

Honest and Fair Leadership

Give the gift of wise rule to the king, O God, the gift of just rule to the crown prince. May he judge your people rightly, be honorable to your meek and lowly. Let the mountains give exuberant witness, shape the hills with the contours of right living.

Psalm 72:1-3, *The Message*

Each year, I approach the Advent season with appreciation of the hope that the birth of Jesus brought to the world. From the humble beginnings in the manger of Bethlehem came a religious philosophy based on the principle that all persons have value, and so we are commanded to love our neighbor as ourselves and to live out our lives in service to others. In our country, and around the world, individuals motivated by this principle have fought against discriminatory treatment of others: for the abolition of the institution of slavery, civil rights for all persons within a society, economic rights for the exploited. The results are uneven in their success, and much remains to be done.

During this Advent season, we will be transitioning to new political leaders in our own country. The choosing of these leaders has not been a pretty process, and the Christian ideal of showing love to our neighbors, including those with whom we disagree, has been given faint allegiance by the participants. But, the choices have been made, and, as in times of turmoil in the past, these leaders will be tasked with defining the level of social justice within our society and finding the resources necessary to implement that vision. What programs are truly needed? Which programs merely pander to a constituency of those seeking power? Do the proposals reduce our economic power to sustain them? Do they drain the Treasury, making our country beholden to others in the future? Does the current benefit pose a danger to the long-term stability of our society by failing to address the needs of all affected by the solution proposed? Have the proposals been presented honestly to the citizenry and its decision-makers, or is there intent to mislead them in order that a politician can claim an accomplishment?

Prayer: Dear Lord, please help our leaders as they make policy decisions for our nation. Guide them in their actions as they define the level of social justice found in our nation. Help them to be honest and fair, just like you, with all your people whatever their circumstances.

As a citizen charged with choosing these leaders, help motivate me to learn the principles of history, science, economics, religious and moral philosophy that are needed to participate with knowledge in the selection of our leaders. Motivate me to participate as a leader in the processes of defining our concepts of social justice. And, help me to love and serve my neighbor as myself, affording dignity and respect to all others in my daily living. Amen.

Gary Cherry

Additional Scripture Readings:

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19, Isaiah 30:19-26, Acts 13:16-25