



SPECIAL REPORT

WAS BARACK OBAMA RIGHT?

IS AMERICA NO LONGER A CHRISTIAN NATION?

When Barack Obama stated that “America is no longer a Christian nation,” he raised the ire of many Christians, particularly those of the Evangelical persuasion. But was he wrong? Is America still a Christian nation? Was it ever a Christian nation to begin with?

Although his statement was uttered in 2006, long before he even ran for the presidency, it has attained tremendous exposure since his election. The Internet is replete with video excerpts from his keynote speech at the Call for Renewal Conference sponsored by the Sojourners (a liberal Christian organization) on April 28, 2006.

It is interesting to note that other portions of his speech were not as well received by some of the leftist religious people to whom he was speaking. They did not appreciate his appeal that they should not discount the value of religion in public life and even its role in shaping the thinking of legislators. As much as leftist Christians like to pose as tolerant, and claim to be Christians of differing Protestant and Catholic persuasions, they adhere to a strict secularist approach to government. Obama addressed the appeals to God that many famous Americans in public life have made for their causes:

Imagine Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address without reference to "the judgments of the Lord." Or King's "I Have a Dream" speech without references to "all of God's children." Their summoning of a higher truth helped inspire what had seemed impossible, and move the nation to embrace a common destiny....

But what I am suggesting is this: secularists are wrong when they ask believers to leave their religion at the door before entering into the public square. Frederick Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, William Jennings Bryan, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King—indeed, the majority of great reformers in American history—were not only motivated by faith, but repeatedly used religious language to argue for their cause. So to say that men and women should not inject their "personal morality" into public policy debates is a practical absurdity. Our law is by definition a codification

of morality, much of it grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Obama also emphasized his friendship with Rick Warren, T.D. Jakes, Jim Wallis, and Tony Campolo, social gospel proponents whom he regards as leaders in “the larger project of



American renewal.” That renewal centers on an emphasis of social programs based on what Obama called “some overlapping values that both religious and secular people share when it comes to the moral and material direction of our country.”

Obama seemed to be trying to reach some middle ground between those who are totally secularist and those who believe religion—particularly Christianity—should form the basis for government policy. Since that time we have seen how his policies have largely ignored the Evangelical Christian influence and leaned heavily toward a leftist religious posture that is virtually in line with the atheistic secularist position. The same causes that fire the atheist, fire the “liberal” Christian. Reality demonstrates that Evangelical Christianity, though straying much from a purely biblical position within churches that identify with Evangelicalism, remains diametrically opposed to the liberal Christianity that characterizes most of the mainline Protestant denominations and a large segment of Catholicism.

Obama's position comes as no surprise to Evangelical Christians whose discernment is intact. Although he presents himself as a Christian, his ideological stance reveals that this is nominal at best. And in view of his consistent antagonism toward Christianity and his attraction toward Islam, many question whether he may be a closet Muslim. It is certain that he lacks any real reverence for, or understanding of, Scripture. This was abundantly evident in his now infamous speech to Sojourners. Obama's attraction is not to Jesus Christ as the only way to God, but to a religiousness that embraces any belief system.

The words that have generated such disdain among non-leftist Christians may have been excerpted by those incensed by Obama's statement that "America is no longer a Christian nation," but they were not out of context. Yet we must consider whether or not what he said about America no longer being a Christian nation is true. For that matter, we must consider whether or not America was ever a Christian nation to begin with.

Analyzing Obama's statement requires careful attention to detail. Before he even uttered that phrase he set the stage with the following words in relation to reconciling faith with our modern, pluralistic society:

And if we're going to do that then we first need to understand that Americans are a religious people. 90 percent of us believe in God, 70 percent affiliate themselves with an organized religion, 38 percent call themselves committed Christians, and substantially more people in America believe in angels than they do in evolution.

At first hearing one might think that Christians comprise only 38 percent of the population; what may easily escape one's attention is the word, "committed." Most likely, Obama spoke truthfully that only 38 percent of Christians are committed. That may even be a generous assessment. Yet recent polls indicate that almost 80 percent of Americans consider themselves Christians of some persuasion. And although this is a significant slippage from previous polls that put that figure closer to 95% at one time, Obama's ultimate words to the effect that America is no longer a Christian nation were disingenuous; they conveyed a false impression to promote his appeal to common ground for his social agenda.

In fairness, Obama did offer an addendum, using the word "just" apparently as an afterthought:

Whatever we once were, we are no longer a Christian nation—at least not "just"—we are also a Jewish nation, and a Muslim nation, and a Buddhist nation, and a Hindu nation, and a nation of non-believers.

In all honesty, considering that not all who call themselves "Christian" are truly of the Faith, and speaking from a purely pragmatic standpoint, it's hardly truthful to equate all other religions with Christianity when speaking of what America is in terms of its religious identity. Obama gave the impression that all these religions share equally in that identity. But the facts speak otherwise when we consider the true religious demographics of the United States, at least as reported by the highly respected Pew Forum as late as August, 2008:

- Christians of all denominations (includes Evangelicals, Protestants, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.) 77%
- Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus combined 5%
- Other Religions 1%
- Non-affiliated Religious/Atheists/Agnostics 17%

Now, we must make the distinction between "Christianity" and pure biblical faith. If we consider only those who are what Obama calls "committed" Christians, I doubt many of them would be truly committed to biblical faith as opposed to some form of Christian religion. Yet the fact remains that in terms of religious demographics, every other religion outside of what is called Christianity in America is insignificant relative to the nation's religious identity. Even understanding that Obama hasn't an inkling of what constitutes true biblical faith, his inference that Christianity is on a par with every other religion in America reveals a hidden disdain for his professed religion. It isn't so much what he said as the way he said it, displaying an almost haughty attitude and a smirk. His following words revealed even further his disdain for the Bible, as well as a woeful misunderstanding of what it says:

And even if we did have only Christians in our midst, if we expelled every non-Christian from the United States of America, whose Christianity would we teach in the schools? Would we go with James Dobson's, or Al Sharpton's? Which passages of Scripture should guide our public policy? Should we go with Leviticus, which suggests slavery is okay and that eating shellfish is abomination? How about Deuteronomy, which suggests stoning your child if he strays from the faith?

Or should we just stick to the Sermon on the Mount—a passage that is so radical that it's doubtful that our own Defense Department would survive its application? So before we get carried away, let's read our Bibles. Folks haven't been reading their Bibles.

A true believer in Jesus reveres the Word of God and studies it so he can properly discern truth from error. This we must do in order to understand fully the implication of Obama's ignorance and disrespect for the true Faith. His reference to the Old Covenant under the Mosaic Law in a disparaging manner reveals a woeful ignorance of, or disregard for, the context of those laws. Under the Mosaic Law slavery was a means to repay debts that could otherwise not be repaid. It did not resemble slavery as practiced in the early history of the United States. Certainly it didn't resemble slavery as practiced since the beginning of time even until today in some heathen nations. After seven years, regardless of the unpaid portion of the debt, Israelite slaves were to be released unless they decided for themselves to remain with their masters (Deuteronomy 15:12-18). The Old Covenant Law also insisted that slaves be treated kindly and be provided for. Instead of such indentured servitude today, we have bankruptcy laws that often resolve debtors of having to pay what they legitimately owe, leaving their creditors on the hook.

Eating shellfish was called "abomination" not because eating it was disgusting, but because touching any unclean animal

prevented the eater from entering into the congregation. Unclean animals according to the Old Covenant Law were those that scavenged off the dead. Thus, no one touching anything dead, whether directly or indirectly, was allowed to approach YHWH without first being ceremonially cleansed. The uncleanness acquired from eating scavengers could not easily be cleansed; it was within the body. To enter into the sanctuary in that condition would be an abomination.

Children were not regularly stoned in Israel. Stoning was the punishment for willful rebellion against authority, whether parental or congregational. It did not apply to young children who may have been naturally resistant to correction, but to those of age who posed a threat to the community by their willful rebellion.

All these laws were for the preservation of Israel until the Messiah came to bring the New Covenant to that nation.

The Sermon on the Mount applies to individuals who would be faithful to Christ; it does not apply to nations that must take means to defend themselves against their enemies.

But only someone who studies God's Word would understand these things. Those who throw the Old Covenant Law in the face of those who believe in righteous government display not only disdain for God's Word, but disdain for the righteousness that God desires for the guidance of government. Barack Obama has certainly revealed such disdain on his part.

What he was really suggesting is that, in spite of his appeal to religiousness, God's Word has no place in government. That is really what was behind his "America is no longer a Christian nation" comment. Obama and the Marxist sycophants with which he has surrounded himself truly do disdain God's Word.

But was what he said true? Is America no longer a Christian nation?

By saying "no longer," he was implying that at one time America was a Christian nation. And that is true, at least nominally. By virtue of its founders and the vast majority of its population the United States of America may be considered a Christian nation. But it has never been a Christian nation in biblical terms. God never instituted America as a theocracy, although some of the early Pilgrims did attempt to impart a Calvinistic form of government in some of the colonies. References to Jesus Christ as Lord in their founding documents attest to that. But the United States, as a constitutional republic, did not insist upon Jesus Christ being Lord over the nation. Considering that many of the founders were Freemasons and deists we recognize that truth. Yet at the same time, even those Freemasons and deists, when referring to "God," had in mind the God of the Bible. They were not thinking of pagan gods when they used the word.

As well, when the motto, "In God We Trust" was first imprinted on U.S. currency, there was never an inkling that those words referred to any pagan god; they referred to the God of the Bible because He is the God who was in the consciousness of the vast majority of Americans, including those in government who commissioned those words. Even today that reference is valid, and it continues to be placed on newly designed currency.

Does this mean that the U.S. government should impose biblical faith, or any religious system, upon its citizens? Of course not. What it means is that from its inception until this present administration the U.S. government has referenced the God of the Bible in all its invocations. Even Barack Obama recognizes that the so-called "Judeo-Christian" ethic forms the basis for our jurisprudence. Yet he has done all he can to distance his administration from that reference. He perpetuates the myth that the government must not consider the God of the Bible above any other god. Yet the truth is that the government can acknowledge the God of the Bible—the God referenced by the vast majority of the population—without imposing biblical faith upon its citizens. Acknowledgement is not imposition. In truth, that has been the history of the U.S. government from its inception until this administration. Acknowledgement of YHWH, through His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, as the guiding hand behind the nation (in truth, He is the guiding hand upon all nations) does not impose anything on those who disagree with that truth, or even hate Him. They are free to practice any religion, or no religion, as they see fit.

To impose any religious tenets would go against the Lord's words that His Kingdom is not of this world. We do not seek a theocracy or a "Christian state." But we are well aware that when the righteous rule the people rejoice, and when the wicked rule the people mourn (Proverbs 29:2). The righteous are those who live by God's Word; the wicked are those who disdain God's Word.

Who knows how many presidents and other politicians throughout America's history have been anti-Christ? Certainly they would never have dared reveal it; they would have kept their anti-Christ thoughts to themselves lest they suffer the political ramifications. But no longer.

Previous administrations may have demonstrated a disdain for God's Word through their actions, but they never were so audacious as to speak their disdain. Obama is the first to exhibit such audaciousness through his disdain for God's Word not only by his actions, but by his words.

I suppose we can credit him with honesty there at least. **MS**

*A wise man's heart
is at his right hand,
But a fool's heart at
his left.*

Ecclesiastes 10:2

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