



Introduction to Political Science:

A Christian Perspective

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The Call for Christians in Politics

“Not all Christians agree on how to think about political life,” says Fred Van Geest of his new book *Introduction to Political Science*. After decades of teaching political science in Christian settings, he still couldn’t find a text that suitably bridged these two somewhat divided areas. In more recent years, Van Geest has come to the conclusion that governments have a responsibility to promote public justice for citizens. As he states, “Government is not the only institution that can help create conditions that are conducive to flourishing, but it is an important one.”

His thesis is that Christians should be compelled to interact with politics in a way that’s full of integrity while also being distinctly Christian. Our Christian culture has a need for a non-ideological and principled approach to political systems. Van Geest demonstrates that there are biblical foundations for these ideas, and we should develop thinking around politics with these foundations in mind.

“I draw on a variety of sources and perspectives within the Christian tradition,” says Van Geest. “I believe the need for such a book is great in our hyper-partisan political environment and to my knowledge nothing like it exists.”

Van Geest’s background in political education is extensive. He currently serves as professor of political science at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was professor of political studies and environmental studies for eleven years at Dordt College in Sioux City, Iowa, and also previously taught at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon. Van Geest’s research and teaching interests include comparative politics, public administration, and the intersection of Christianity and politics.

Throughout this latest writing, Van Geest addresses topics such as:

- the need for a Christian government
- political parties, elections, voting
- social and economic policy
- perspectives on international relations
- the UN, INGOs, vulnerable peoples

“Thinking about the study of politics from a Christian perspective usually entails holding a secular textbook in one hand and the Bible or your favorite ‘faith-and-politics’ book in the other,” says Peter J. Baker of the American studies program with the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities. “Van Geest offers students an introduction to political science—organizing material into sections on ideas, institutions, issues, and international aspects—that highlights how various theological traditions within Christianity have weighed in on the same questions and concepts that attract the scholarly focus of our secular counterparts.

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BOOK DETAILS

In its examination of the many different ways we study and do politics, the textbook succeeds in creating opportunities for students to consider how their own Christian faith shapes their own perspective and participation in political life.”