

BILL MOYERS JOURNAL
EXCERPTS (last section)
2-8-82

-1-

NB: Very indistinct
tape

MOYERS: I know the people in this report. I was born and reared among them. They are my kin. Although long ago I made passage to another place and culture, to another way of seeing and believing. I still hear, at certain times, with affection, echoes of their prayers and hymns. I recognize deeply imprinted within me the inherited yearning for order and authority that caused them in menacing times to cleave more tenaciously to their faith. It isn't surprising that they are fighting back against the discoveries of science, the decrees of government, and the dilemmas(?) of democracy that intrude upon their fixed scheme of things. Nor is it unprecedented for people of a religious persuasion to want to affect their system, to matter politically, to try to elect to office agents of their anger, who will attempt to supply the leadership for which they ache(?). There are _____? precedents?
aplenty.

I once wrote a speech for Lyndon Johnson, asking the Southern Baptists to rally behind the Voting Rights Act of 1965. A Catholic bishop urges his parishioners to vote for candidates who oppose abortion. Jimmy Carter _____ black churches as if they were precincts of the Democratic Party, which many are. William Sloane Coffin marshaled his congregation to march on the Pentagon. And Jews pressure Washington to support Israeli government decisions based on interpretations of Scriptures from the Bronze Age. Precedents all.

It is not that the evangelicals are taking politics

Moyers excerpt

-2-

seriously that bothers me. It's the lies they are being told by the demagogues, who flatter them into believing they can achieve politically the servitude they have embraced theologically. The world doesn't work that way. There is no heaven on earth. Nor can our democracy agree to a Moral Majority that makes religious doctrine the test of political opinion. You may have that only where all are alike in thought and root and intent, which America is not.

Here, the idea has long been to protect religious freedom from the carnivorous state of political integration and dogmatic zealot and militant believers from one another.

So they are being misled, these people, by manipulators of politics masquerading as messengers of heaven. And their hearts will be broken by false gods who have been taking the coin of their ? or purse, and will move on to work the next crowd.

The same Reverend Falwell who claims a divine mandate to go right into the halls of Congress and fight the law that will save America, is caught lying in public about a meeting he had with the President. Ronald Reagan, having endorsed the Moral Majority in Dallas, moves on to a luncheon given for him by Teamsters in Ohio, whose chief include four men either indicted, convicted, or being investigated for corrupt practices. Some majority, some morality. I'm Bill Moyers.

END OF TAPE