

There's No Education in the Second Kick of a Mule

On October 9, *The Washington Post* ran an opinion piece titled: "If Donald Trump has done anything, he has snuffed out the Religious Right."

So it was that Russell Moore, the president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention, opined his obituary of organized Christian political activism.

Moore couldn't have been more wrong.

As reported by the *The New York Times* and countless other news outlets, exit polls revealed that self-identified white evangelicals comprised a record 26 percent of the electorate and voted 81 percent for Trump, with only 16 percent voting for Hillary Clinton. Her vote total among white evangelicals was the lowest share ever received by a Democratic presidential nominee.

The problem with Russell Moore is not his theology but his ideology. The former Democrat staffer to Mississippi Congressman Gene Taylor (D)—and nowadays identifying politically as an "Independent"—Dr. Moore is like a dog barking at passing cars.

If he had sought pastoral influence instead of notoriety, Dr. Moore would have moved closer to assess and discern the spiritual condition of Donald and Melania Trump, and then began to pray. He was afforded the position to do so. Instead, to all appearances, he searched for the nearest venue with a camera in order to criticize.

In a way, it's too bad. But in another way, it might not be bad at all. Moore is left owing nothing to Donald J. Trump and

is free to second-guess and criticize, the importance of which cannot be overemphasized. Russell may be one of those essential people in politics who operate better on the outside. But, with the Trump administration, Dr. Moore may feel like a penny looking for change. For the ERLC, Moore may not be the best fit.

Frank Page, CEO of the Executive Committee of the SBC, sent an ICBM missile bathed in klieg lights toward Dr. Moore the day after the election. Page wrote:

“Ignoring the condescending verbiage from the moral elites, Baptists voted and voted in droves. You can listen to what the moral elites tell us, but Christians still make a difference!”

Moore would be wise to hear what California Calvary Chapel Pastor (and present-day Thousand Oaks City Councilman) Rob McCoy preached the Sunday following the election. The sermon’s theme was the manner and way that Christians may be “salt and light” and the “city on the hill”—bringing Jesus into the public square. McCoy said:

“One of the reasons why the political world dismisses the church is because we don’t have the ability to get people elected. Our people don’t walk precincts. Our pastors educate their people to do nothing, and they say flippantly, ‘Vote Third Party’ because it’s a moral statement. That’s stupid. It’s fatalistic, apathetic and it’s lazy.

“1 Timothy chapter two says to ‘pray for those in authority so that we can lead quiet and peaceable lives.’ I say this to pastors, can you please tell me the names of the school board members you’ve been praying for, by name? Oh, you don’t know them? Can you tell me the council members that you’re praying for? Can you tell me the top five issues for the school board and the city council you’ve been praying for wisdom for them? Oh, you don’t know them?”

I'm not sure, but it appears that celebrity is Russell Moore's goal instead of clout. Unfortunately, celebrity is not a denomination of political currency.

The day before the election, I wrote:

“Evangelical pastors and pews must take our game to the next level. Fundamentally we must begin to comprehend that religious liberty will be won by organizing and not Sunday sermons. A Sunday sermon is not a denomination of political currency; mustering and marshaling parishioners to the public square is. But be not mistaken, the teaching of the whole counsel of God in America's pulpits and the resurrection of prayer in America's churches—led by the senior pastor—will determine if America remains free.”

What we need is a Gideon or Rahab to make a stand. {eo}