

DEMOCRACY AND DEMAGOGUERY

THE CONTEXT, CONCERNS AND CANDIDATES OF THE 2016 US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

DEMAGOGUE

“A person, especially an orator or political leader, who gains power and popularity by arousing the emotions, passions, fears and prejudices of the people.”

www.dictionary.com

In any election there always exists a fine line between **democracy** – the free choosing of a candidate with sound and morally acceptable policies – and **demagoguery** – electing a candidate who manipulates voters by feeding on fears and prejudices. The 58th US presidential election, scheduled to take place on **Tuesday 8 November 2016**, will be no exception.

While there are elections of various leadership bodies taking place in Thailand, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Hong Kong this year, these will all be overshadowed by the 2016 electoral events in the US, and the election of the next “leader of the free world”. Many believe this election will be the most important in US history, and one that will greatly affect the future of this significant nation as well as global politics.

DEMAGOGUERY

“An appeal to people that plays on their emotions and prejudices rather than on their rational side.”

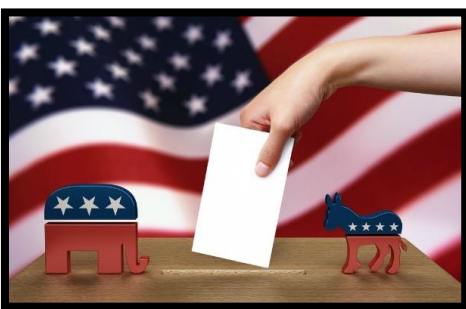
www.vocabulary.com

The alarming reality is that the US, like ancient Rome once did, is showing the historical warning signs of an empire on the verge of implosion. The US is home to the second largest army in the world, the second largest economy in the world and the largest Christian population in the world; it is a key contributor of global humanitarian assistance, and one of the greatest advocates for human rights around the world. As such, it remains a leading global power with the ability to change geopolitical events. As the nation battles external conflicts, negative perceptions, and some of the greatest

domestic moral and spiritual crises to date, this election will bring the nation to a crossroads – both inside and outside the Church.

The CONTEXT of the US Elections

From Wikipedia



*“The United States presidential election of 2016, scheduled for Tuesday, November 8, 2016, will be the 58th quadrennial U.S. presidential election. The series of **presidential primary elections and caucuses** are scheduled to take place between **February and June 2016**. This nominating process is an indirect election, where voters cast ballots for a slate of delegates to a political party's nominating convention, who then in turn elect their party's **presidential nominee**.”*

Article Two of the United States Constitution provides that for a person to be elected and serve as President of the United States, the individual must be a **natural-born citizen** of the United States, **at least 35 years old**, and a **resident of the United States** for a period of no less than 14 years.

Candidates for the presidency typically seek the **nomination** of one of the various political parties of the United States, in which case each party devises a method (such as a primary election) to **choose the candidate the party deems best suited to run for the position**.

The incumbent, President Barack Obama, a Democrat and former US Senator from Illinois, is ineligible to seek reelection to a third term due to restrictions of the Twenty-second Amendment; his term expires on **January 20, 2017**.

In the 2008 election, Obama was elected president, defeating the Republican nominee, Senator John McCain of Arizona, receiving 52.9% of the popular vote and 68% of the electoral vote. If incumbent President Barack Obama and

Vice President Joe Biden serve out the full remainder of their term, the voters will elect the **45th President and 47th Vice President** of the United States, respectively.”

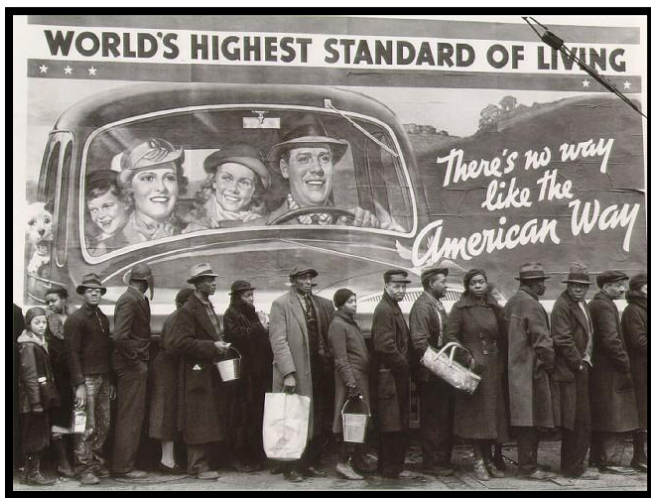
WHAT HAPPENED IN THE 2014 MIDTERM ELECTIONS?

“In the 2014 midterm elections, voter turnout was the lowest seen in 70 years, by which just 34.4% of eligible voters turned out. As a result of the election, the **Republicans** retained control of the House of Representatives, increasing their majority to its largest level since 1928. Republicans also gained a majority in the Senate for the first time since the Democrats took control of the chamber after the 2006 elections, thus giving the Republican Party a **majority in both chambers of Congress**, and their largest majority in Congress since the 71st Congress in 1928.”

The CONCERNS of the US Elections

There are many issues that are currently polarising the US public, but much is rooted in feelings of ‘being targeted’ by Islamic terrorists and continued economic fears among the American middle class. Some of the main issues dividing voters are:

- Abortion
- Deficit and Debt
- Education
- Federal Budget
- Gun Control
- Health Care
- Immigration
- Iran, Iraq and Syria
- Israel
- Jobs
- Minimum Wage
- National Security
- North Korea
- Poverty
- Religion
- Social Security
- Taxes
- Terrorism



Issues of an ‘extreme’ nature often become the focus of **demagogue candidates**, who appeal to emotions, fears, prejudices and ignorance, and step forward with ‘easy answers’ that win the hearts and confidence of voters. These candidates often gain power and influence among lower socioeconomic classes.

Blake Fleetwood, in the *Huffington Post*, writes that **Donald Trump's** recent proposal to keep Muslims out of the US fits the classic approach of a demagogue, and even though his comments were attacked by Republicans and Democrats alike, he still enjoys most of the Republican support. In these extraordinary times, Mr Trump provides easy answers, appears strong and promises to protect.

Mr Trump, however, is not unique in his approach during times of fear and disruption. Fleetwood writes: “In one of the ugliest episodes of American history, Franklin D. Roosevelt incarcerated 120,000 Japanese Americans in 1942, who had been law abiding and loyal U.S. citizens. In 1882, a federal law prohibited all immigration of Chinese citizens, which was the defacto legalisation of racial discrimination, according to one US senator at the time. The legislation was nevertheless upheld by the Supreme Court in 1895.”





The CANDIDATES of the US Elections

During previous elections in the US, there were more than 50 parties from which to choose, stretching across the 50 states of America. However, the only two parties that are realistically competing for power are the **Republican** and **Democratic** parties. There is no doubt that the next president of the United States will be elected from one of these two parties and could be one of the following candidates, profiled by **CNN.com**:






REPUBLICANS

Jeb Bush	Ben Carson	Chris Christie	Ted Cruz
			
<p>43rd Governor of Florida He served two terms as Florida governor from 1999-2007. After opting not to run for president in both 2008 and 2012, Bush announced he is running for president on June 15, 2015.</p>	<p>Director of Paediatric Neurosurgery Johns Hopkins Hospital The prominent and well-respected physician recently entered politics. His politically charged comments at the 2013 National Prayer Breakfast made him a conservative media darling.</p>	<p>55th Governor of New Jersey Christie successfully ran for governor of New Jersey in 2009, defeating Gov. Jon Corzine in the largely Democratic state. Christie was re-elected by a large margin in 2013.</p>	<p>US Senator from Texas Cruz was elected to the US Senate in 2012, after he rallied support in Texas, and has since been one of the Senate's most vocal critics of Obamacare. On 23 March 2015 he became the first Republican candidate to announce his campaign.</p>
Carly Fiorina	Jim Gilmore	Mike Huckabee	John Kasich
			
<p>CEO of Hewlett-Packard Widely known from the corporate world at such companies as AT&T and Hewlett-Packard, Fiorina ran for the US Senate in 2010 in California, losing to incumbent Democrat Barbara Boxer. Still an advocate for conservative causes, Fiorina ruled out another run for the US Senate in California before declaring she'd run for president.</p>	<p>68th Governor of Virginia Gilmore's crowning political achievement thus far has been his election as Governor of the state of Virginia in 1997, in which office he served for four years. Gilmore seriously considered but ultimately declined making a presidential run in 2008, though he did seek election to the United States Senate for Virginia in that year</p>	<p>44th Governor of Arkansas Huckabee became the Arkansas governor in 1996, when Gov. Jim Guy Tucker was convicted on federal fraud and conspiracy charges. Huckabee was elected to the office in 1998 and again in 2002. He was able to pull out a surprise victory in the 2008 Iowa caucuses as a contender for the GOP presidential nomination, but failed to garner significant support.</p>	<p>69th Governor of Ohio After a nine-year stint in the private sector, Kasich ran a successful campaign for governor of Ohio in 2010, when he defeated Democratic incumbent Gov. Ted Strickland. He was re-elected by a wide margin in 2014. He declared his run for president in July.</p>

Rand Paul	Marco Rubio	Rick Santorum	Donald Trump
			
<p><i>US Senator from Kentucky</i> Paul gained national attention in 2010 when he became the junior US senator from Kentucky following a tough battle in the GOP primary. The Republican was the second candidate to declare his entrance into the 2016 presidential race, in April 2015.</p>	<p><i>US Senator from Florida</i> Rubio, the first Cuban-American speaker of the Florida House, won the 2010 US Senate election in Florida over then-Gov. Charlie Crist, who ran as a political independent. He became the third Republican to jump into the 2016 fray in April 2015.</p>	<p><i>US Senator from Pennsylvania</i> Santorum served two terms in the US Senate but was defeated in his bid for a third term in 2006. He ran for president in 2012, emerging from relative obscurity to win the Iowa caucuses.</p>	<p><i>Chairman of The Trump Organisation</i> Trump, real estate mogul, discussed a potential presidential run for the 2000, 2008 and 2012 elections, but he had never run for any elected office. Trump announced his 2016 presidential campaign in June 2015.</p>



DEMOCRATS

Hillary Clinton	Martin O'Malley	Bernie Sanders
		
<p><i>67th Secretary of State from New York</i> The former first lady ran in the 2008 Democratic presidential primaries. After losing the Democratic nod to Barack Obama, she was later secretary of state. Clinton announced her second presidential bid in April 2015.</p>	<p><i>61st Governor of Maryland</i> O'Malley was elected mayor of Baltimore and served until 2006, when he won his campaign to be the 61st governor of Maryland. O'Malley jumped into the race to the White House in May 2015.</p>	<p><i>US Senator from Vermont</i> After spending 16 years in the House, Sanders won election to the US Senate in 2006 and is the longest-serving Independent member of Congress.</p>

From a CHRISTIAN perspective

MISSION INFLUENCE



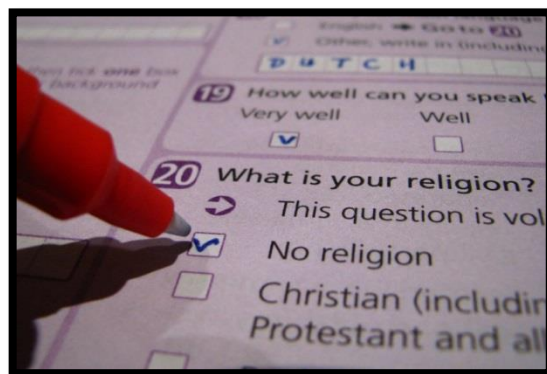
America, for now, is still the world's dominant superpower, and whatever happens in the US will unquestionably influence the rest of the world, the Church and the global mission field.

From a missions perspective, the world is deeply indebted to the American Church, and the US continues to send more Christian missionaries abroad than any other country in the world. According to the *Atlas of Global Christianity*, the US sent out 127,000 of the world's estimated 400,000 missionaries in 2010. This number constituted more missionaries than the next three countries combined – 93,000 more than Brazil, which sent out the second highest number of missionaries (34,000).

A new political leadership, which is likely to implement new foreign policies, will ultimately influence the initiatives and relationships of Western missionaries serving abroad, especially in the Muslim world. In the recent past, the US military presence in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq kept the doors open for foreign mission efforts, and circumstances are becoming far more dangerous and sensitive for missionaries as troops withdrew. However, US military initiatives have also had a massively negative impact on minority Christians, as Christianity is often perceived to be a 'Western' religion. Thus local Christians become targets in response to aggressive US military action.

THE 'NONES'

Diane Winston wrote the following for *Vice News*: *"In 2014, twenty-three percent of adult Americans identified as what media and academics have come to refer to as religious 'nones'. Although the term covers a lot of territory — atheist, agnostic, unaffiliated, 'nothing in particular', and 'spiritual but not religious' — it does not include anyone who identifies with a particular faith tradition. The overall percentage of Americans who identify as nones is all the more striking because it has climbed seven points in seven years. And that percentage is even higher among Millennials; a full 36 percent are unaffiliated, compared with 11 percent of the silent generation — those who preceded Baby Boomers — and 17 percent of Boomers.*



The same Pew study found that those who identified as Catholics fell from 23.9 percent in 2007 to 20.8 percent in 2014, while mainline Protestants plunged from 18.1 percent to 14.7 percent. (Non-Christian faiths bumped up from 4.7 percent to 5.9 percent.) Evangelical Christians, meanwhile, dropped from 26.3 percent to 23.4 percent.

That means there are now as many nones as there are evangelicals in America."

From an electoral perspective, this could prove to be significant. Winston continues: *"The media is already speculating on what role nones will play in the 2016 election. Nones won't care whether Ted Cruz or Mike Huckabee is the better Southern Baptist. Nor will they compare the faith-based positions of Roman Catholic candidates Jeb Bush, Bobby Jindal, Marco Rubio, and Rick Santorum. In fact, a CNN poll found 70 percent of Millennial voters do not want a presidential candidate to consider religion when making policy decisions."*

This new trend vastly differs from forty years ago: *"... Jimmy Carter's born-again faith transformed the American political landscape. Even though many Americans — perhaps as much as one-quarter of the population — shared Carter's evangelical beliefs at the time, media and political elites seemed surprised that evangelicalism had survived*

the Aquarian Age [the advent of the New Age movement in the 1960s and 1970s]. TIME Magazine dubbed 1976 'The Year of the Evangelical', and journalists scrambled to tell the story: religion not only motivated the Democratic candidate, but also galvanised millions of voters."

CONCLUSION

Why people vote and the consequences of **how** people vote in the 2016 US elections will be a defining factor in global spirituality. Prayer will be a determining factor, and the global Church should pray that a nation of such influence returns to God before trying to find political solutions to global challenges.



One of the major prayer initiatives that will be launched in the US is by leading evangelist Franklin Graham, who has launched a national prayer tour aimed at getting Christians praying. Graham's tour is called the **Decision America Tour**, and he will hold prayer rallies in all 50 state capitals.

[\(https://decisionamericatour.com/\)](https://decisionamericatour.com/)

The need for prayer, however, extends far beyond US borders and the US Church, and the global response to the importance of the US elections should be rooted in **1 Thessalonians 5v17**: “... pray continually...”

SOURCES

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