

Politics, Faith, and the Church
Resources
Charlie Drew

Movements and courses

Braver Angels: <https://braverangels.org/>

Not a Christian group, it nevertheless models and teaches skills for the sort of constructive and illuminating red/blue engagement we need in the church. A blurb from their website: “Braver Angels leads the nation’s largest cross-partisan, volunteer-led movement to bridge the political divide. Through community gatherings, real debates, and grassroots leaders working together, we’re offering America what it needs to overcome the bitterness of our partisan divide.”

Christian Civics-Foundations Course. A ten-week free video course. It is an illuminating, disarming, wise, accessible, theologically sound, and practical resource that I highly recommend to pastors and churches everywhere. Produced by the Center for Christian Civics, a Washington DC based non-partisan ministry helping pastors, ministry leaders, and lay people integrate civic stewardship into their community’s program of spiritual formation, and political de-polarization into their vision for witness and evangelism. It offers workshops, Bible studies, podcasts, articles, and recommended readings.
<https://www.christiancivics.org/foundations>

The “And” Campaign. <https://andcampaign.org/> Justin Giboney leads a prophetic and practical movement aimed at bringing both sides of America’s polarized world under the critique of the Bible.

Giboney’s essay *Backbone, Mouthpiece and Good News: a Word from the Black Church* (December 2023) captures the essence of the movement, offering a rebuke of both conservatism and progressivism in the tradition of black oratory.
<https://comment.org/backbone-mouthpiece-and-good-news>

Books

Tim Alberta, *The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory* (2024). A journalist raised in a vibrant EPC church in the mid-west, Alberta writes as a forthright believer from inside the world of

protestant evangelicalism. He tells stories that make vivid and disturbing the politicizing of the evangelical church.

Charles Drew, *Surprised by Community: Republicans and Democrats in the Same Pew*. I suggest practices, ways of thinking, and strategies for in-church discussion that help believers engage in politics while making room for one another when their political convictions differ.

David French, *Divided We Fall*. French is a columnist, evangelical, and long-time conservative who has given particular attention to the defense of religious free speech and practice. In this book French analyzes the polarization of our time, warning that we could easily lose our two-hundred year experiment in united self-rule, while offering some hopeful direction.

Paul D. Miller, *The Religion of American Greatness: What's Wrong with Christian Nationalism*. Miller distinguishes between Christian republicanism, which brings Christian principles to bear on how we think about and structure government (say, the intrinsic dignity and the corruptibility of people, and the role of common grace), and Christian nationalism, which seeks to make a culture Christian by force. His gracious and nuanced critique of the latter is persuasive because he writes as an insider—a long time Republican who has served in a Republican administration, a dedicated evangelical Christian, and a veteran. American historian George Marsden endorses his work: “Conservative Christians who suspect he may be wrong should at least give him a hearing. More progressive Christians can also learn from this balanced and constructive approach.”

Richard Mouw, *How to be a Patriotic Christian: Love of Country as Love of Neighbor*. A brief, winsome, wise, and practical guide. While urging us not to withdraw cynically from public engagement, Mouw (President and Professor of Christian philosophy at Fuller Theological ‘Seminary) warns against the idolatry intrinsic in Christian nationalism. He grapples with sticky questions such as how to honor national holidays in church and the place of protests in forging a more perfect union.

Soong-Chan Rah, *Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times*. Rah helps us build lament more deeply into our

private lives and church culture, walking us through the book of *Lamentations*.

Kaitlyn Schiess, *The Ballot and the Bible: How Scripture Has Been Used and Abused in American Politics and Where We Go from Here* (2023). Schiess reminds us with sensitivity and nuance of the all-important difference between the authority of the Bible (certain) and the authority of our interpretations of the Bible (much less certain). She documents our tendency to forget this distinction through our national story, from the era of the pilgrims to the present day, offering helpful advice along the way on how to be humble readers, together, of the Scriptures.

Kaitlyn Schiess, *The Liturgy of Politics: Spiritual Formation for the Sake of Our Neighbor* (2020). Like Michael Wear (*The Spirit of Our Politics*--see below), Scheiss aims at helping us with “upstream politics”—with cultivating through spiritual disciplines the attitudes and perspectives that shape us before we head “downstream” into public engagements.

Scheiss interviews Wear in the IV Press podcast *The Disrupters: Faith changing Culture*, December 17, 2023, [here's](#)

John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today--4th edition* (Zondervan 2006). Though somewhat dated, Stott’s work is still enormously helpful, offering thoughtful and practical insight into Christian engagement with many of the issues that trouble and divide us. Stott focuses particularly on war, creation care, global poverty, human rights, work, business, diversity, sexuality, marriage, abortion, euthanasia, and biotechnology.

Michael Wear, *Reclaiming Hope*. An illuminating memoir from a Christian who worked on faith-based initiatives in the Obama White House.

Michael Wear, *The Spirit of Our Politics: Spiritual Formation and the Renovation of Public Life*. Wear gives attention to what I call “upstream politics”—the attitudes and perspectives that we get to bring to public life before we engage in policy discussions and advocacy. He aims at helping us cultivate an approach that aims at healing rather than division, kindness rather than hatred, and hope rather than despair.

Peter Wehner, *Death of Politics*. An informative, hopeful, and challenging account of modern politics by a Christian who is a conservative thinker and speech writer. He served 12 years in three administrations in numerous federal agencies and as a

senior advisor to the White House.

N. T. Wright and Michael Bird, *Jesus and the Powers*. With close and challenging attention to (1) the long, complex, and nuanced history of the relationship between church and state and (2) what the Bible actually teaches, the authors challenge both our tendency to withdraw from political engagement and to engage in ways that Jesus never would. They ask, and begin to answer, “How do we build for the kingdom without falling into the trap of spiritual isolationism or being led into captivity to a political master?” [NB: There is another, very different, book of the same title].