

The Audacity of Truth

By Bill Fortenberry

Should politics be influenced by religion?

Our current president has answered this question with a resounding, “No!” From his claim in *The Audacity of Hope* that the Constitution is a denial of absolute truth to his ultimatum against religion in his “Call to Renewal” keynote address to his insistence that America is not a Christian nation, President Obama has made his position on the role of religion in government very clear. He has firmly insisted that religion and politics must be kept separate from each other, but he is far from correct. While religion can be shielded from the influence of politics, the opposite is completely impossible.

Inherent in every law is a foundation of absolute truth. In mathematics, the laws of addition and subtraction, multiplication and division are all based on a foundation of absolute truth. Two plus two always equals four. Two times five always equals ten. These are absolutes: they are truths that always exist and can not be denied.

Scientific laws are also founded on absolutes. Every object in the universe is subjected to the law of gravity. There is no escape from it: it is absolute. The laws of thermodynamics are also absolute as are the ideal gas laws, the laws of motion and every other law of science. These laws are all founded on the concept of absolute truth.

Human laws are no exception, for though they are not absolute in and of themselves, yet they are all based on a religious belief in some absolute truth. Every law written by men was written with the assumption that it is justified according to some absolute standard. Every human law assumes that it is right for men to obey that law and wrong to break it. For example, laws against pedophilia are based on the idea that it is wrong for a man to force himself upon a child. Thievery is outlawed because of the belief that it is wrong to take that which is not yours, and laws against murder stem directly from the religious principle of the sanctity of human life. No law can be separated from this religious foundation.

The question then is not so much a matter of whether politics and religion should mix, but rather which religion produces the best laws. Should we base our laws against murder on the Koran which teaches that only the lives of those who accept Islam are valid? Should such laws be based on the humanist idea that certain people are more fit for life than others? Or should we embrace the Christian teaching that the life of every human being is sacred to God? Anyone who gives thoughtful consideration to the relationship between religion and law must conclude that the two are inseparably joined and that those laws which are so joined to the Christian religion are the most favorable and good.

This was the conclusion of the founding fathers of America as well as that of their enlightenment predecessors. As Noah Webster put it, “The Christian religion... is the basis, or rather the source, of all genuine freedom in government... I am persuaded that no civil government of a republican form can exist and be durable in which the principles of Christianity have not a controlling influence.” One cannot read through the writings of the great men who founded this nation or of those who have subsequently risen to similar levels of influence without being flooded and overwhelmed by their sure reliance on the Scriptures in every area of life both public and private.

What a contrast this is to our current president who is the first president in the history of this great

nation to openly disavow the Christian religion. Is it any wonder that he has also sought to do more to destroy our freedoms than any of his predecessors? I heartily agree with John Witherspoon who boldly declared that "Whoever is an avowed enemy of God, I scruple not to call him an enemy to his country." It is a sad time indeed in American history when our Commander in Chief can also be said to be public enemy number one.