

## THE EASTER/PASSOVER “COINCIDENCE”

Stephen L. Bakke – March 26, 2010

It is the Lenten season and Easter will be here in just a few days. And we are approaching the sacred Jewish observance of Passover. Superimposed on this we have been watching the U.S. and Israeli tradition of support and friendship being trampled by the President and his minions. The current administration seems more exercised about the Israeli plans for building housing in Jerusalem than they are about the imminent development of nuclear arms by our long-standing enemy Iran. And in recent meetings in Washington between the U.S. and Israel, Obama is reported to have excused himself early from the meeting and dinner, which included Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu - **an obvious, purposeful, and arrogant “snub” at a very good friend.**

This is part of my continuing commentary on our President’s relationship with religion. It was approximately one year ago that I began taking note of, and commenting on, some of his comments about religion and religious tradition. In this holy Christian and Jewish season it seems appropriate to go back and recall several disappointing comments by our President.

While on a trip to Europe and the Mid-East, President **Obama made a comment while in a Muslim country that we in America don’t consider ourselves a Christian nation, or Jewish, or Muslim, or anything else.** Why does this comment really matter to me? First, **our tradition of freedom is based in our Judeo-Christian roots.** Those ideals were why we settled this continent and they ultimately resulted in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution. That’s just a fact, but we are certainly not a Christian or Jewish theocracy which tries to make other religions unwelcome or which gives preferential treatment. **Why would our President make this statement if not to ignore, and thereby weaken, the Judeo-Christian underpinnings of our country. Does he think this gives him a little more wiggle room for the planned transformation of our country?**

Another comment by the President seems to underscore his ignorance about Christianity – even though he professes Christian belief. He said that his agenda in Europe should be the common goals among people of faith during holy days of Easter and Passover. **Is it fair to interpret this as being Obama’s attempt to re-define the theologies of these religions, in particular the meaning of Easter and Passover, to suit his agenda?**

A recent comment by Obama further emphasizes his apparent ignorance about Christianity and Judaism. He said: *“These are two very different holidays with their own very different traditions. But it seems fitting that we mark them both during the same week. For in a larger sense, they are both moments of reflection and renewal. They are both occasions to think more deeply about the obligations we have to ourselves and the obligations we have to one another”.*

**Good Grief! He seems to imply that Easter and Passover occurring in the same week is merely coincidence. Contrary to his declaration, these traditions are DEEPLY related.** The Jewish Passover became the “Last Supper” in Christian tradition. Jesus was a Jew and was observing the holy day with his disciples. For Christians, Jesus is the Lamb of God who was sacrificed to free believers from their sins. Jesus called this “the new covenant in my blood”.

The original “lamb” in the Jewish tradition was killed and its blood was put above each Jewish door in Egypt so that the Angel of Death would “pass over”, and they could be freed and start their travels back to the Promised Land. This was also a covenant between God and his chosen people. Jesus was crucified on the day after celebrating the Passover meal. **So, of course, tradition DOES INDEED have them occurring during that same “Holy Week”. Our President had an opportunity to meaningfully point out these parallels and did not – either because he didn’t know any better, or because he doesn’t want to further strengthen the long relationship of these theologies. He may feel that acknowledging the traditions of these theologies somehow is inconsistent with his world view.**

And finally, President Barack Obama was asked in an interview what he considers a sin. **He defined it as “being out of alignment with my values.” So now he’s the ultimate judge. He made no reference to any type of theology or tradition having shaped human morality for centuries. That’s scary!**

Nevertheless, have a Wonderful and Blessed Easter and Passover season!