is a social issue. Missing from the list are issues of religion, faith, family, a divided society, etc. The third problem is that other websites identify social issues that are not even listed by Simpllicable.

Many of the issues listed in these lists are discussed in the Bible. For example the issue of LGBTQ+ rights is discussed in

- Genesis 19:1-29
- Leviticus 18:1-30
- Leviticus 20:13
- Romans 1:26-27
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
- 1 Timothy 1:10
- Matthew 19:4–6

The role of people in churches who declare themselves as LGBTQ+ is being discussed in churches across the nation. Church denominations accepting LGBTQ+ people to be married or ordained include:

- [Alliance of Baptists](#)
- [Anglican Communion](#)
- [Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists](#)
- [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#)
- [Disciples of Christ](#)
- [Christian Reformed Church in North America](#)
- [Community of Christ](#)
- [Episcopal](#)
- [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)
- [United Methodist Church](#)
- [Metropolitan Community Church](#)
- [Moravian Church](#)
- [Presbyterian Church \(USA\)](#)
- [United Church of Christ](#) (
- [Unity Church](#)

[\[Christian denominational positions on homosexuality\]](#)

John Holbert, [United Methodist Church](#), inadvertently describe the problem of faith when he stated “Taking the Bible seriously, not literally.” [ConstitutionUS](#) defines a

constitutionalist as a person who values the constitution as our founders envisioned, who want our nation to return to its roots and restore the values of freedom and liberty, and beliefs that the Constitution is the highest law of the land, and it should be followed as written. But over time, it has been watered down, misinterpreted, and rewritten for many reasons. The Bible is the constitution of our faith and should be the foundation for our church. Our pastors should adhere to biblical teaching and not try to massage it to fit any social issue or norm today. The truth should be spoken clearly and not diluted with any personal interpretation or bias.

To answer a pastor's question as to who to vote for in our upcoming election, the answer should be simple. The answer lies in which candidate has true faith in God and his teachings. We must take a look at the actions and into the souls of each candidate and then decide which candidate would best serve our Lord and his children.

“denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”

Titus 2:12