

March 27, 2006

LIBERAL READERS SAY MY COLUMN HAS GONE TO THE DOGS

A few weeks ago I wondered aloud what liberals think about a number of issues — and why — and asked them to let me know. A lot of them did, although I got more mail pooh-pooing liberal-think, which makes me wonder if liberals may be a vanishing species — kind of like the snail darter.

The responses ranged from preachy and self-important to thoughtful and considerate. One reader in Perry asked me to join him for biscuits and gravy and allow him to make his case in person. If he is planning on taking me to the New Perry Hotel, I just might be willing to listen. A respondent from Gainesville also invited me for biscuits and gravy with him and his friends in Hall County. If the New Perry Hotel deal doesn't work out, it is good to have a backup plan.

A few responses were weird. One writer told me he read my column to his dog, and his dog just laughed. He needs to get out of the house more. A writer from Bainbridge took me to the woodshed for criticizing kissing cowboys. He claimed to be a "moderate Republican." He sure sounded like a liberal Democrat to me. I don't think "moderate Republicans" are into kissing cowboys.

There were other responses I found equally baffling. One stated that Ted Kennedy's driving Mary Jo Kopechne off the Chappaquiddick Bridge was no worse than George W. Bush's drinking escapades in college. Another said that I was wrong in claiming that Hispanics can't — or won't — speak the English language. Makes me think all the "Habla Espanol Aqui" signs I see around town are store decorations.

The same writer opined that blacks may "appreciate" U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, but that they "revere" Joseph Lowery. If he is correct, that is a shame. Condi Rice is a far better role model for young blacks than is Joe Lowery.

More than a few twitted me for "name calling" in the column and then proceeded to call me, as well as anybody who disagrees with their liberal point of view, every name in the book. I guess they were too focused on being righteously indignant to appreciate the irony of that.

A number of respondents asked me if I thought Jesus would approve of the war on terrorism. That's a question Dr. Gil Watson, the World's Greatest Preacher, is much more qualified to answer than me, but I suspect Jesus dislikes any kind of killing and, therefore, probably wasn't crazy about the Revolutionary War, the War Between the States or World War II. Since they brought it up, I doubt also that Jesus likes people saying women can't be preachers or refusing children communion because they have an allergy to wheat. In fact, there has to be a lot happening in the world these days that Jesus doesn't approve of, but that's a story for another time.

After a careful analysis of the responses, I have arrived at the following conclusions: Liberals are passionate about their causes and are feeling more than a little besieged these days. Not all liberals think the same way, and that's good to know. Several say they are embarrassed to have Howard Dean in a leadership position. Some would like to see the country get control of the immigration issue. Some decry Muslim terrorists, although others believe they are no worse than Christian extremists.

One subject on which liberals are united is George W. Bush. They detest him and think the war is unwarranted. They also didn't like Ronald Reagan and think Jimmy Carter was a good president. (Please don't shoot the messenger. I'm just telling you what they told me.)

The good news is that by this exercise I have made a lot of new friends. I consider them the Loyal Opposition, and I welcome their dissent. The bad news is that I'm not sure I understand the liberal mind-set any better now than before I solicited their responses. But I promise that I will keep trying. After all, Sheila the Family Wonderdog says anybody who reads my columns to their dog can't be all bad.