

Duquesne University

Duquesne Scholarship Collection

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly
Excellence and Professor of Law

11-30-2007

November 30, 2007: Huckabee on Hardball

Bruce Ledewitz

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

Title: Huckabee on Hardball

Date: 2007-11-30T11:19:00.000-05:00

11/30/2007--This blog is not going to become the Mike Huckabee site, but there is one important fallout from the Republican debate in Florida Wednesday night. Chris Matthews had Huckabee on Hardball on Thursday night and asked Huckabee why none of the Republican candidates had objected to questions about their religious beliefs. Matthews kept referring to the constitutional prohibition on religious tests for office in Art. VI, section 3: "but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." Matthews wanted to know why no candidate objected on constitutional grounds to questions about religious faith. This is a very important point. As I tried to explain in my book, *American Religious Democracy*, the religious test language is a limit on legal qualifications for office, not a limit on democratic decision making. A voter who says I want to vote for a Christian is not acting unconstitutionally. Voters do not have to ask permission to justify their reasons for voting. This would be true even if there were no public policy implications of the Christian faith in the context of the Republican Party. But, there are in fact such implications as we all know. Christian is short-hand for pro-life and anti-gay marriage. Even Matthews would agree that this is a proper basis for voting. But the claim of faith can also mean the opposite. If I think a candidate is a faithful Christian and that candidate then supports something I thought had nothing to do with the Christian message, I may be willing to listen. Something like this is happening with some Christians and the issue of global warming. On one point, Matthews exposed an important inconsistency in the Huckabee "Christian leader" message (that is a line from a Huckabee commercial). On poverty issues, Huckabee claimed his Christian faith makes a policy difference. But on the death penalty, Huckabee more or less claimed he was merely following the law. This is certainly trying to have it both ways. Huckabee needs to be reminded that Jesus did not just "review each death penalty case carefully." Jesus forbade sinners from carrying it out (let he who is without sin...). So, unless Huckabee is without sin, he cannot as a Christian cast the stone—sign an execution warrant. Since Huckabee did so and is proud of it, he is the typical religious hypocrite.