

# Highest obligation to peace

Dan Nelson - pastor

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It's happened and everyone has been talking about it! History has been made. The people have spoken and the 44th president of the United States of America has been elected.

For so many, seeing a black man elected to the highest office in the land provides so much hope for opportunity and healing of past wounds. Hopefully, our beloved country can experience genuine healing from the history and foster renewal at the heart level.

A whole lot of people have been pouring everything into the outcomes of this voting week. From the national, state and local elections to the various measures and propositions that were on the ballot, individual volunteers and participants numbered in the millions. Some were out campaigning door to door or phone calling; others put out signs or worked within media. Many spiritual people were praying and fasting for the past 40 days over the outcome. After everything that has been done in an effort toward affecting outcomes, we now have the results and many are breathing easier. But some aren't.

When we vote our values, there is an opportunity to take the temperature of the nation and culture and we learn what is important to the people. The political pundits are talking about it on every channel. Each place where there was an attempt to reduce the number of abortions, it failed. Every state that grappled with the definition of marriage determined that it was to remain between a man and a woman. Aside from the mending and benefits of racial reconciliation, we did elect the most liberal of all the current senators to be our commander in chief. This is telling of where we are, morally, as a people.

As a pastor, I want to speak to you about appropriate responses to your friends, family, neighbors and co-workers who don't agree with your position. Further, our attitudes toward our leaders should be directed by what God says in the Bible. One of the saddest things our nation has faced in the past eight years is the extreme hyper-criticisms and anger that stemmed from bitterness and lack of real reconciliation with those who think their election was stolen from them by Florida's debacle.

Bitterness produces all sorts of bad fruit in your life and the Scriptures warn against allowing the "root of bitterness" to grow in your heart. Our church was added to the list of victims of harsh and intolerant people this week. Someone stopping to scream outside our church at innocent people coming in to worship and another defacing our welcome sign with slurs and name calling during services are examples of the very thing we do not want to participate in.

Although these people are using intimidation to suppress the voice and free speech, our call is to love all people and forgive their foolishness. I asked all who would listen not to touch a "No on Prop. 8" sign nor participate in their attempts to hide people's opinions on the matter. But unless I told you, you probably wouldn't know that for every sign you did see

standing for traditional marriage, it probably was replaced between five and 20 times, depending on the location. It takes a lot of work to do the right thing and I am asking that we do this together.


Whether your candidate, measure, or proposition was voted in or not, there is a higher obligation of being a "peacemaker" according to Matthew, Chapter 5. And the Bible teaches that, in the final analysis, it is God who establishes leaders, raises them up or takes them down, and our trust should be in God rather than any human government or candidate. Obama is our next president and deserves our respect and prayer. Each federal and state legislator and local leader, regard less of party or position, should also receive the appropriate godly response from all those who claim to be a follower of Christ.

You see, Christians are a key component to any healing in the community, state and nation. We are to take on a role that aids in the healing of hearts. You can stand for the truth and do it in love.

As I write to you, there is a protest in the streets somewhere in Los Angeles rejecting the outcome of the election. Don't be like them. Be loving, joyous, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and please have self-control. Galatians 5:22 and 23 says that this is the fruit of God's Holy Spirit in your life. With emotions running high and post election celebration and woes, we need God's help now more than ever. We know Jesus loves everybody and so do we.

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.

  
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Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
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**Mid-Week Study:**  
**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
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