



*“From Where I Sit ...”*

**“Life Imitates Art ...”**

## **Does The Church Imitate Politics?**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!** And may your 2017 be wonderfully blessed!

Actually, I am writing this article in October, just following the third Presidential Debate. Early voting is underway and no one knows who will win the election. By the time you read this article, the election will be over and a new President will be preparing for inauguration. Because the Christian Index is a church periodical, we must be careful that political subjects are not partisan. As such, I have purposely waited until this season following the election to share this article that transcends politics and yet deals more readily with reality.

No one can disagree that this election season has been the most unusual in our lifetime. A lot has been said by both sides in significantly varying degrees. Whether you are a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent, the way we view politics and political parties has been irrevocably changed, and this change has not occurred overnight or in a vacuum. Although the change began quite some time ago, many of us are not surprised to see the change increase this rapidly during this election season in light of the treatment of President Obama (a black man) and his administration over the past eight years. All of these acts of the past have brought into being our present (October) political reality and the most noticeable byproduct has been the increased polarization of our nation.

Oscar Wilde, in his 1889 essay *The Decay of Lying*, opined that **“Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life.”** Even in our brief lifespans, we have witnessed innovative and technological creations that were only dreams written in works of fiction some 20-30 years earlier. When the dreams found in works of fiction ultimately become real, then the words of Oscar Wilde again become true that “Life imitates art ...”

The growing polarization of our political government, with emphasis on our houses of Congress, is now more clearly present throughout our country. However, what concerns me is a similar polarization found in our local churches. In too many churches cliques, factions, and family disputes have diverted numerous congregations from the mission given by Jesus in Acts 1:8 instead to selfish goals of domination by these internal groups. The result is a “polarized” congregation. This polarization is also an example of the “Church imitating Politics.” And just as political parties in coming days will suffer significant loss because of polarization, so too will our church congregations who have allowed themselves to become polarized. Our congregations must always remember that we are called to lead by following in the footsteps of Jesus instead of imitating worldly groups including political parties. And the sign of our leadership is the love of God that conquers all. In the end, the Church is called to “imitate Christ.” *Or at least that’s the way it looks to me...*



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