



A Mucky Business

Tim Farron

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Tim Farron will be familiar to many of us – the Christian, Liberal Democrat MP and former party leader who resigned because it seemed too difficult to ‘lead the party well whilst remaining a faithful Christian’. He was frequently asked his opinion on ‘hot topics’ like gay sex and abortion, and by his own admission gave wobbly answers. Since stepping down, he has spoken honestly about his struggles in navigating faith and a political career – succumbing to vanity, people pleasing, and trying to blend in. He’s emerged however as a strong and unashamed Christian voice in politics, and the fruits are this book and a podcast of the same name.¹

Co-authored with colleagues from Faith in Politics, the case is made for why Christians should be involved in politics and not avoid or ignore this all too often ‘mucky business’. It’s helpfully divided into three sections looking at: why Christians don’t get involved in politics, why they should, and the different ways that could look like. These are not arm’s length discussions, but rather Farron’s own story and testimony are weaved in alongside case studies from across the political spectrum.

There is honesty infused throughout this book, as those who feature (from MPs to local organisers) share their challenges and failings, something that can all too often be absent from our leaders. It is both a convicting and encouraging reminder to them (and us) to continue to stand and stand for Jesus in the political space and beyond. More than discourse, it is helpfully practical to the reader by providing ways we can be involved politically; from simply being aware and praying to standing for political office. In seeking to be faithful to

biblical, orthodox Christian principles, *A Mucky Business* shows us how politics can be viewed through this lens and engaged with well, whilst acknowledging that ‘we can compromise politically without compromising theologically’. As fellow faith and politics advocates from the AND campaign also write: ‘two Christians can disagree on an important policy without one or the other necessarily being unfaithful’.²

So, what can we as Christian medical, nursing, and midwifery students do? Should some of us enter the mucky world of politics? Some of us may feel called to that, not just in the context of Westminster, Holyrood, Stormont, or Cardiff Bay but also in the BMA and our professional colleges. More than that, it is a reminder to be salt and light wherever God has called us; to remain in him and faithful to him and his word, whether than be in the lecture theatre, on placement, in the hospital or the GP surgery.

This doesn’t happen passively, but through intentionally walking with the Lord, gaining knowledge and understanding. Like the men of Issachar (1 Chronicles 12:32) knowing the signs and times, the issues in our own areas of healthcare are important. Not in isolation but firmly rooted in Christ, with our Bible in one hand and our stethoscope or scalpel in the other.

Finally, it is a challenge to pray earnestly and persistently for our leaders and those in power; for Christians involved in politics that God will keep them, give them wisdom and work through them, and for ourselves that we may truly love the Lord God will all our heart, mind body and soul and love our neighbour in politics, in healthcare, wherever God may call us. ■

REFERENCES

1. A Mucky Business with Tim Farron. Podcast. amuckybusiness.podbean.com
2. Giboney J, Wear M, Butler C. Compassion (&) Conviction: The AND campaign’s guide to faithful civic engagement. InterVarsity Press. 2020