

CHRISTIANITY AND PUBLIC LIFE

Remarks by Robert Morgan
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Abraham Lincoln once said that "War is too important to be left to the generals." I submit that religion is too important -- too important to us, personally -- to be left to the ministers. Yet we tend to leave religion to the experts. We want them to handle it for us. We take the path of least resistance, going to church Sunday to hear a sermon, and then we too often leave our religion at the church door on the way out.

Yet we all have an affirmative duty to practice our religion every day, as we do our work and engage in our home life. Religion is like the waters of a cooling well. A person can go and sit

by the well, but unless he drinks of the waters, he will never be refreshed.

As a Senator, I am well aware of the fundamental separation in our land between church and state. For me, that means I cannot work to have the beliefs and laws of any particular religion -- even my own Baptist religion -- imposed on everyone as a matter of public law. But it does not mean I have to forget that our laws must be based on the same respect for human life, the same sense of justice, the same sense of honor and decency which are fundamental principles of my religion. There is no better guide to judging the merits of law than to remember the inspirations contained in the Bible. The Bible is the greatest commentator on the nature and principles of human life that there ever was.

No lawmaker can work in a vacuum.

His knowledge of the Constitution must guide him. His understanding of the feelings and opinions of his people guide him.

And the witness of his religion, on the purposes of human life, must also guide him. Strip it to the law, strip it to public opinion, and the process of legislation becomes dehumanized and hollow.

Religion must be practiced. It must be practiced by any man who would call himself a Christian. That includes us all; it does not exclude those of us whose life is politics. There is no final conflict between reverence for the laws of God, and concern for the humane government of mankind.