

http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/willis_e_elliott/2007/10/vote_american_1.html

Vote American!

ON FAITH - WASHINGTON POST - WILLIS ELLIOTT

Observation 1....."Only in America," as "Carolina Israelite" Harry Golden used to say. In our country more than anywhere else on earth or in human history, one's background may not be one's foreground. We're tolerant of jumping one ship for another. Nobody gets killed because of converting to another religion. This is my first observation on this week's "On Faith" question:

"GOP presidential candidate John McCain said recently that he 'admired' Islam but would prefer a president with 'a solid grounding' in the Christian faith. Would you consider a candidate's religious background in deciding for whom to vote? If so, under what circumstances?"

Observation 2....Religion is one of the story-strands in the rope of a person's reality, and *knowing* this background-foreground strand is essential to knowing the person and *guessing* her/his performance in political office.

Observation 3.....It's unfair to the candidates, and irresponsible as a citizen, to vote for a candidate on *any single* story-strand of the candidate's reality, or any single political issue.

Observation 4.....In addition to having more differences of background than any other people in history, all of us Americans have the same background (namely, *the American heritage*) and the same foreground (namely, the American present).

Observation 5.....In voting today for the America we want, we Americans vote "American"--whatever that severally means to us.

Observation 6.....For John McCain and me, voting American means voting for candidates with "a solid grounding" in America's founding religion, Christianity. The earliest Americans in the continuity of our customs and laws were English Puritan and Separatist Christians, who before landing in 1620 drafted our first founding document, the Mayflower Compact. In our documentary history, they were followed by the English Enlightenment Christians who wrote the Declaration of Independence (1776), the Constitution (in effect, 1789), and the Bill of Rights (1791).

Observation 7.....The taproot in the formation of the American mind was the American religion, a dynamic mix of English Christianity and a rationalist spin-off therefrom, namely, the English-Scottish-French Enlightenment.

Observation 8.....Since America's Founding Fathers were scattered all along the Christian spectrum from conservatism to deism, we Americans today can *choose our favorites* among the Founding Fathers according to our own predilections, our own way of seeing and living in the world today.

Observation 9.....When I say "Vote American!" I am expressing my concern for honoring and promoting the American mind of private and public dialog between our Founders' Biblical **faith** and their Enlightenment **reason**. Only in this light, and within this very specific sense, do I view as un-American all other minds. This does not mean that those of other minds cannot be good Americans. It does mean, as historians of culture will agree, that only by the promotion of the American mind can the American heritage survive and thrive. Negatively put, America could not survive the death or even the radical re-definition of the American mind. Analytically put, ideological multiculturalism in America's public schools now threatens the American heritage/religion/mind with **death by amnesia**.

BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | OCTOBER 4, 2007; 12:13 PM

Comments

Please report offensive comments below.

Certainly, we would want someone of American heritage, regardless of ethnic or religious background.

POSTED BY: FRIEND | OCTOBER 7, 2007 3:50 PM

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OK, so what you are saying is that if the original "founders" of a nation adhere to a certain belief, then we should continue with it forever? That is by far the stupidest thing I have EVER heard. I guess if you are Chinese, it is un-Chinese to be Christian - well that negates your God's omnipotence somewhat, eh? Does that mean you have to believe in Native American beliefs? Or is it just who killed who last? Man - such a horrible representative for God. Good thing he doesn't exist - he would be so ashamed.

POSTED BY: LUKE | OCTOBER 7, 2007 1:02 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

So once again, you try to define who is and is not American. It comes down to those who think like you. Shameful, especially for someone who calls himself a teacher.

Not everyone needs to rely on the Bible to figure out what will help and what will hurt other people.

If you do, great! If not, great! I don't look at what people say, I look at what they do and if it squares up with what people say.

and who gets to decide? You? I think you're afraid of losing power- to what, I'm not sure.

America is the promise of something more.

We are already a multicultural society, and if we don't address it as such and not seek to exclude people by use of divisive language and trying to tell people that they 'hate' things that they don't, we will never overcome the conditions that lead to fundamentalism in any religion.

Oh, and btw: Madison, who wrote our Constitution, was certainly no Christian and said so in no uncertain terms. Neither was Jefferson, Adams, or Franklin.

G Day:

Couldn't have said it better myself.

POSTED BY: PRIVER | OCTOBER 6, 2007 1:11 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

It takes quite a bit of "amnesia" about our history to forget that America never could have grown beyond the original 13 states without additions from many cultures: French influence in the old Northwest (the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes), and in Louisiana up into the Mississippi Valley; the Spanish contributions in Florida, Texas, and throughout the southwest; the Russian colonization of Alaska with trade extending as far south as Oregon; the lands wrested from Native tribes; and lest we forget, the slave labor of Africans which clothed and fed and enriched a nation.

It's also questionable how the "American mind" can view our heritage as if history somehow stopped in the 1790's. The founding fathers themselves knew they didn't have the answers for the ages, which is why our Constitution was given the capacity to change and grow. Over time America has grown, and, heaven help us, it has changed, welcoming Germans, Irish, Scandinavians, Russians, Italians, Poles, East Europeans, Mexicans, Cubans, Koreans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Pakistanis, Indians, Chinese, Salvadoreans, as well as British and Canadians. Back in the 1880's, the concern was that Catholic and Jewish immigrants from eastern and southern Europe would unravel the fabric of American identity. Today, the alleged culprits are Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist (and again Catholic). The truth of the matter is, most of these recent immigrants are equally if not more committed to freedom, private property, opportunity, and good old fashioned family and faith. "American minds" are all around us. If you want to save America and preserve our heritage, the only recourse is to embrace who we are now, in all its multicultural glory and messiness.

POSTED BY: G. DAY | OCTOBER 5, 2007 10:06 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Richmond T. Stallgiss:

The states HAD the right to segregate. Then we the people decided to enforce the constitution. It's just a matter of time for state government established religion.

What does the very first paragraph at <http://www.hoax-buster.org> say? It's free, donations not accepted and there's no advertising. How much money do you suppose they take in? It's the same amount you would have if you did as Jesus commanded, "sell all your earthly possessions and give to the poor."

Religion is the worship of Devil by people fooled by con men called ministers who use a hoax as their source of authority and to substantiate their claim of knowing what God wants. Take the Bible away and there's not much left as a source of God is there? Leave the Bible alone and it's provably the word of Devil.

<http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul>

That web site is a thorn in the side of those who would destroy democracy. It has something they can't take, the truth.

POSTED BY: BGONE | OCTOBER 5, 2007 3:52 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Yes, you are correct about the VSFRF verbiage.

For the record, I oppose faith-based initiatives, as do many Christians. It violates separation of Church and State.

As for real estate, it's a legal definition question. No state money is given to churches for their real estate. None. Zero. Zip. etc.

If states choose to make them exempt that's an issue to take up with your lawmaker.

Peace,
RT

PS I'll bet you are on the dole from that website

POSTED BY: RICHMOND T. STALLGISS | OCTOBER 5, 2007 1:10 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Richmond T. Stallgiss:

I presume, "no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever" is from the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.

You are aware that the tax laws force all "to support" all official recognized religions. Only official religions actually own real estate. All others, so called home owners included must pay RE taxes that is paramount to rent. Don't pay and the government will sell your RE.

Example: Eddie Murphy's 3.5 million dollar mansion has over \$50,000 per year taxes while the Crystal Cathedral worth much more pays none. Murphy's mansion is now in foreclosure. Hurst Castle was donated to the state of California rather than wait for the tax sale.

I use the RE tax example of how tax laws force all "to support" religions because it's so obvious, unquestionable. The Bush administration has done massive payback by doling out hard tax dollars to ministries, (that supported his election?).

They sell their souls for 30 pieces of silver.

<http://www.hoax-buster.org/sellyoursoul> explains it all. Devil and not God is behind religion.

Religion is the great enemy of democracy.

Devil worship is the great enemy of democracy.

God is not the great enemy of democracy.

God requires no worship or help from man.

When man cries out to God for help, Devil always answers while God turns a deaf ear.

POSTED BY: BGONE | OCTOBER 5, 2007 11:50 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Jimbo... where are you from?

I am kind of surprised that you think religion would have no influence in America but for the Islamist attacks.

If you lived my part of America (Richmond, Virginia) you would see many positive things that religion is doing.

Peace,

RT

POSTED BY: RICHMOND T. STALLGISS | OCTOBER 5, 2007 11:38 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Mother Teresa got it wrong,as she suspected.

There is no God.It's all made up.It is obvious.

All you have to do is think about it for a few minutes and it's really obvious.We are all so desperate and confused,and need this celestial teddy bear to make us feel better about death and other scary things.

Religion will not survive the 21st century.

People are getting smarter all the time,and will finally drop religion the way it drops all stupid notions eventually.

Once upon a time we all believed the world was flat.

Now we know better.

If it wasn't for Islam forcing religion back onto the front pages,it would be as significant as astrology.

This I believe.

POSTED BY: JIMBO | OCTOBER 5, 2007 10:43 AM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

"There really is a god there really is a god there really is a god there really is a god there really is a god."

Mother Teresa.

What I believe.

POSTED BY: AQUAS | OCTOBER 4, 2007 9:07 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Regarding your eighth point: You forget Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who was in no way a protestant.

POSTED BY: MARYLANDER | OCTOBER 4, 2007 4:30 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

You said: *I am expressing my concern for honoring and promoting the American mind of private and public dialog between our **Founders'** **Biblical faith** and their Enlightenment reason. (boldface supplied by LW)*

You talk about history as if you know something about it -- but you don't! You'd better go read some of the writings of Jefferson, Adams, Madison, and Franklin. I think that's a pretty impressive lot of founders, all of whom lacked what you call "Biblical faith."

Of course, if you just want to continue spouting nonsense, you don't need facts.

POSTED BY: LW | OCTOBER 4, 2007 2:13 PM

[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Mr. Elliot... I would agree with you except that I am afraid of the Dominionist Christians who would read what you wrote and think that they somehow have the monopoly on American Christianity.

The American Christianity that I know worships a God who does not force people to worship him but allows people the mistake of ignoring Him.

The American Christianity has at its base the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom ... a fundamental guarantee that the government may not infringe on the right of personal conscience.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Statute_for_Religious_Freedom

I agree with you... and I want to be clear that the American Christianity we are talking about allows for American Muslims and American Jews and American Pagans and American Atheists the exact same political rights... not dhimmitude or some fake equality, but, "...no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."Peace,

RT, who lives in Richmond, VA

POSTED BY: RICHMOND T. STALLGISS | OCTOBER 4, 2007 1:01 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

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