

Faith is the culture of the people and belongs in politics | Opinion

Bob Linn

Guest Columnist

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The OCPAC Foundation and one of its leaders made front page news last Sunday, March 15, in The Oklahoman (<https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/politics/2026/03/15/oklahoma-legislature-republican-party-lawmakers-seek-more-control/89087603007/>).

At the heart of the Oklahoman's article was the great progress which has been made by Oklahoma conservatives in electing those who want to govern by the same conservative and Christian values they espoused to the voters when on the campaign trail.

But under current GOP leadership, Democrats are getting more bills heard in the state legislature than are conservative Republicans -- especially members of the Oklahoma Freedom Caucus.

Bills from legislative conservatives are routinely ignored by "leadership." That is, except for Senate Pro Tem Lonnie Paxton's unnecessary rebuke to Sen. Shane Jett, an OCPAC board member, who proposed legislation asking for enforcement of the "no drunks on the Senate floor" rule.

In The Oklahoman's article Paxton indicated he represented the Reagan side of the GOP Party. His comment immediately brought to my mind the 1988 Vice-Presidential debate and Democrat Senator Lloyd Bentsen's well-timed response to a youthful Dan Quail's ill-advised effort to compare himself with Jack Kennedy, an American icon. Bentsen smiled, shook his head, and laughingly said, "I knew Jack Kennedy and you are no Jack Kennedy."

Lonnie Paxton is no Ronald Reagan.

I took issue with the perspective offered in the article by Oklahoma State University professor Seth McKee that cultural conservatism is an exploitive maneuver designed to achieve political gain.

I presume Professor McKee had Senator Jett in mind when he stated, "Their agenda is very much fighting this war about how we live our lives. Sanctioning and regulating morality, the kinds of books that wind up in schools, they love that stuff."

Both McKee and Paxton refer to Sen. Jett's cultural conservatism as, in McKee's closing words, "A very different strain of governing."

In fact, culture is that which drives politics, and it is the culture of the people which determines the trajectory of a nation. Nations are dependent on the moral and spiritual qualities of its citizens.

We celebrated St. Patrick's Day this month, and it was Patrick who, by bringing Christianity to Ireland, brought Christianity and Western Civilization to the world. It was in AD. 401 that the 16-year-old Patricius, the yet-to be St. Patrick, was captured from his farm in Great Britain and carried away to the brutal slave markets in the Godless and pagan territory of Ireland.

Thirty years later, this slave turned-Christian executed a major re-write of existing Irish law. He removed the pagan elements and replaced them with Christian legal concepts for a set of governing laws we call "Patrick's Code." St. Patrick's Christianized Law is often credited as a philosophical and structural ancestor to English Common Law, later codified by King Alfred in the late 800s. St. Patrick's Christianity and Christ's influence on the legal system in the United States demonstrates the profound importance of "cultural Christianity."

Thomas Jefferson recognized the importance of these Biblical foundations. In 1776, Jefferson was commissioned to a three-man team to develop the American National Seal. He advocated for Biblical imagery suggesting a seal illustrating Moses and the Hebrews crossing the Red Sea.

Now, in the 21st Century, many politicians advocate a watered-down church and an educational system no longer articulating our Christian roots but instead questioning the integrity of our founders and founding institutions.

We need statesmen possessing cultural depth and clarity. We need leaders who spend more time reading the thoughts and ideas of those who laid the foundations upon which our nation was established, rather than listening to the promises of lobbyists offering short-term gains for short-sighted people.