



DORDT COLLEGE

Digital Collections @ Dordt

Faculty Work: Comprehensive List

10-21-2015

Wasting My Vote: Why I am an "Independent"

Jason Lief

Dordt College, jason.lief@dordt.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty_work



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), and the [Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lief, Jason, "Wasting My Vote: Why I am an "Independent"" (2015). *Faculty Work: Comprehensive List*. Paper 348.
http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty_work/348

This Blog Post is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Work: Comprehensive List by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

Wasting My Vote: Why I am an "Independent"

Abstract

"What gives shape to my political views are issues of justice: caring for the poor, the widow, and the orphan."

Posting about issues that influence our voting from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/wasting-my-vote-why-i-am-an-independent/>

Keywords

In All Things, voting, health care, poverty

Disciplines

American Politics | Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt College.

Wasting My Vote: Why I am an “Independent”

 [all in allthings.org/wasting-my-vote-why-i-am-an-independent/](http://allinallthings.org/wasting-my-vote-why-i-am-an-independent/)

Jason Lief

In the 2000 presidential election I voted for Ralph Nader, a decision that brought ridicule from all sides. I was too young to know about *Unsafe at Any Speed*, but I had grown weary of the inability to think outside the box. The same issues we hear about today— abortion, Supreme Court justices, immigration— were the issues making headlines back then. It was Nader’s opposition to corporate power that caught my attention. Sure, the Republicans say they are about jobs, hard work, and the American dream, but they fill their coffers with money from large corporations concerned with profit margins and investor’s portfolios. The rhetoric of the Democrats, on the other hand, seems to support the poor and working class, but they’re also in the pocket of special interests that dictate which issues receive attention and which ones are largely forgotten.

I never voted for President George W. Bush and as some of my conservative friends will tell you, I wasn’t a big fan of his presidency. And yet, there are decisions he made for which I have deep gratitude and respect. No other president has done more to address the issue of AIDS on the African Continent than President Bush. He and U2 front man Bono became unlikely partners by providing badly needed medicine and resources for communities in Africa. Similarly, President Bush pushed for loan forgiveness for many nations buried under crippling debt from terrible loans made through the IMF. For years these issues – not the most attractive issues for the Christian community— remained under the radar until Bush used his political power to make something happen.

My critique of the Bush presidency focused on the expansion of the war on terror into Iraq , along with the use of drones to kill enemy targets and innocent civilians. You can imagine my dismay to find out that President Obama has outdone the Bush administration in this area with more drone attacks and casualties than President Bush. While some Christians are upset with the Obama administration about government mandates for birth control and issues of religious freedom, my problem is that Obamacare isn’t really a health care bill at all— it’s an insurance bill. Making sure that everyone has health insurance is not the same thing as tackling the increasing costs of medical care and prescription drugs. Instead of seeking true justice for the American people with a health care solution that affirms medical care as a basic human right, both Republicans and Democrats play politics under the influence of special interests. A medical doctor explained it to a group of college students this way: Republicans are under the influence of the insurance companies, while the Democrats are looking out for the trial lawyers. Insurance companies and resistance to tort reform are why nothing of any real substance is getting done on the issue of health care.

I can hear the critique, “Wait a minute, so far you sound more like a liberal than an independent.” What gives shape to my political views are issues of justice: caring for the poor, the widow, and the orphan. Politics should work to create a public space in which individuals and families are able to make a life together as members of a community working toward a common good. Along with the true conservatives, I believe access to meaningful work and a livable wage are crucial, and that self-serving bureaucracy both in corporations and in government often gets in the way. With the liberals I believe the government must help those who are unable to provide for themselves. Both conservatives and liberals, however, are guilty of worshipping at the altar of Mammon— allowing money and celebrity to influence policy. Ultimately, politics should be much more than falling in line with the rhetoric or ideology of a particular party. From a Christian perspective our participation in civic life must mean more than the labels of the status quo. Instead, we

seek the welfare of the city by tirelessly invoking the justice and mercy of the kingdom of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

So, who will I vote for in the 2016 election? Not sure. There are candidates from both parties and beyond that have thoughtful insights into the issues facing our country. The problem with our political system is that thoughtful wisdom doesn't seem to win elections. Like my support for Nader in the 2000 election, I'll more than likely end up "wasting my vote", but that's okay— I'd rather waste my vote than sell my soul.