



MORMONISM AND THE PRESIDENCY

October 11, 2011

Does Mitt Romney, an elder and former missionary of the Mormon Church, believe he will one day be a god...equal to Jesus...ruling his own planet? Does he agree with Mormon teaching that Jesus and Satan are brothers? That America is the Promised Land where Jesus will return one day to rule from the Garden of Eden Mormons believe to be Jackson County, Missouri? And do American voters have the right to know this?

When Barack Obama was running for president, he assured us he was a Christian. Pastor Rick Warren brought Candidate Obama to his mega church and questioned him before a national audience. Obama's answers seemed to satisfy and with Warren's blessing, he proceeded to campaign. Never mind he sat for twenty years under a pastor who fumed Christian apostasy. Dr. Jeremiah Wright preached anti-Semitism, embraced homosexuality and abortion, and practiced open promiscuity. Obama and his family were mentored by Pastor Wright, but Obama said he was a Christian and that, in the minds of those who wanted to support him, made it so.

Almost three years into his presidency we see that those very anti-Christian teachings of Pastor Wright have made their way into policy. President Obama has suspended enforcement of the Defense of Marriage Act and forcefully secured open homosexuality in the military. Against their protests, the Defense Department has ordered Christian Chaplains to perform same sex marriages in military chapels. Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider has a champion in the White House and Israel, having been strategically undermined by this President, is in a fight for its life.

Does a Presidential Candidate's core religious beliefs have any bearing on his ability to perform his duties? Rather than embrace the Judeo Christian ethic of hard work and personal responsibility, the current President incites envy between classes. Rather than speaking truth, he has embraced dishonesty to implement "hope and change."

If Christianity means anything to a person, it results in transformation of their character to the character of the central figure of Christianity, Jesus Christ. One can say one is an apple tree but if fall comes and there are no apples, it might

not be so. Are core beliefs of presidential candidates important or not? And does the voting public have a right to know what they are?

When the Founding Fathers established “no religious test” in Article VI they were precluding literal religious tests commonly used by the colonies to ascertain Christian orthodoxy among would-be local candidates. There would not be a national church, but there were state churches, and the denominations of those states wanted leaders to be faithful to those particular teachings. The Founders did not want federal office seekers to have to pass such tests in order to serve, but they never intended to infer it was of no concern to voters what a potential public servant’s deeply held views were in order to inform their vote.

So now again come questions about Mormonism and Mitt Romney. Dr. Robert Jeffress, Pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas declared in an interview after introducing Governor Rick Perry at the Values Voter Summit that Mormonism is a cult.

To my knowledge there have been no follow-up questions to Dr. Jeffress to ask why he believes that. But there has been a quick rush to discredit him for saying it and another one to demand other hapless Republicans declare or defend what he said. No one seems to have asked Mitt Romney what he actually believes that might be of concern.

Evangelicals have not been spared this courtesy. Byron York of the Washington Examiner asked Michele Bachmann during the FOX presidential debate if, as an Evangelical, she believed she should submit to her husband. Rick Perry was asked by Brian Williams if he could sleep at night embracing the death penalty. Others have been asked if they thought mothers who aborted their babies should be prosecuted. Herman Cain was asked if he would appoint a Muslim to his cabinet. All of these go to the core of deeply held beliefs. It is at the very least instructive to hear their answers.

But, of course, pundits and questioners are not interested in deeply held beliefs, but entrapment. They play a dangerous game out of their own theological ignorance. It DOES matter what a person believes who runs for the office of President of the United States. It might not matter what they choose as a religious diet...whether they bow or kneel...or conform to certain rituals, but what they truly believe truly matters and has an effect on public policy.

It matters which God they worship. Modern American culture would like to persuade us all faiths are equal...all systems of belief basically the same, but in

our rational minds, with the advent of radical Islam to our shores, we know inherently that isn't true.

Everyone in this country has the right to worship the way he or she chooses...freely, but if they are running to be leader of us all, it does indeed matter what they believe and we as citizens have a right to know.

Why should a Christian theologian be ridiculed for telling us what he knows from his studies? Why should Herman Cain or Michele Bachmann or Rick Perry be expected to explain it? Why don't pundits, if they really care to know, ask intelligent questions to help us all learn what is true?

Because conservatives want, at any cost, to beat Barack Obama in 2012 and some think Mitt Romney can beat him. Questions about Obama's faith were useful to them in '08, but questions about Romney's now are to be dismissed. They would rather diminish and humiliate Dr. Jeffress than allow the inconvenient teachings of Mormonism to surface.

Mitt Romney is free to practice Mormonism. And he is free to run for President of the United States, but he should not be free from answering questions about what he actually believes.

Once when we know that, we will be free to embrace or reject him based on truth, not obfuscation.