

Religion Enters the Presidential Race

Dr. Ben Carson introduced the subject of religion into the presidential race last week by questioning the depth of faith of Donald Trump. Trump wisely did not take the bait and responded by questioning Carson's energy level. Quickly, Carson apologized for his comment and said he did not want to enter "that arena."

Religion of a sort is already in the race. Former Senator Rick Santorum is a very devout Catholic and Mike Huckabee is a former Baptist preacher who abandoned that calling for politics and show business. On occasion, Huckabee also plays bass guitar with rock bands.

Most of the Republican and all of the Democrat candidates consider themselves too "elite" to be bothered with such a "private" matter as Christianity. After all, someone may become offended.

Dr. Carson talks a lot about his faith in and dependence upon God and frequently quotes scripture from the Old Testament. Dr. Carson is a "twice-baptized Seventh-Day Adventist," according to the Christian Post.

The Adventist Church in North America issued a statement when Carson announced his candidacy.

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church values Dr. Carson as we do all members. However, it is important for the church to maintain its long-standing historical support for the separation of church and state by not endorsing or opposing any candidate."

"Adventists should take civic responsibility seriously. We should participate in the voting process available to us when it is possible to do so in good conscience and should share the responsibility of building our communities. Adventists should not, however, become preoccupied with politics, or utilize the pulpit or our publications to advance political theories."

Carson said he spends just about as much time in non Seventh-day Adventist churches as in his own, "because I'm not convinced that the denomination is the most important thing," he told Religious News Service in 1999. He added: "I think it's the relationship with God that's most important."

Non-Christians and most of the news media are puzzled and can't understand why Evangelical Christians are supportive of Trump. The Pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, was asked about that on FOX News recently. He said this was such an important election that Evangelical Christians are not looking for a candidate who professes to be a good Christian. We will be happy to have one who is not working against us, he said.

David Brody, Chief Political Correspondent for CBN News, has addressed the question of Evangelical attraction to Trump in a recent article reprinted on page 3 of this issue. Brody did an excellent job of assessing the attitude of many Evangelical Christians today.

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legitimate Christians, along with most Conservative
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be Conservative Christians during their campaign and when they get to Washington, they prove themselves to be slick-tongued purveyors of mendacity. Christians with spiritual discernment can see through the lies and are not fooled. They are now very angry.

Brody explained the similarities of Trump to Evangelicals. Trump operates in a world of absolutes. There is right and wrong. There is white and black, no grey. When Trump speaks out boldly, he is ridiculed.

In their quest to advocate biblical values, Evangelicals operate in a world of absolutes. The Bible is the inerrant Word of God. End of discussion! They believe the only way to Heaven is through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is non-negotiable. When Christians are bold, they are ridiculed, just like Trump.

Brody paints the picture. He said when asked about forgiveness, Trump does not give the Evangelical textbook answer, but he is telling the truth. That is a rare commodity these days.

Brody concludes: "Evangelicals don't want to hear politicians feed them the 'I love Jesus' line and then treat them and their issues as a political vehicle just to acquire presidential power."

Evangelicals are learning from Trump also. They are learning not to be so nice to people who lie, cheat, steal or want to cut off your head.