

RELIGION AND POLITICS SHOULDN'T MIX

In a statement released from his home today (December 12, 2007), independent candidate for Congress in the third district of Pennsylvania, Dr. Steven Porter, said that mixing religion and politics is not only unwise, it is unconstitutional.

“The ***First*** Amendment,” said Porter, stressing the word ‘First’, “reads as follows: ‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...’ ***No*** law,” he repeated. “It was the clear intent of our founding fathers to separate the practice of one’s faith from the business of government. It was also their intent to insure that our government would not inhibit anyone’s religious practices (or, for that matter, the lack of them).

“The current litmus test of politicians—that they profess a belief in God or in Christ or in any doctrine—is a danger to the democracy, not because the beliefs are a danger, but because they are being used in an age of professed morality to judge the ability of people to govern.

“Lincoln was a deeply spiritual man, but not a member of any church. In 1846, he ran against Democrat Reverend Peter Cartwright, who castigated his refusal to honor the doctrines of an organized religion. Here is his response: ‘That I am not a member of any Christian church is true. But I have never denied the truth of the scriptures nor the power of the God who made and preserves us all. ***I suppose the greatest difference between me and the Reverend Cartwright is that I do not compel others—as he does—to see religion in my own personal way.***’

“Lincoln’s views surely did not hurt his ability to govern. Nor did the views of John Kennedy when he stated that the practice of one’s faith is between a person and his God alone and not the province of politics.

“The discussion of a candidate’s religious views pales before a discussion of his social, economic, and political ones. It obfuscates the real issues and aggrandizes those who would weaken the separation of church and state by requiring office holders to somehow measure up to a manufactured standard. It is time to stop that.

“Much has been made of the ‘godliness’ of President Bush, our ‘reborn Christian’ leader. Whatever else his religious fervor has done, it has not prevented him from lying about intelligence reports or conducting unnecessary wars. Better to have questioned him on his international policies rather than his love of God.”