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Helms' mix of religion and government presents danger

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Reader

In his commentary, "Ten Commandments inspiration for laws," Circuit Clerk **Steve Helms** attempted to excuse his display of religious material in government. He also displayed a shocking combination of ignorance and bad judgment which signals his unfitness for office; we should dismiss him in the coming election.

To begin, **Helms** pleads naivete, saying he saw the **poster** simply as a 9-11 tribute. It is no such thing ... 9-11 images are alongside those of Iwo Jima and other patriotic scenes, surrounding the Ten Commandments, a dedication to Jesus Christ and the catchphrase, "America bless God." It's hard to see this as nonreligious or centrally about 9-11. Does **Helms** expect us to believe that he was simply ignorant of the fact that many other displays of the Ten Commandments in houses of government have ended up in court? That he really didn't consider that this would be contentious? While that strains credulity, his next suggestion should anger everyone. He says, "I thought (viewers) would remember this awful tragedy (9-11) and think we should never let this happen again." Fair enough. But he continues, "To me, a greater tragedy that has been perpetrated on our nation is by those who would erase any religious thought or symbolism from the public arena." **Helms** considers removing religious imagery from government a "greater tragedy" than 9-11! Oddly, the 9-11 tragedy involved thousands of violations of "Thou shalt not kill," while removing the **poster** would violate no commandment.

Apparently **Helms** is less interested in the victims than he is in using them to flaunt his religious fervor. Of course, he doesn't really think that, and he wasn't really totally ignorant of the frenzy his **poster** would cause. He's grandstanding in an election year and hoping to win over Christian voters with his mock-brave stand. This is evil, of course, but what concerns me more as a citizen and Christian are his misunderstandings of Scripture, law and their relationship. **Helms**, like many misguided souls, sees government and religion as naturally connected, when they are much better apart. It is mostly summed up in this: "All Western laws come from (the Ten Commandments) and our Judeo/Christian heritage; to deny this is like trying to deny the rising of the sun." He gives no evidence for his claim ... just an insult to those who disagree. Yet the claim is false; Mr. **Helms**, would you care to explain where copyright or patent law is rooted in the Ten Commandments? Or better yet, divorce law? Employment law? All our laws are NOT rooted in the Ten Commandments, but rather come from a variety of sources. In fact, about half of Moses' rules run completely contrary to our laws. Of course, I also deny the rising of the sun. I insist that the Earth rotates on its axis, creating the illusion of a rising sun. But I digress. The point is that Mr. **Helms** knows shockingly little about our nation's true history and its founders, and he's pursuing shockingly bad policy as a result. He ignores that John Adams was a Unitarian and Thomas Jefferson a Deist, but more

importantly, he ignores that these framers specifically and unequivocally walled religion off from government. They did it for a reason: Both institutions are stronger alone, and to put the power of either in the hands of the other is to create tyranny. A man with these beliefs is a danger to our government. He is a danger to the lives and liberties of us all. We should show him the door.

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