



April 10, 2025

Since the inception of our organization, we have sought opportunities to pray WITH and FOR our legislators and other elected officials. On Monday, April 7, a group of Baptist pastors did just that with Vivek Ramaswamy. The public response to a simple picture has been surprising, and we have grown to expect that from social media. While we cannot address every concern, I would like to reply to some surprisingly negative responses from those who label themselves Christians.

We prayed for a candidate for office who disagrees with our view of salvation by grace through faith in the efficacy of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Many organizations who are criticizing us have done the same. I have prayed with and for Roman Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Church of Christ, Mormons, Hindus, Islamists, as well as atheists and agnostics. And I will continue to do so. As Baptists, we hold different doctrines from our biblical positions than each of these belief sets.

Is there a person or group of people who should NOT receive our prayers? Does anyone need to prove their worth or value before we can even pray for them?

Why would "Christian organizations" complain that we prayed for a Hindu? Is it OK to pray for a Catholic, even though evangelical believers would disagree with a doctrine of salvation by works - but not a Hindu?

During this prayer, which has been deemed "offensive," "divisive," and "confusing" by other Christian political groups, we prayed for wisdom and God's protection upon his family, that if it was God's will that Mr. Ramaswamy would be our next governor that he would rule well, and even that one day he would find faith in Jesus Christ. I guess other Christian political groups must not want us to act like Christians.

We obeyed the Scriptures and prayed for a leader. This particular leader is also a conservative candidate who embraces our shared values of patriotism and liberty.

Are we to reserve our prayers only for those who hold conservative political positions? I have prayed with and for many Democrats with whom I disagree politically. But I pray with them when they allow me, and I pray for them consistently. Our church prays for every single state house and senate member through the year. I may disagree with someone on a position, but it doesn't give me the right to hate them and I've found out it's pretty difficult to hate someone if you are praying for them. When Paul penned the following command, Nero was Caesar of Rome and not exactly known for his virtuous lifestyle. Yet, believers were commanded to pray for him, too.

1 Timothy 2:1-3, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;"

I referred to this verse at the close of our meeting before we prayed. Our goal for praying for our leaders is that they would leave us alone so we may preach the Gospel and live out our faith.

During our prayer, we touched him with our hands.

The "laying on of hands" is reserved for an individual going forth and preaching the Gospel. Some lay hands on deacons or assistant pastors as they begin their term of service to the church. In the doctrinal sense, we did not "lay hands on" Mr. Ramaswamy and send him forth to evangelize Ohio. We asked if we may pray for him, and he consented. We put our hands on him out of concern. For 43 years of Gospel ministry, I have prayed for people in hospitals, funeral homes, living rooms, offices, and church services. We often hold hands or place a hand upon a forearm or shoulder. When it is a dear or close friend, I put my arm around them and squeeze their shoulder out of compassion for their need.

Is it unscriptural to touch someone if you are praying for them?

We prayed for a candidate for office.

This is the root problem.

So far, no one has called me to clarify what we did and what was said. What has become public is assumption and accusation. If Vivek were not running for office, no one would care what we did. There is an undercurrent and whispering from other Christian political groups that object to Christians praying for a Hindu because that Hindu is running for office.



The implication given is that, indeed, a Christian wouldn't support a Hindu! The optics appear like an endorsement! It wasn't intended as an endorsement - but what if (gasp) a Christian did endorse a Hindu for office if he was, in that Christian's opinion, the best candidate for office? Is there something in the Bible that prevents me from voting for a Hindu but permits me to vote for someone else who is not an evangelical Christian? Is a person's faith in Christ the sole factor in procuring my vote?

In my opinion, it is cowardly for someone to use Christianity as a cloak for opposing a candidate, when, in reality, the real reason is that they are supporting an opposing candidate. What if we lived in a Hindu culture and a Christian was running for office? What would be our reaction then? In my opinion, it is inconsistent and dishonest to use religion to blackball a candidate. We certainly should be more spiritually mature than that. Senator Niraj Antani was a conservative force in our state legislature for many years, and Christian groups didn't condemn praying for and with him - they supported him.

We must be cautious we do not replace consistent Christianity with cultural Christianity. As I would assess each candidate's position, I realize that one's belief system affects one's values. Each candidate's talents and abilities are also a part of their sum total of potential. I try to assess my doctor, dentist, lawyer and other professionals on their skillset and not solely on their belief set. Why would I not do the same for my potential governor?

Our organization chooses not to endorse candidates because we encourage each pastor to shepherd their own flock. But we do encourage all pastors to shepherd their flock in all areas - even politically. I have grown to appreciate the controversy that has swirled around the "prayer heard round the world." It has hastened my assessment of the candidates currently running for governor, and I have now arrived to the decision that, personally, I am voting for Vivek. I will continue praying that he will have the opportunity to lead Ohio into stronger and more conservative values, and I plan on heavily supporting him in this endeavor.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan L. Wolvin".

Daniel L. Wolvin
State Director