

Plain Talking About Voting and Church Attendance

✘ by Burt Prelutsky

No matter how much attention a person tries to devote to the political scene, some questions appear to be unanswerable. For instance, with Nevada, a state suffering from an unemployment rate hovering around 15%, why is Harry Reid, a man with the personality of an unsuccessful undertaker, running neck-and-neck with Sharron Angle? Is it that extra “r” in her first name? Do Nevadans fear that someone given to wasting letters is a greater danger than a senator who doesn’t think twice about squandering their tax dollars?

And what’s with the voters in West Virginia? Barack Obama vowed in 2008 to bury the coal industry and send our energy costs soaring, and the folks in West Virginia can’t decide between the Democrat and the Republican in the Senate race? Perhaps all that coal dust has affected their brains.

For that matter, what is it with those undecided voters? According to the polls, in some congressional races, there are still 10% of the voters who haven’t made up their minds. After nearly two years of Obama, Pelosi and Reid, running America into the ground, why would anyone remain undecided? I realize that conservatives and sensible Independents will vote for the GOP, just as I understand that dopey left-wingers and youngsters, who are convinced that other people should pay their way through college and that their parents should pay for everything else, will vote for Democrats, but who the heck are all these lunkheads who will apparently flip a coin on election day?

Much has been made of Barack Obama foregoing golf so that he could take his family to church services on Sunday, September

19th. Cynics wrote it off as a political, not spiritual, gesture. But it seems that there might be more to it than that.

Perhaps because St. John's Episcopal Church is just across the street from the White House, folks assumed the choice was merely based on its convenient location. But I'm not so sure that was the case.

For one thing, St. John's pastor, Rev. Luis Leon, delivered a sermon that day that dealt with Matthew 20:1-16. Apparently the parable tells of a landowner who needed to have his crop harvested quickly, and at the end of the day he paid those who had only worked for the final hour the same amount that he paid those who had labored in the heat throughout the entire day.

According to Rev. Leon, "The full-day workers believed in the world of merit, not the world of grace." In their eyes, according to the pastor, the owner's graciousness was seen as injustice. Instead of seeing themselves as selfish or self-absorbed, they saw the landowner as unfair, and the tragedy, Rev. Leon told his congregation, is that they estranged themselves from the source of graciousness.

The pastor, it seems, believes that payment should be determined not according to ability or even effort, but simply according to need. Or, in other words, he was making a case for the redistribution of wealth. I'm sure he got a big shout-out from at least one person in the congregation that day.

At St. John's, where apparently the Gospel According to St. Marx is promoted, they have a series of guest speakers. On that particular Sunday, the speaker was Dr. Ziad Asali. Dr. Asali is described as a Middle East activist. If that sounds something like a community organizer, there's a good reason. It seems Dr. Asali has addressed Congress on more than one occasion, demanding additional aid for the Palestinian

Authority and complaining about “Israel’s disproportionate use of force in Gaza.” In case you haven’t noticed, “disproportionate use of force” is Arab and Muslim code for “How dare the Jews defend themselves!”

Among Dr. Asali’s nefarious activities was serving as a member of the U.S. delegation to Yasser Arafat’s funeral. Which strikes me as a highly questionable honor unless it was to make certain that the Nobel Prize-winning terrorist was, in the words of the coroner of Oz, “not only merely dead, but really most sincerely dead.” The corpse in this case wasn’t the Wicked Witch of the East, but of the Middle East.

I know that many people were disappointed that as a self-proclaimed Christian, Barack Obama had only attended church three times in a year. But I suspect that now that he knows that Washington’s St. John’s isn’t all that different from Chicago’s Trinity United, he and Michelle will be occupying the amen corner from now on.

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