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Peter McKnight of Van Sun Sept 25, 2004

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Faith, Politics, Reason¹

My good Peter

You interestingly identify a fact that few people are aware of, namely, the role of faith beyond the realm of formal religions. You write about faith in politics. You are so right. Thank you for drawing the role of faith in that area to our attention. It is an important recognition that politics is not an area different from faith but is based on faith, whether consciously or unconsciously, always, invariably, inevitably.

Some people do not recognize this use of the term "faith," for they associate it with religion. However, if you use the term "worldview," then it becomes more generable acceptable.

You have applied to concept to politics and suggest that the opposite is "the light of reason" that can "help us escape." It is here that I want to suggest to you that even reason is based on faith or worldview. WHY is it that people come to such different conclusions even when faced by similar situations or facts. The cause is not a difference in ability to reason but the worldview that guides our reasoning process--and that difference applies to all of us. Even the much vaunted objective light of reasoning, a favourite doctrine of a worldview called "secularism"--you've probably heard of it!--is the product of a worldview or faith. No one has ever proven that reasoning is "objective" or almost "infallible" once it is divorced from faith. It is a particular doctrine of man and of reason that has over the centuries become the established "common sense" in the West that makes us think of it as objectively true and unassailable. It is something that Westerners, including, apparently, you, believe. It comes from a whole raft of Western philosophers like Emmanuel Kant who published the book RELIGION WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF REASON. A former teacher of mine, now a retired Yale professor, countered that title with his own REASON WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF RELIGION!

I just want to share this concern with you, for I believe that this insight provides liberation to a mindset that is shackled by the doctrines of secularism. It is not only of philosophical interest, but is an important issue in the Western relationship with and attitudes towards Islam. If you are interested in pursuing this, I would be happy to continue the discussion. I can also point you to literature on the subject. And it may interest you to realize, that, even though I am not an adherent, postmodernism follows this perspective on the role of faith in reason.

Cordially
Jan H. Boer

¹Letter to Peter McKnight, 27 Sept/2004, in response to his article in *VS*, 25 Sept/2004.

