

## The Religious Base Of Politics

Yes, Mr. Reagan, for the past few weeks and, in fact, for the past few months, politicians, journalists of both the written and spoken media, and clergymen have been discussing religion and religion's relationship to politics.

These scenarios, from the presidential candidates of the two major political Parties on down to their local organizational leaders and supporters, and yes, even hypocritical clergymen who soil the dignity of their presumed authority role by languishing in the pits of partisan politics.

The Republicans, and rightly so, have criticized Mr. Mondale for not objecting to Jesse Jackson's use of black churches for political rallies, fund raising and voter registration drives. Furthermore, they questioned Mondale's own voter-seeking appearances in black churches and his campaign speeches of special appeal to Jewish groups. Then, too, there is the much weaker assumption that Mondale chose Geraldine Ferraro as a running mate simply to pick up the Catholic vote.

On the other hand, the Democrats, and rightly so, have accused Mr. Reagan and the Republicans of implying that God must be a Republican and that Reagan-Bush are "God's instruments for rebuilding America." In this same context, Mr. Mondale said in a speech, "It is troubling that Rev. Jimmy Swaggart, who insists that Catholicism is a 'false religion' and that Jews are damned to go to Hell, is a welcome policy advisor at the White House." Or that The Rev. Jerry Falwell is registering people to vote in his church on Sunday mornings and allegedly telling them it would be a sin to not vote for Reagan and Bush in November.

Mr. Reagan says, "morality's foundation is religion, religion and politics are necessarily related. We need religion as a guide....And our government needs the church because only those humble enough to admit they are sinners can bring democracy the tolerance it requires in order to survive..."

### False Religion

Mr. Mondale says, "I believe in an America where government is not permitted to dictate the religious life of our people; where religion is a private matter between individuals and God, between families and their churches and synagogues with no room for politicians in between..."

These statements by Reagan and Mondale both sound as American as "motherhood and apple pie," however, they are both equally inconsistent with our other comments on what these men have said, done or not done.

Ironically, and correctly so, Mr. Mondale notes that "No President should attempt to transform (political) policy debates into theological debates. He must not let it be thought that political dissent from him is un-Christian. And he must not cast opposition to his programs as opposition to America."

Ironically, too, Mr. Reagan commented on the really central issue to religion and politics with these words "...we poison our society when we remove its theological underpinnings; we court corruption when we leave it bereft of belief."

While Mr. Reagan's overall philosophy on religion and politics appears to be quite negative, his statement on "theological underpinnings" seems to get to the real issue.

If we take Thomas Jefferson's "wall of separation between church and state" and change it to a "floor of separation between church and state" we can see the true and appropriate relationship between politics and religion. Simply stated, arising from our religious beliefs are values that affect and influence our lives including our political beliefs and voting decisions. These values are the foundation upon which we build and direct our lives. Interestingly too, the values foundation reflect the meaning of Mr. Mondale's statement that "religion is a private matter between individuals and God, between families and their churches..."

### Value Judgments

Therefore, a wall does not separate religion and politics, but rather values that emerge from our religious belief foundation influence and direct how we act and think politically.

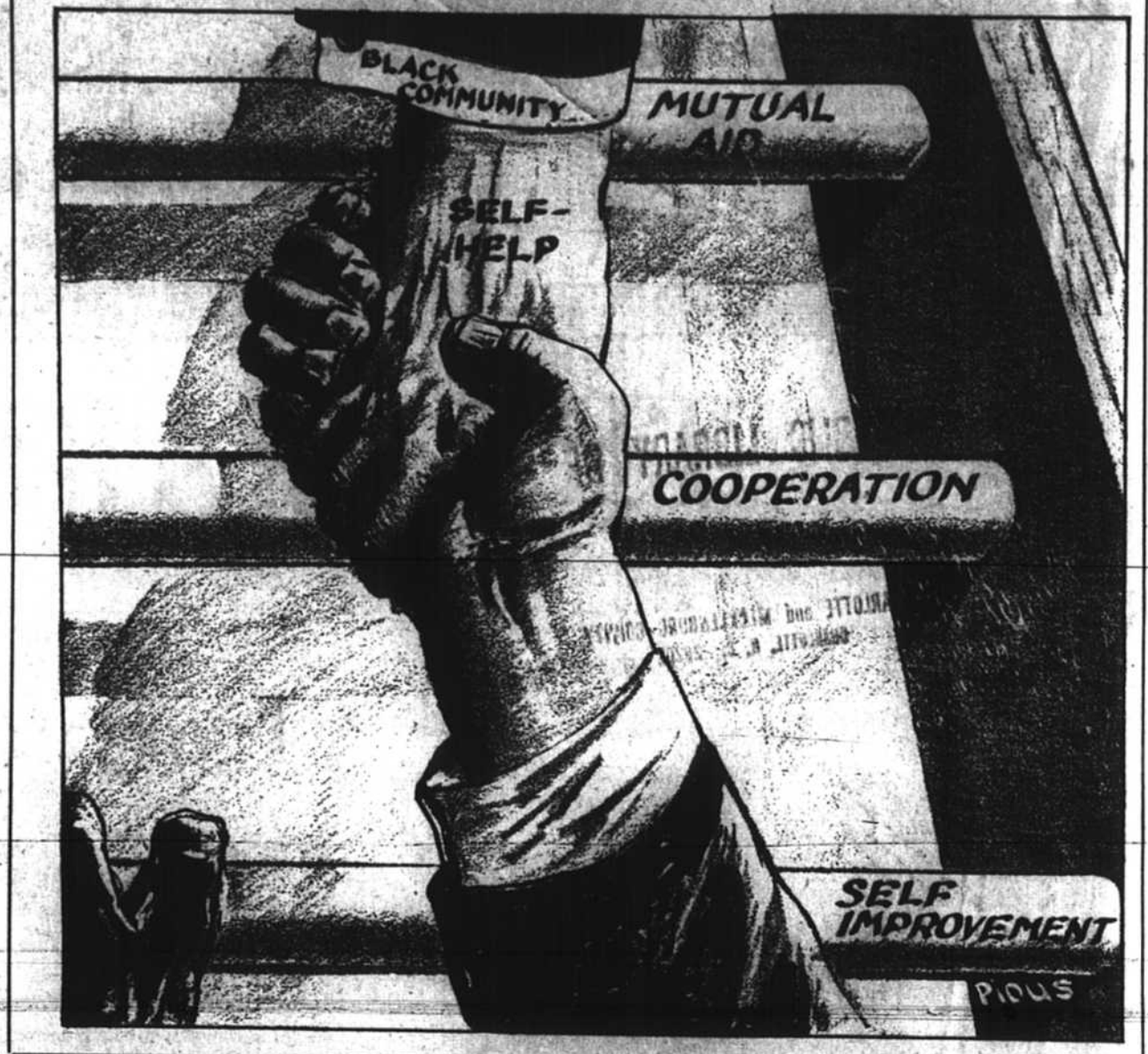
Thus, it should be more than clear that the appropriate role of religion in politics and public policy is that of influencing our value judgments about political matters as a result of our private and personal relationship with God.

This on the appropriate role and relationship between religion is certainly well known and clearly understood. For example, it was awareness of the moral misdeeds imposed on black Americans that led to the massive civil rights efforts of the 1960's led by clergymen. In effect it took the moral consciousness of clergymen to awaken America to its moral values arising from their religious beliefs that segregation and overt discrimination are wrong in God's eyes.

It has been through a similar sense of moral concern that the Catholic Church has taken a strong stand against nuclear arms build-up. For others the issues of abortion, or capital punishment, prayer in public schools, tax credits for private school tuition payments, etc., are all political issues that bear heavily on our religious values and convictions.

Finally, all politicians, Republicans, Democrats, Independents and religious zealots should stop immediately waving the flag of Almighty God in the pits of politics and view and accept God for his reverence and mercy and recognize that He loves us all, sinners though we may be, regardless of our political beliefs.

## LEADERSHIP IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY



## Republicans Versus Democrats!

By Sabrina Johnson

Now that the conventions are over and the campaigns have officially started - one question still prevails among all: Where do the Republicans and Democrats make their Party distinctions? Both Parties have moved to the right since 1980 - with the Democrats being referred to as a "new realism." And the Republicans presenting specific lists of economic programs that are part of the history of the New Right Agenda.

The "new" Democratic programs propose no defense cuts, no business taxes and no new ideas on cutting Treasury money. On the other hand, the Republican program is built on the old GOP ideological tenet that less government equals more prosperity for the country.

Well, let us examine the Republican and Democratic issues by comparing the two platforms based on the conventions past.

**-Income Tax Increases...**  
Republicans oppose any attempts to increase taxes that would harm the recovery and reverse the trend to



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economic recovery to individual Americans. They also oppose tax proposals to increase taxes in an effort to balance the budget.

**-School Prayer...**  
Democrats believe broadening the tax base, simplifying the tax code, lowering rates, eliminating unfair, unnecessary, and unproductive deductions and tax expenditures can raise revenues needed for economic growth.

Republicans affirm their commitment to freedom of religion and speech, including the right to engage in voluntary prayer in school.

Democrats affirm support of the principles of religious liberty, religious tolerance and church-state separation, and of the Supreme Court

decisions forbidding violations of those principles.

**-Capital Punishment...**  
Republicans believe in capital punishment when it coincides with the people's approval and when appropriate. And will be carried out humanely.

Democrats made no mention of their stand.

**-Education...**  
Republicans believe education is a local government function, a state responsibility and a federal concern. Federal involvement on education should be limited.

Democrats believe that, while education is the responsibility of local government, local governments are strapped for funds by the present administration, and should not be expected to bear the cost alone. Therefore, they call for immediate restoration of cuts in funding of programs by the Reagan administration.

**-Defense Spending...**  
Republicans plan to continue with the President's military build up.

Democrats plan to reduce the rate of increase in defense spending.

**-Balancing The Budget...**  
Republicans will work towards a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget. In the event of Congress failing to act - a constitutional convention will convene on the issue.

Democratic viewpoint opposes rigid and artificial constitutional restraint of a balanced budget and oppose the idea of a constitutional convention for this purpose.

**-Windfall Profits Taxes...**  
Republicans believe in the repeal of the confiscatory windfall profits tax.

Democrats make no mention of the issue.

**-Personal Tax Exemptions...**

Republicans want to restore the value of personal exemptions by raising the minimum per person to \$2,000.

Democrats - no comment.  
**-Equal Rights Amendment...**

The Republicans made no real mention of the issue; however, as a Party they will not inhibit or promote women's rights to full opportunity and advancement within the American society.

To the Democrats this is top priority, especially with the running of Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro, and the Party will push for ratification of the ERA.

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### From Capitol Hill

## Reagan Makes Judicial System In His Own Image?

By Alfreda L. Madison  
Special To The Post

The Republican platform requires federal judges to make a strong commitment to anti-abortionism. When asked if President Reagan accepted that plank, White House press secretary Larry Speakes said the President wants judges who are in line with his policies. This removes the Judiciary from the purpose for which it was designed - to settle questions in light of the mandates of the Constitution to a politicized department which makes decisions based on the President's policies and interpretations of the Constitution.

There is no wonder that J. Harvey Wilkinson was nominated and confirmed for the Fourth Circuit Federal Court - a man who has never tried a case and who was given special low minimum qualifications by the American Bar Association. He only needed to express a commitment to President Reagan's judicial philosophy to be confirmed by the Republican-controlled Senate. If President Reagan is reelected, it will just about be useless for an individual to take a case to the courts unless he is confident that his complaint is in accord with the President's policies.

Upon return after the summer vacation, the 98th Congress will have an opportunity to confirm another Fourth Circuit judge. It will be interesting to see if the Republican-controlled Senate will confirm the nominee with the most federal civil court experience or the one with the least federal civil court experience.



Alfreda L. Madison

On July 19 Senator Strom Thurmond recommended that President Reagan appoint Emory M. Sneed of South Carolina to fill the newly-created vacancy on the Fourth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals. In stating Sneed's qualifications for the position, Thurmond noted that he had been a member of a Columbia law firm, Assistant Administration member of his senatorial staff, when the Senator became ranking Judiciary member, Sneed was counsel for the minority and when Thurmond became chairman of the Judiciary, Sneed was made chief counsel for the committee. He received both his undergraduate and law degrees from Wake Forest University, is a retired Brigadier General having served in World War II and the Korean War and Vietnam. Sneed served as Personnel Chief of the Judge Advocate General's Corps and later as the Executive to the Judge Advocate General of the Army, and later appointed Chief Judge of the Army. He received three Legion of Merit Awards, one Air Medal, a Senior

Parachute Badge, and 18 other honors and decorations. Sneed has published articles in legal journals and digests.

Senator Hollings of South Carolina asked President Reagan to appoint Matthew J. Perry who is black to the Fourth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals instead of Sneed. Hollings showed that Perry's qualifications were more fitting for the position because of his civilian court experience. He said, "I am proud to be able to make this recommendation to the President. Judge Perry has served on the Federal District Court of South Carolina. He is a man of character and an excellent jurist and lawyer." President Ford appointed Perry to the Military Court of Appeals, and in 1979 President Carter appointed him to the South Carolina Federal Court. Before being appointed as a judge, Matthew Perry distinguished himself as a practicing attorney for 30 years.

In urging the President to appoint Judge Perry, Hollings wrote, "In your search for qualified minorities, I can think of no more appropriate appointment that would be significant than for Judge Perry to serve as the first Black member of the Fourth Circuit of Appeals." Perry received both his undergraduate and law degrees from South Carolina State University.

July 24, Senator Hollings wrote Senator Thurmond asking that he withdraw Sneed's name from the appointment to the Fourth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals and instead join him in recommending Perry. Hollings stated, "I couldn't vote for J. Harvey Wilkinson's con-

firmed as a judge of the Court. For one who has not practiced either in the District or the Fourth Circuit, it is highly inappropriate." The letter continued, "I've recommended our mutual friend, Judge Matthew Perry. He has served now for five years as a judge of the District Court and would be the first Black in history to grace the bench of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. I hope you can reconsider this - it would not only be in the interest of the Court but then, of course, you would have another appointment at the District Court level in South Carolina."

Senator Thurmond did not change his nomination.

In a conversation with this reporter, Senator Hollings said if Perry is appointed South Carolina will have the distinction of making the first Black appointment from the South to a Federal Circuit Court of Appeals.

He also stated that the Democrats on the Senate Judiciary committee are highly unlikely to support his nominee. This will be just another example of the Democrats ignoring Blacks for high positions.

It is almost certain that Emory Sneed will be confirmed over Matthew Perry. President Reagan has already appointed him and as usual Reagan gets his way, even though Sneed's experience as a judge has been in the military, which is quite different from being a civil court judge and Matthew Perry has extensive experience as a Federal Judge in civil courts.

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Published Every Thursday By The Charlotte Post Publishing Company, Inc. Main Office: 1531 S. Camden Road Charlotte, N.C. 28203
Second Class Postage Paid at Charlotte
Member, National Newspaper Publishers' Association North Carolina Black Publishers Association
National Advertising Representative: Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.
One Year Subscription Rate One Year - \$17.76 Payable In Advance