
THE GOODLY PARENTS LETTER

July 22, 2024

I, J. Smith, was born of goodly parents. The seventh son of Erik, aide to an apostle, and Joni, a direct descendant of Hyrum, brother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I have been taught the principles of the Gospel since my youth.

Election season in the United States has previously been a time of reflection for me. While there had always been spirited competition and debate, there had also been rejoicing. Traditionally it has been a time for all to reflect on the freedoms we enjoy - the fertile freedoms that nourished our faith into a worldwide expansion of the Lord's Kingdom.

But that is no longer true.

My brothers and sisters, while we look forward to the millennial reign of the Messiah, our time is awash in conflict and incivility. The spirit of debate, long guarded by a shared sense of unity, has been traded for name-calling and violence. Neighbors lash out at neighbors. Children shake their fists at their parents.

As we navigate these troubled waters, remember the closing refrain of our Articles of Faith: if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

When you look at the choices before you this season, do you find anything praiseworthy or of good report? When you cast your vote will it be a light that shines before men, glorifying your Father in Heaven?

Rendering unto Caesar that which is Caesar's often means tolerating behavior from our politicians that we would not tolerate otherwise. But one man's transgressions step far out of bounds. For too long, too many of us have used our vote to prop up a wicked man.

Donald Trump is a man known to be dishonest in his dealings with his fellow man, lying to banks and governments, committing fraud to hide his gains and losses, refusing to pay small businesses contracted to work for him. His charities for veterans, and children with cancer, were shut down because he used the donations to enrich himself rather than help the vulnerable people he claimed to serve.

He mocked a reporter for his physical disability. He even mocked Senator McCain, a former prisoner of war, for being captured and suffering torture and deprivation for our country.

Donald Trump is a lascivious man who bragged privately to Billy Bush about groping women against their will. He bragged publicly to Howard Stern about walking through the dressing room of the Miss Teen USA pageant to leer at unclothed, teenaged contestants.

He is a man known to fornicate with porn stars while his third wife was home, nursing his newborn child.

Donald Trump is a man judged guilty of rape.

How did we come to accept such egregious transgressions? We are a people who believe

character matters, that our actions echo through eternity. How do we teach our children to value dignity and righteousness in our churches, while rallying for such a man in the public square?

In 2016, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints supported Donald Trump more than any other religious group except Evangelicals. What message does this proclaim to the world about the saints? On judgment day his sins will be his own to answer for. But here, now, as we strive to build the Kingdom of God on Earth, what do we show the world about the kingdom we are building when we elevate such a man?

But all is not lost! We do not have to raise our voice in support of this wicked man. Nor do we have to prop up another candidate, guilty of her own misdeeds, mired in her own misguided policies. There is another way.

*Write in the name of our prophet, our seer, our revelator, **President Russell M. Nelson.***

He is a man of God, a true and faithful servant of the Lord. He is an example of righteousness to the world.

He will not win of course. It is an office he does not seek. But if the saints join together, when the final votes are tallied, and the roles and registries compiled, our number must be reckoned with. There are too many of us to be ignored, our influence on elections too great. The pundits and reporters and politicians across the country will see our numbers, hear our acclamations, and read the Prophet's name on every broadcast, in every paper, on every website.

Let our nation witness that we stand for righteousness and dignity. Let our children and our grandchildren see that we will not throw our pearls before swine. We will not trade our cherished convictions to prop up a wicked man for fleeting, worldly ends.

It is not too late to shine our light from the hilltop.

Glory be to God, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, our Savior, Jesus Christ.
