

Religious Politics

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Timeless Question

- Consider proverbial ruler
- When motivated by remorseless greed
- How could they consolidate and expand power?
- Entire culture could be corrupted and manipulated
- Law, religion, business, school, war, news, ...
- Is this happening in our world?
- Looking at religion tonight

Goals Of Religion

- Worship divinity
- Sense of community
- And whatever else leaders decide

Religion Supported Kings

- Ancient kings anointed by prophets
- Divine right of kings medieval doctrine
- God save the king!
- Kings were frequently tyrants

Religion For Status Quo

- Sin to disobey civil authority
- Religion told slaves to respect masters
- Some texts say focus on afterlife for justice (ignore earthly problems)
- “One nation under God” in Pledge of Allegiance
- Some invocations lavishly praise current leaders

Religion For Pretense

- Start meetings with prayer
- Pretend to care about truth, poor, fetus
- Implement corruption, violate civil rights
- Some Christians support anti-abortion Republicans
- Republicans start unjustified war, don't care about hungry children
- Pro-life means more than anti-abortion

Religion To Rally

- Politicians speak of “faith, family, freedom”
- Provokes excitement, connection
- Says nothing about policy or plans
- Should be avoided

Religious Extremism

- Some scripture says convert the infidel by force
- Martyrs have rich reward in heaven
- Not confined to Islam
- Dictators worship their own power

Religion For Progress

- Religious social welfare
- Love your neighbor as yourself
- Care for the sick, widow, orphan, ...
- Religion for justice

Recommendations

- Spirituality is important for people
- We need to connect to earth, heaven, people
- Don't let your connections be polluted
- Reach outside yourself
- Find something big to love

God's Beauty In Nature

