

The Religious Right Is Hurting the Republic

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"In the past couple years, I have seen many news items that referred to the Moral Majority, pro-life and other religious groups as "the new right," and the "new conservatism." Well, I have spent quite a number of years carrying the flag of the "old conservatism." And I can say with conviction that the religious issues of these groups have little or nothing to do with conservative or liberal politics."

Barry Goldwater - 1981

For many Americans, there is no Party that both advocates a strong America and represents traditional American political values, not "traditional American values" as defined by Social-Conservatives, but the political philosophy that has at its core limited government and staying out of the individual's personal life.

The recent Presidential election is in many ways an example of Americans being fed up with a moralizing Government telling them how they should live their lives. While the current wave of Federal moralizing comes from a conformist engendering secular fanaticism, moralizing in America is not new, much of it coming from religion, going back to the founding. It has been both a good and a bad influence.

[Quakers](#) were among the strongest religious voices speaking out against slavery as part of the Constitution. [Northern churches](#) were at the core of the abolitionist movement prior to the Civil War.

It was also [religion](#) that was at the core of the Temperance movement, which gave us a Constitutional Amendment prohibiting alcohol. Yet, even that [Amendment](#) did not prohibit the consumption of alcohol, just its "*manufacture, sale, or transportation*":

At least in 1917, the Federal Government understood it could only control commerce, but couldn't tell you what you could or could not do with your body.

Prohibition did not go over very well. Americans ignored it. It brought along with it a disrespect for law and order, and was ultimately repealed. Americans do not want government interference with their lives. Part of FDR's attraction was his election promise to have the 18th Amendment repealed.

The next time prohibition came along, it was to control drugs. This *legislative based* prohibition is also not doing very well.

The problem with morality is that it can be portrayed either as good or bad. Some moralities are "socially based moral imperatives" and others are "religiously based moral imperatives". Sometimes they are one in the same and there is no conflict. Sometimes they conflict. And, as Shakespeare would say, "There's the rub."

The appeal of the Libertarian Party, is that they recognize this distinction. They are fiercely opposed to government telling the individual what they can or can't do with their bodies. Their philosophy allows for any individual's action that does not impact another individual's liberty or cause them harm.

Individual Liberty used to be the stance of the Republican Party. It no longer is.

With Donald Trump's victory there is much talk of the political map being changed. It hasn't. Like the victory of Barack Obama, whose election was about his being Black, little attention was paid to his political philosophy. This election, may in part have been a revolt of the forgotten American, but more so it was a temporary shift to a celebrity saying what many people wanted to hear, with little attention paid to Trump's political philosophy.

Whatever shift there was, it was away from establishment Democrat and Republican politicians. Large numbers of people sensed the country was heading over a cliff, and felt it was time to replace the Democrats in the White House with

whatever Republican was running. They held their noses, put aside their deeper beliefs, and voted for the lesser of two evils.

The 2016 fight in the Republican Party, between the Conservatives and the Eastern establishment, is a fight that goes back to the Republican's founding as the Party of Jefferson, staunchly protective of individual rights, and a sometimes contradictory small government sentiment, mixed with a strong patriotism and a willingness to defend National sovereignty - as Jefferson did against the Muslim Mediterranean states.

In the 1964 Election, as in 2016, the Left ginned up the fear that Goldwater was irrational, and would get us into a Nuclear war. The Establishment Republicans, the Bushes and the Rockefellers, aided by Liberal Madison Avenue advertising firms, worked to defeat Conservative Barry Goldwater, describing the bespectacled WW2 War hero, businessman and Constitutionalist as a man looking at the world through "Rose colored Bombsights."

LBJ - promised 'no war', and then as soon as he stepped into the Oval Office ordered 550,000 men to Vietnam - and then fought the war as if it were a schoolyard tussle, costing 57,000 dead Americans, a massive "guns and butter" deficit and millions of dead Vietnamese.

Goldwater's loss in 64' devastated the Conservatives. The smug establishment Republicans, instead of calling out LBJ's hypocrisy, and getting Goldwater to run again, replacing his 64' slogan, "In your heart you know he's right," and take the campaign to the Democrats by saying, "Now you know he was right" - resurrected Nixon, who expanded the war and gave us *China Incorporated*, the 'open door policy' to America's decline.

In 1980, Reagan, a celebrity with an optimistic message won the White House.

While many of Milton Friedman's "Free Marketeers", (not to be confused with 'Mouseketeers') have vested their careers on Reagan being a Conservative - he wasn't. He was a proud American, spent on the military, cut taxes for business, increased the size of the Federal Government and the deficit, and gave amnesty to almost three Million illegals. The fabled Conservative "shift" lasted only as long as Reagan.

Since Goldwater there has been no true Conservative offering in the Republican Party. There was, though, the Karl Rove engineered annexation of Southern Democrats. The Dixiecrats held on to the moniker of 'Democrat' only because they despised Republican Abraham Lincoln.

Rove realized that there was a greater cohesion binding the Southern Democrats together than their hatred for Lincoln - religion. Through the efforts of Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, this group became more political, and their home in the growingly more secular Democrat Party was becoming untenable. Their focus was not religion itself, but the issue of abortion - and those who were in the position of coalescing this group made this issue the center piece of a growing Religious-Right movement.

To get the Bible Belt into the Republican Party, the Republicans did what the Democrats did to get the Blacks, Hispanics and Gays into their Party, they started categorizing Americans with prefixes attached to them.

The problem at the get-go was that religion and politics do not mix. Seeing the move towards religion, Goldwater, still in the Senate, said that "*Every good American should kick Jerry Falwell in the ass.*"

Therein lies the problem for the Republican Party, not that they have been co-opted by globalist neo con-artists - they have been sucking up to the Religious Right to get elected. In 2012, many of the Religious Right stayed home rather

than vote for Mormon Romney, solaced that they would be going to a better place later on anyway.

By 2016, the 'here and now' President was telling them "to get off their high horse and stop hiding behind their guns and bibles". At least Trump was a main stream Christian, who paid lip service to the social issues.

When Ted Cruz, Mr. Trump's only real challenger, rambled on and on about the Constitution, it meant nothing to the overwhelming majority of Americans who have never read the Constitution, or care to read it. The bottom line for those who listened to him, in agreement or disagreement, was that he is fiercely religious and anti-abortion. Cruz, never understood that most average Americans may want religion in their lives, but not candidates who wear it on their coat sleeves.

This distrust of religion in politics has been with us since the Federal Convention and the 1788 State Ratification Debates, where the issue of a "Religious test" being included in the Constitution was thought to have finally been put to rest. Today's Americans, in spite of their lack of historical knowledge, proved to be as skeptical and distrustful as their forbears when it comes to politicians overtly proclaiming their religion. Donald Trump, may not know one [Bible verse](#) from another, but he knows about Americans.

The Religious Right gave George W. Bush enough votes to win the Presidency. But, pandering to them alienated many moderates and [disturbed true Conservatives](#). The focus on abortion, by any other name is religion. Even if many of the moderate Republicans could accept keeping government funding away from abortions, having the Federal Government actively prohibit abortions is a bridge too far.

Democrats portrayed abortion as a right, and labeled their movement Pro-Choice. The Republicans made their issue a morality issue and labeled their movement Pro-life. The issue was elevated above the state level, where it should have remained, if at all, by Roe V. Wade, and has since become a perennial campaign issue. Abortion, which many Americans, on both ends of the political spectrum, felt should have remained a personal choice for women, became a full fledged crusade and a litmus test for any Republican candidate claiming to be 'Conservative'.

The Democrats, seeing how effective this issue was in alienating moderates of all stripes, made the decision to become the Party of social issues. Any issue they could find became part of the national political debate. They became the party of anything they could label.

As far as the Democrats and many of their acolyte utopia oriented social zealot youths are concerned - the economy could crash, the entirety of the American industrial base could be sent overseas, Iran could blow Israel off the face of the Earth - as long as people could use any bathroom they wanted to use, define their sex by their sexual preference or gender preference rather than by their genitalia, force Christians to bake celebratory cakes for same sex weddings, open all borders and let illegals flood into the country, have a free education system, forced racial redistribution into neighborhoods, and get rid of dangerous guns - they are on board with the program.

Barry Goldwater said you can't legislate morality. And, whether you can or can't - or even should - each party has taken it unto themselves to do that very thing; have the central government become the moral arbiter of the nation. The GOP, that once believed in the separation of religion and state, is seen by many as the party of proselytized bigotry.

America to be America, must remain anchored to its founding principles, with a true Classic Liberal / Conservative philosophy.

Most people who voted for Trump were not focused on abortion. They were more concerned about same sex bathrooms than same sex marriage. If the Republican Party would take a strong stance on the protection of the free exercise of religion, and stop exploiting particular religious beliefs, there are many voters who would be very comfortable supporting a traditional socially tolerant and politically conservative Republican Party.

Many of those voting Libertarian would have voted Republican, if the Republicans espoused a more traditional socially laissez faire central government. Even if the Religious Right were to jump the Republican ship, because it ceased being a religious party, there are more than enough Independents and disgusted Democrats out there to fill the Republican ranks.

The Traditional Conservative base today is an unflappable 38+% of Americans. But, Social Liberals now comprise the same percentage of the voting population as Social Conservatives - [31%](#). And 69% of Americans believe that some type of abortion should be legal. From that pool of "pro-choice" Americans, aside from those who might already vote Republican, as may have just happened in this past election, there are enough who disagree with the Democrat's extreme positions on social issues and would vote Republican if the Republican positions were more "Traditionally Classical Liberal." Add whatever Libertarians that would get on board, and on any given day you wind up with more than half of the voters in national elections.

The Republican's religious positions alienate many Americans, who, religious or not, do not want religion in their politics; freedom of religion, personal morality - yes; preaching from the White House - no.

The majority of Americans have a problem with either prohibiting all abortion or rejecting same sex marriage in any form. Preserving Western Culture need not exclude the belief that women should be able to control their bodies and that gay couples should enjoy the very same rights as anyone else. Of course, that would mean that Republican States would have to propose concrete legislation to protect a committed relationship between gays in the same manner as traditional couples are protected in traditional marriage.

Like the Democrats, who have maintained their base by offering a racial, ethnic and gender based Santa Claus agenda, rather than an agenda that's good for all Americans, the Republicans are sacrificing the nation's political future in order to maintain what they see as their political base.

When the nation was founded, the Convention faced two almost insurmountable problems - slavery and the difference in the amount of representation between the large and small states. Yet, a more unified nation was needed to be able to protect itself from the attacks on the West, from the South and from the British, who would within two decades make war on the U.S., hoping to undo the Revolution.

Had the founders proposed religion as part of the Constitution, the country would never have been formed. The different religious sects never would have agreed to it. Religion was and is a divisive issue.

The founders explicitly added Article Six Clause 3, stating that no religious test would be required for elective office, because they knew that there was no rational way to discuss religion, and that it often was used by [charlatans](#) to hide their true intentions.

America is a society with many Judeo-Christian values infused into our culture. The Founders guaranteed that government would not interfere with the free

exercise of religion; still, they would not yield to certain Christians demanding that the country live its life according to their beliefs.

Sadly, there are too many in this country who confuse the Ten Commandments with the Ten Amendments of the Bill of Rights

As long as the Republicans accept a religious agenda, in spite of Trump's victory, there will be lean times ahead for Republicans; and as the only party espousing traditional American principles - there will be bad times ahead for America if they cannot win elections.