

Is Hillary Clinton the Most Religious Candidate Left?

This past January, at a town hall event in Iowa, a high school guidance counselor asked Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton about her faith.

“I am a person of faith. I am a Christian. I am a Methodist,” Clinton said. “My study of the Bible has led me to believe the most important commandment is to love the Lord with all your might and to love your neighbor as yourself, and that is what I think we are commanded by Christ to do.

“And there is so much more in the Bible about taking care of the poor, visiting the prisoners, taking in the stranger, creating opportunities for others to be lifted up. I think there are many different ways of exercising your faith ...

“I do believe that in many areas judgment should be left to God, that being more open, tolerant and respectful is part of what makes me humble about my faith. I am in awe of people who truly turn the other cheek all the time, who can go that extra mile that we are called to go, who keep finding ways to forgive and move on.”

Now, in an in-depth analysis of Clinton’s faith, ThinkProgress, a left-leaning website, is claiming that the former secretary of state is now the most religious person left in the presidential race. And, it explains why that’s important to voters:

This thoughtful, conciliatory approach to religion rarely make headlines these days, but it should sound familiar to millions of America’s so-called “Mainline Christians” – devotees of older, overwhelmingly white, and often liberal-leaning Christian denominations such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), or

Clinton's own United Methodist Church (UMC).

Rooted in a firm theological embrace of "social justice," this strain of religious thought contrasts sharply with Clinton's Republican opponent. With preacher's son Ted Cruz and the often pastoral John Kasich dropping out of the race for the White House this week, the GOP flock has winnowed to Donald Trump, a man whose grasp of the spiritual is dubious at best. Unlike virtually every other Republican nominee from the past three decades, The Donald is infamous for his bumbling inability to speak coherently about the Bible, much less his own theological beliefs, earning him scorn from an uncommonly ecumenical consistory of critics: right-wing evangelical leaders, heads of Trump's own Presbyterian denomination, and even Pope Francis have all condemned the businessman's uneven approach to matters divine ...

The importance of Clinton's faith is often lost among America's increasingly bifurcated media echo chamber, where right-wing outlets insist liberals cannot possibly be Christian and left-wing writers unleash (un)righteous indignation at debate moderators simply for asking Democratic candidates about their prayer life. But as Clinton inches ever closer to becoming the presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party, it's worth reflecting on how deeply her theological beliefs impact her worldview – and her politics.