

Religipublicans in Crisis

(Re-publican: those who seek to “make faith great again,” especially through their MAGA-churches, without knowing they are returning to the social class of “publicans and sinners”—the ritually unclean folks their Crucified Captain tried to save)

Riding the ripples behind a rowboat is very different from surfing along in the wake of the Titanic—or the Exxon Valdez. Woke Republicans (oxymoron?) in Congress are feeling the chill after the thrill (true of spiritual surfers as well). Of course, if you can’t possibly fathom the depth of shallows in the captain’s head, how could you ever really jump on board? Life-preservers look like question marks and lifeboats have limited space. You aren’t sure if you’re a crewmember, passenger or swimming with the sharks already.

The “Acting Embarrassment-in-Chief” (one of many “acting” department heads in D.C.) has become more difficult to float with and many in his *circle*, thick headed as they are, wonder why rowing on one side gets them nowhere. Apparently some are finally noticing the holes in the hull. This is no Washington crossing the Delaware. More like a clown commanding a ship of sand.

And the sand is slipping away.

The Racist-in-Chief, in the whiter-than-it’s ever-been White House, is not even trying to “be best” and no doubt thinks that’s foolish anyway (but worth a kiss on the cheek for the Acting First Lady, whose personal best is “Christmas in July” while hundreds of “holy families” are experiencing their personal worst in cages).

As this [article in The Hill](#) puts it, “House Republicans plotting to win back their majority in Congress fear they are on the brink of a massive wave of retirements that could force them to play defense in a high-stakes presidential election year.”

My own state plays a part in this Psychic Civil War,

“The next tipping point could come in September, when voters in North Carolina head to the polls in a special election meant to fill a vacant seat. Republican Mark Harris won the seat in a 2018 election marred by absentee ballot fraud, an election the state Board of Elections overturned.”

Can anyone explain how a representative government sunk from the “new world” of Thomas Paine to sectarian soldiers battling to “take back” “their country”? (and yes, this has been true, to some extent, since the days of Adams and Jefferson). How is it that nine justices who swear to uphold the law of the land, so often seem to wear either red or blue robes?

Are any of these “public servants” aware that a Red/Blue mentality can lead naturally to Blue/Gray warfare?

Looks like Americanism (which ought to be considered a new world religion). As I once wrote in an article, do we want to see sanctuaries painted blue or red, because essentially that’s already happening.

Partisan politics mirrors partisan religion. When the trumpery of “we trust in God” supplants the “pluribus” and the “unum,” is there even a “we the people” any longer? We know it’s about power. Those of us who vote, and who don’t follow the flag of one fleet, are fairly clear that American politics, just like our American Religion, is sadly splintered, and suffering a Twit-in-Chief surrounded by the prayers of prosperity preachers feels like a reverse Noah’s ark: the deadly flood is *inside* the ship and the world waits to see who or what will emerge. Maybe children and animals shall lead them?

There are those who want to “take back” the Church too. They are fighting battles aboard the rotted old Ship of Faith though they call themselves “Progressive

Christians,” “the emerging church” or simply “followers of Jesus” who often focus their energies not on theology but on social action and justice coalitions. Proud they have returned to the “real gospel” (and maybe they have) we wonder why they stay when there are so many other boats and they could build their own raft with other survivors. Would they even consider abandoning ship for the Freethought Frigates that sail under the flag of true freedom?

I tend to paddle alongside those who cling to the cross-shaped mast of the Christian ship, the kind of kind-hearted folks I think of as good people who still want to wear some vestiges of vestments and re-frame archaic words—God, Spirituality, Christ, Word—in rather nonsensical ways. I’d like to see them let go and feel the liberation, yet I also sense their need for the community that faith can provide, even when the sail or rudder is missing (I’m sympathetic since it may be the only vessel they’ve ever known).

This Talking Points Memo piece nails the problem that both politicians and preachers must eventually face: “The odds are against us retaking the majority,” an unnamed senior Republican lawmaker told the Hill.

The lawmaker partly put the blame on Trump, who’s “made an already hostile political environment worse.”

“Every day there is some indefensible tweet or comment to defend or explain,” the Republican said. “It is exhausting and often embarrassing.”

And what if that exhaustion is faith-based and the embarrassment is coming from the pulpit, the scriptures or (god-forbid) one’s own God? Do we hold the line and stay on board, or jump ship?

Many of us have jumped (and some have “walked the plank”). Which leaves us, oddly enough, where some Religipublicans are finding themselves: decision time. Follow the truth, an innate sense of ethics, or continue to scuttle our conscience? How many Religipublicans de-convert?

We have to face the fact that we're in this together—like it or not—this thing we call America which (new religion or not) so often seems a melting pot of too many seasonings, a nearly unpalatable stew. America includes alternative views, political and religious (even atheists have parties, flags and battleships). We can be stronger through honest debates, not fighting to “take” the public square like a Missionary Ridge or Little Roundtop. We don't have to always take sides, wear our colors, “win back” and make (our Power) “great again,” imagining our own golden age. If we have to “win” we have to explain what we've “won” and how we bring the others with us.

Unfortunately a lot of religion is just like politics—or identical to politics—and that leaves each citizen to choose their identity, or claim the identity of their birth. As one of our great heroes of freethinking America proclaimed as his creed:

“My country is the world and my religion is to do good.”

Can our politics, as well as our religion, rise up that far? Could we pilot that ship?

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