

**"Politics is a mess":  
how can we engage Christianly  
with politics and chats about it?**



# The Plan

- explore our thoughts and feelings about politics
- explore a Christian view of politics and biblical principles that underpin that
- explore how then we can talk and engage in politics in a Christian way



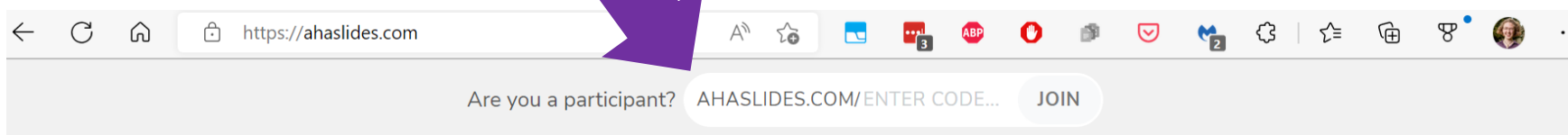
# How do we feel about politics?

- Aha Slides: VKG5U

<https://ahaslides.com/VKG5U>



Put in the code here!



# Politics is hard – but important!

- Why are you here?
- The work of “translation”
- Faithful “translation” is so **good!**

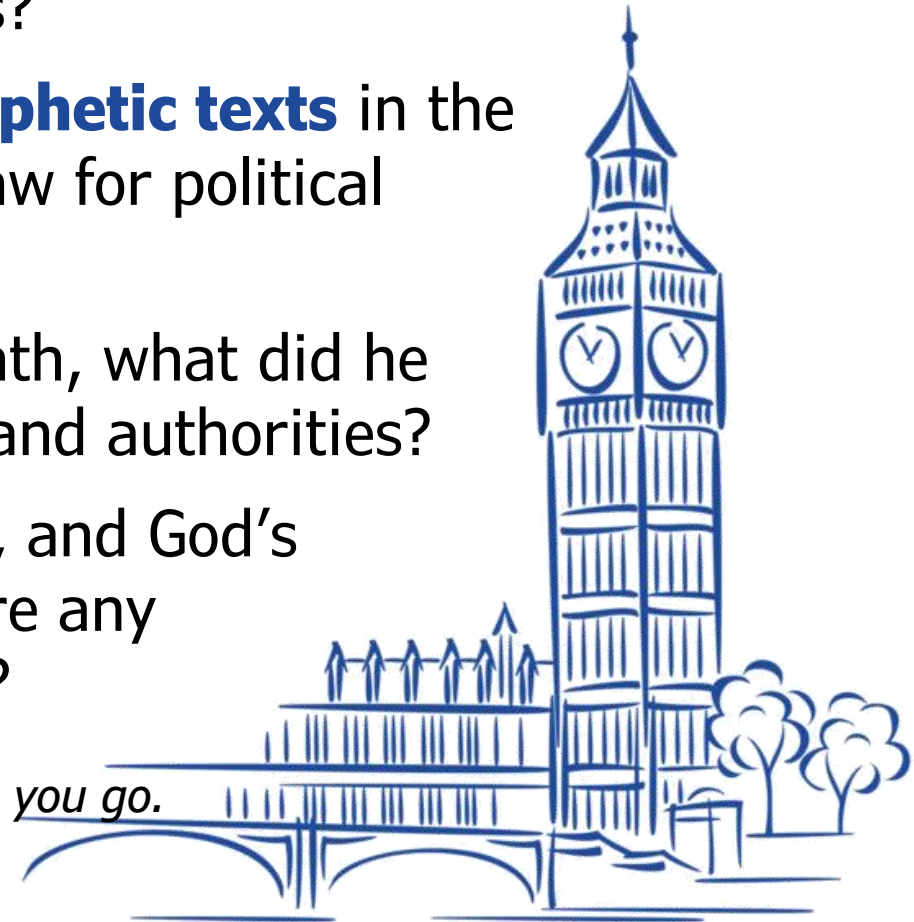
*Engaging in politics matters, whether through our prayers, conversations, or in action. It is no ‘dirtier’ than any other area of human life tainted by sin, power, greed, ambition and compromise. When Christians do make the effort to speak, act and pray with faith and integrity, God moves and he is glorified in the public sphere.*



# Christian principles for politics

- Thinking about the Christian story of **Creation**, what principles and beliefs will shape a Christian approach to politics?
- Thinking about other **stories, proverbs and prophetic texts** in the Old Testament, are there any lessons we can draw for political engagement?
- Thinking about **Jesus**, his teachings, life and death, what did he teach and show us in relation to politics, power and authorities?
- Thinking about the **church**, letters to the church, and God's kingdom (now and when Jesus returns), are there any other principles we can bring to bear on politics?

*Write up your answers (1 sentence max!) onto AhaSlides (VKG5U) as you go.*



**Jesus is King and our ultimate allegiance must be to him** (Revelation 19:15-16, Acts 5:27-31). That is a political statement – no wonder Herod was worried! Our ultimate obedience is always to God, and when challenged, we have to choose to submit to God above human rulers.



**Only Jesus' kingdom is eternal, and he will inherit the whole earth** (John 18:33-37, Psalm 2). Before that day comes, we pray that his kingdom would come on earth, as in heaven.





**Humans are all made equally in the image of God: human dignity is fundamental**  
(Genesis 1:26-28). This impacts everything political, from disability rights to abortion to access to safe housing to racial and gendered discrimination!





**Humans were created to do good work,  
stewarding the earth** (Genesis 1:28, 2:15).

We recognize the value of work and the responsibilities we have to our planet, and we promote these in policy.



**God establishes the nations and authorities, which are accountable to him** (Psalm 2, Romans 13). Ultimately they too will be judged, and none are eternal. There is comfort in this too, as well as warning.



**Christians can speak prophetically to power.** We see the prophets doing this, whether in relation to a leader's conduct (2 Samuel 12), or for making unjust laws and withholding justice from the poor and oppressed (Isaiah 10:1-2).



**The poor, vulnerable and marginalized matter to God.** Charity is of great value, but God also desires to see justice in the laws of a nation particularly in caring for these groups (Isaiah 10:1-2).



**We are to live as citizens and loving neighbours** (Romans 13:1-10). We live in the world, in our societies and therefore as citizens of that nation, though ultimately citizens of heaven. As ambassadors and followers of Christ, we love our neighbours in all sorts of ways including in action and in policy.



**Christians can serve and influence faithfully  
by God's wisdom in pagan governments**  
(Daniel 1:17-20). There is opportunity for  
faithful witness and influence in our politics.



**We should pray for our leaders and governments – that we might live peaceful and quiet lives and the gospel might flourish** (1 Timothy 2:1-4). The Timothy passage makes this really clear. Good rule is such a blessing to God's people, and rulers need our prayers desperately!

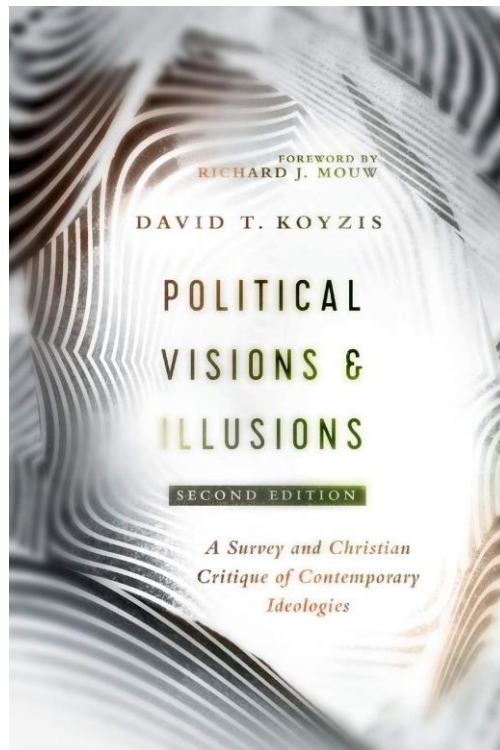




**The world is fallen – humans alone can't build utopia** (Genesis 3). We need to beware of idolizing politics. Policies, parties and ideologies will include distortions of the truth and be tainted by sin; political decisions will involve compromise. But there is still very real opportunity for good policies to improve things.



# Christian principles – unplumbed depths!



Political Visions & Illusions,  
by David Koyzis.



# Christian principles for talking about politics

Back to Aha Slides (VKG5U) one final time...



# 3 principles for political conversations

- Seek to understand the core values or worldview underpinning someone's opinions or statements – then see if you can engage on that level.
- Engage empathetically and seek to understand what experiences have shaped someone's views or persuasions.
- Be humble – always examine your heart and ask whether you are being tribal or trying to win the argument.



# 3 principles for glib political chat

- Where possible, humanize.
- Resist cynicism.
- Choose when to stay silent.



# Imagine...

*...you've just walked into your workplace kitchen, or dropped off a child at the school gate, or sat down on a park bench, and an acquaintance turns to you and says:*

**"I still can't believe only 150,000 people elected our new PM. I just don't trust any of them."**





# Get involved

- Stay informed – include Christian voices
- Find out who your local MP and Councillors are
- Consider joining a political party

Further resources... see the handout.





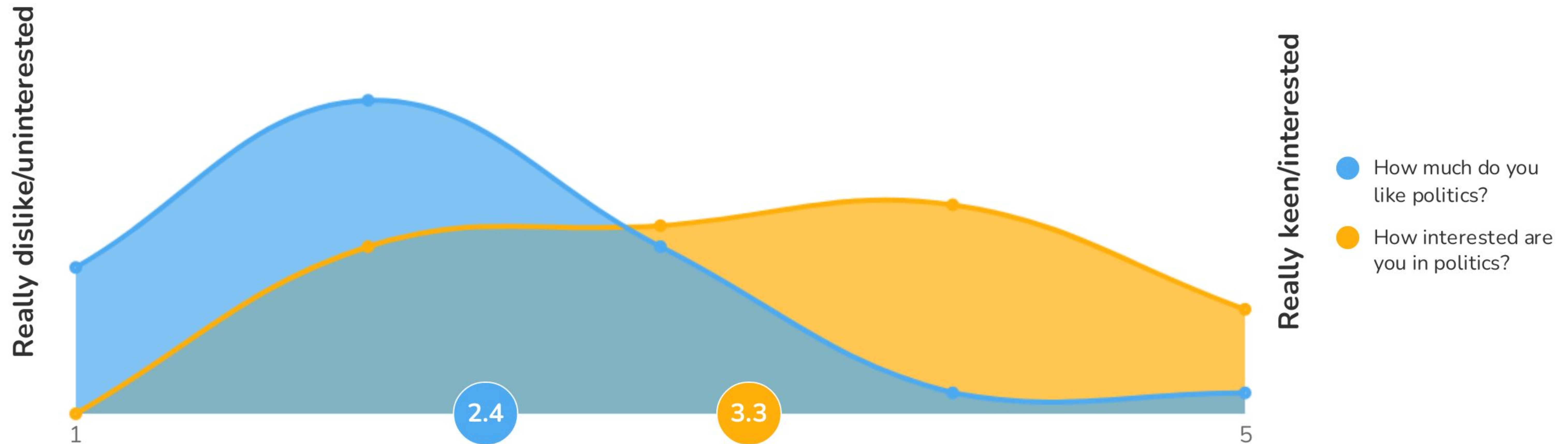
**Thank you!**



# How do we feel about Politics?

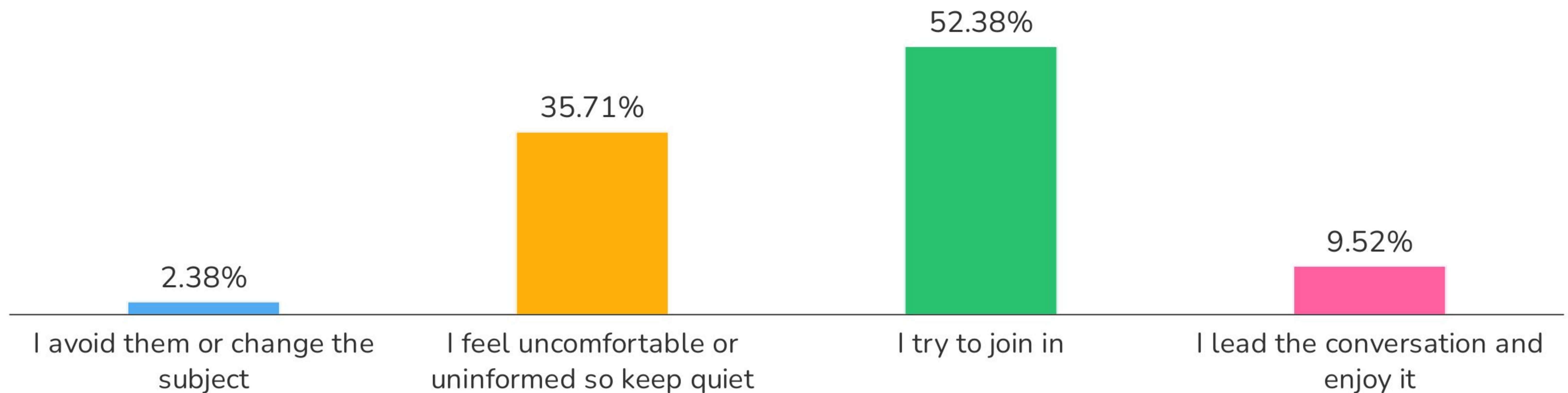
A chance to get a feel for the room, share your thoughts with the group,  
and get a bit reflective!

# How do you feel about politics?

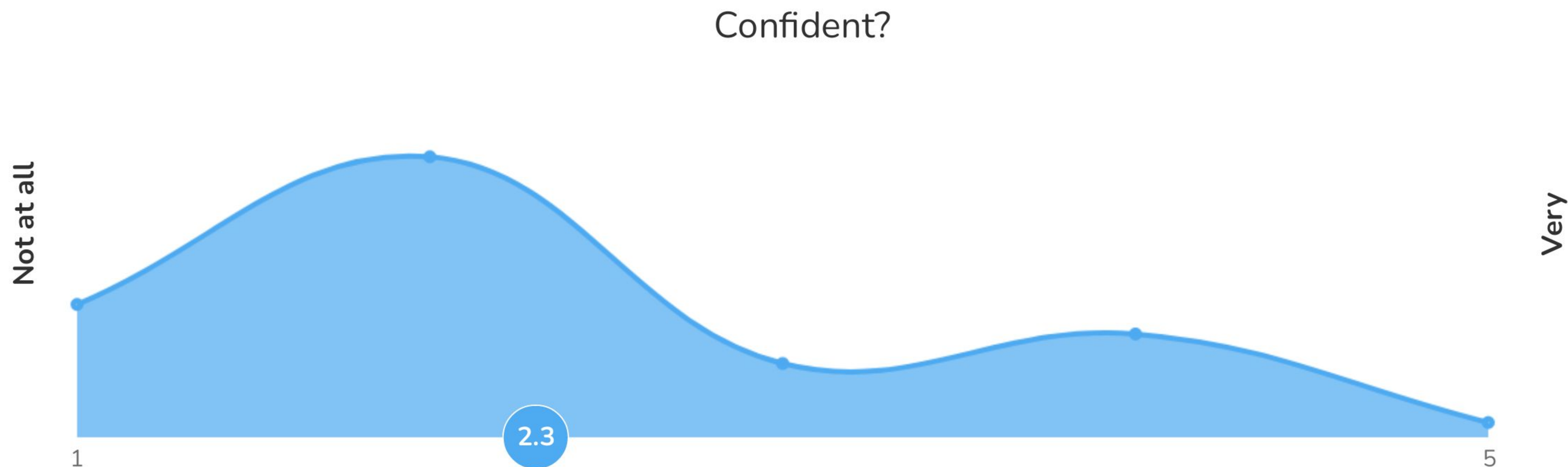




# How do you respond when conversations about politics come up?

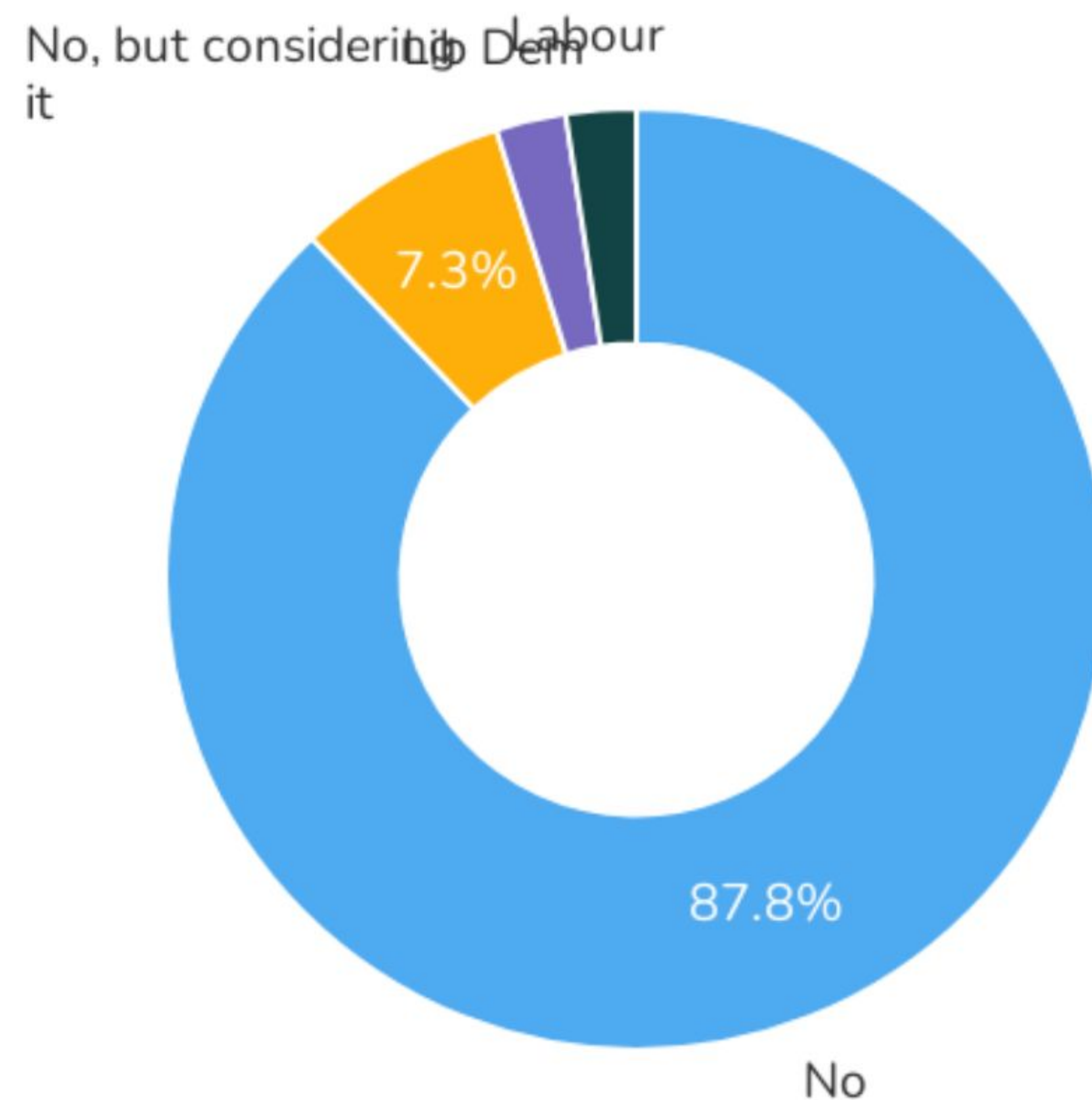


# How confident are you in relating conversations about politics to your Christian faith?





# Are you part of a political party, and if so, which?





# Are there reasons you find engaging in politics hard? In a word or two, what are these?





# Is there anything political that you're currently frustrated by or grieving?





# What do you hope to get out of today?

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| To be less indifferent   | Understanding other Christians   | Hope  |
| Process on how to engage in politics                                     | Encouragement  | Feel less apathetic                                   |
| Bring Christian faith in to conversations more easily                    | A voice  | How to point to Jesus the ultimate leader and kingdom |
| Having a some tools to talk about politics with my non-Christian friends | Approach politics with a more Christ driven mindset  | Being more informed                                   |
| confidence in forming political opinions                                 | More confidence in talking about difficult issues with friends and colleagues                | Grow in actually connecting bible and politics        |
| To feel more confident and able to engage in conversations               | An honest talk about the relationship between current politics and Christianity              | Learning how to make the connection to Christ         |
| Learn more about how to engage in a Christian, informed way              | How/whether church should be involved  | Excited for conversations about politics              |
| Thinking Christianly first   | How to engage with non-Christians when talking about politics                                | How to engage with friends' political conversations   |
| Practical ideas of getting involved                                      | How to disagree with a large group of like minded colleagues                                 | biblical reflection                                   |
| Being able to show how faith is relevant to politics                     | Bridging the gap between a Christian worldview and what non-Christian friends will hear well | Know where to affirm and condemn politics             |
| Good fellowship across political differences of opinion                  |  | T   |



# Christian Principles for Politics



# What are some Christian principles for politics?

Humans given job of looking after creation

Everything ultimately belonging to God

Every person is made in God's image

Men and women made in God's image.

Given mandate to be stewards over the earth

We are made with a job of caring for and cultivating the world

All people are made in god's image and therefore have equal dignity and value

Justice is important to God

Good world, enough resources, stewarding.

Poor are not to be exploited or neglected

Joseph takes a political role and stewards resources

Forgiveness of debt (Jubilee)

Justice is crucial - especially not depriving the poor/vulnerable of their rights

God gives people to challenge leaders, grace to other nations, responding as nation

Jesus treated marginalised people respectfully

All authority is ultimately God's

God loves to give his people wisdom and understanding to use in service of non Christian government

Jesus said we should pay our taxes

Pray for and obey the lawful authorities

Honour the authorities in their sphere

Never take a census ;)

Christians in politics are to pray faithfully and seek to be above reproach morally, and willing to suffer for faithfulness to God

Obedience but not blind obedience, God is really in charge

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves

Servant leadership; don't seek power for your own gain

Not about defending our interests, but laying down our interests to defend those in need

We should pray for people in authority

Living as exiles

Answering to a higher power so being able to scrutinize ourselves and our own party. Avoiding tribalism

God created a good world with purpose

Submit to authorities unless you can't do so faithfully to God, in which case be willing to be imprisoned etc

Being willing to challenge like the prophets

God has given humans responsibility, dignity, authority under him

Expect it to go wrong, but it will eventually be right

God is the source of all wisdom

Make sure there are enough resources for those who can't earn a living (gleaning)

Treat others as you would like to be treated

God has placed sinful people as leaders over us and has done throughout history. He has done this for a reason.

Underlying motivation is to care for the world that God created. And love and care for our neighbours. God grants positions of leadership and they should be used to honour Him. "Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling" Psalm 2:11.

The purpose of law in restraining evil

Acts: political interference can't stop the spread of the Gospel

Engagement but also red lines (Daniel)

Importance of humility and compassion in leadership



# What are some Christian principles for conversations about politics?

'Treat each other with gentleness and respect.' 'Bear with one another.' 'Speak the truth in love.'

Generosity

Civil disagreement

Humility and openness

With love and understanding to those with differing views

Overarching hope, vision of the "end goal" when Christ returns

Confidence

respect the other party during conversation- don't give in to anger.

Don't be unthinkingly partisan - our own "side" is as flawed as the "other side".

Remember all are made in the image of God and loved by Him

Humility

Kindness, and respect

Grace and truth

Salt and light

Grace and truth

The person we're conversing with is more important than our point

Not always shifting the blame

Honesty

Hopeful outlook - all will be made right when Christ appears.

Remember the plank in your own eye

Authority and governance is a Biblical principle (priests, judges, kings) - it is a good thing but broken by the fall

Humility

Patience

Being seasoned with salt, willing to give a reason for the Hope we have

Humanising politicians / humility yourself

Seeking to understand others

Be bold and unafraid to speak the truth (also choosing the right moment!)

Ready to listen