

December, 2012

The Role Faith Played in the Election

I was hopeful when I heard the Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies announcement that the theme of President Obama's second inaugural address will be "Faith in America's Future." For a moment or two I thought that President Obama might be taking this incredible opportunity to talk about how our country needs to turn toward faith in God if we want to insure our nation's future – something I could certainly agree with. However, on researching the matter a bit further I found that what the ceremony will commemorate is, in the words of the committee, "the United States' perseverance and unity and marks the sesquicentennial year of the placement of the Statue of Freedom atop the new Capitol Dome in 1863. When the Civil War threatened to bring construction of the Dome to a halt, workers pressed onward, even without pay, until Congress approved additional funding to complete the Dome that would become a symbol of unity and democracy to the entire world." So it appears that rather than the President telling us that we need to turn toward the Lord, we will be hearing that all we need to do is persevere, stay the course and believe in ourselves in order to secure our future.

Considering how those of faith fared in the recent election we should not be surprised. The media has been awash with stories about the decline in influence of Christians, particularly conservative or evangelical Christians, in national politics. For example, the New York times carried an [article](#) stating, "Christian conservatives, for more than two decades a pivotal force in American politics, are grappling with Election Day results that repudiated their influence and suggested that the cultural tide — especially on gay issues — has shifted against them."

Immediately after the election the Barna Research Group asked over 700 voters what role their faith played in the presidential election. The [results](#) released on December 5 indicate that faith was not a major factor for most voters. Slightly less than half (45%) said that their faith mattered in how they voted. And only half of this 45% said that it mattered, "a lot."

Evangelical Christian voters looked at things differently with 72% saying their faith mattered "a lot." Barna also reported that 81% of evangelicals voted for Mitt Romney and 56% of born again Christians who are not evangelicals voted for Romney. These results make it clear that those who vote according to their faith are a minority in our nation.

While this could be a source of discouragement it should not be, particularly if our primary concern is the influence of Christ rather than the influence of Christian power blocks. The Lord has made it clear through scripture that he prefers to work with people who are in the minority so that His great power can be revealed. Time and again we see that our Lord is quite capable

of working through a small remnant of people to accomplish his purposes. As David said in Psalm 3, “I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.” The second Psalm makes it clear that we need not be too concerned about the leadership of any nation turning against the Lord:

- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,
3 “Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”
He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.

As we approach Christmas we should also be mindful that our Lord came to us as a child born in poverty and has had more influence than any other figure in human history. So as we think about the apparent lack of political strength of people of faith have let us not despair, but rather be joyful that we serve a King not of this world. As teachers the effect of this is radical because through Christ and the Holy Spirit, the influence we can have with our students is limitless. Living out our lives before our students may have more impact on their lives than we can know or imagine. The *Christian Educators Association* stands ready to protect your religious liberties and empower you with materials to help you live out your walk in the schools.

We can be certain that through reliance on the Lord we will be successful.

If you have thoughts or comments on this issue or other Federal education issues please share them with us. You can address your thoughts and comments to JMitchell@ceai.org.

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