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December 11, 2007: More on the Romney Speech: Liberal Reaction

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Title: More on the Romney Speech: Liberal Reaction

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12/11/2007--The New York Times Saturday edition (12/8) published seven responses to the Romney speech on Faith in Public Life. Four of the seven reflected a liberal perspective that criticized Romney and/or the Republican Party for blurring the line between church and state. These writers believe that religion is a private matter with little or no appropriate public role and that the framers of the Constitution meant to prevent the sort of speech that Romney delivered. As to the private nature of religion, this is not what Thomas Jefferson—the author of the Wall of Separation metaphor—thought. In the Jefferson Memorial one can read of Jefferson's fear for our nation concerning slavery because God's justice will not sleep forever. When Moses demanded that the Hebrew slaves be freed, should Pharoah have accused him of blurring the line of separation between church and state? Why do non-believers or liberal believers get to decide what kind of religion people are allowed to believe in? Religion is only private in a world of hyper individualism. As for the framers, when the subject is religion, liberals sound like Justice Antonin Scalia talking about textualism. I don't know what the framers meant concerning religion. I am confident, however, that the framers never intended to legalize abortion, grant equality to women or rights to gays. Does that mean that these constitutional commitments will now be abandoned by liberals? Of course not. We cannot turn constitutional interpretation into a fruitless search for a meaningless original intention. The framers could no more make us secular than they could make us laissez faire. These are matters we must decide.