



A YEAR IN POLITICS – REFLECTIONS OF A FORMER THEOLOGY STUDENT

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I left LST in June 2009 ready to take on the world. Three years of study had led me into the world of politics, something I would never have expected at the start. I focused my dissertation on trying to discover a relationship between Christianity and politics. I am now continuing that journey by working in the deep end of politics in the office of an MP! These are my reflections...

I notice the catchphrase that LST have adopted on their website is "Preparing for Real Life in the Real World." What a fantastic description of the process students embark on at LST! I learnt lots of lessons in my three years at LST that have been invaluable in the "Real World." As well as developing analytical, literary and reflective skills, I learnt crucial lessons in how to conduct myself. The most important lesson being that the priority for my life must be to love my neighbour and treat everyone I meet as I would want to be treated. Politics can be a stressful environment. Problems arise, issues need resolving and tempers can fray. To love in this atmosphere is not easy. No matter what political background, whatever position and situation I find myself in, I am aiming to love my neighbour.

Christians need to speak truth in the world of politics. Truth is powerful; the Gospel is potent because it is truth. Spin, lies and deceit are part and parcel of the political world. So too is reputation, career and compromise. Christians need to step away from all of these trappings of political life and live a life that is characterised by the truth of the Gospel. When I started working in politics I believed that compromise was essential to progressing up the political ladder. As I have worked in Westminster, however, I have seen that Christians are being pushed to the outskirts and faith in Britain is being threatened by an increasingly secular agenda. This concerns me greatly and the only way to tackle this is for Christians to speak the truth. Truth is costly; it may cost someone a promotion, a position in cabinet or their reputation, but it is what is required of us. Compromise cannot be an option for the Christian. The future of the Church depends on it!

I have found the relationship between Christianity and politics an uneasy one that sits uncomfortably. I do think however, that this is how it should feel. When I become complacent with the world as I find it, I know that I have lost my passion. The political

world can be hostile, ferociously unchristian and unforgiving; if I become complacent with how I find it I know that I have lost the battle. There are, however, pockets of light in the dark. Christians are making a difference within all of the political parties, speaking truth into darkness, loving their neighbours even when it is difficult, and never compromising. These rays of light encourage me and fill me with hope. Christians *can* gain ground for the Church through the political sphere. Christ's love compels us to engage and a broken society needs the love and grace that only Christians can bring. As an election looms I am excited as to what Christians engaging in politics can achieve.

Whilst many would like to push faith out of politics, everywhere I go I carry my faith with me in boldness and confidence. Westminster can be a very hard place to work, the trappings of money, power and position are always on show. It is comforting to know that Christ walks with me in the corridors of power but also that he owns the corridors themselves!

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