

# OPINION

## TIMES-NEWS

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### Quote of the day

**“I think they really relate to the issues.”**

Lincoln Elementary School music teacher Karen Sweet, on teaching Black History Month in a district with few blacks.

### OTHER VIEW

# What we can learn from Presidents’ Day

This appeared in Monday’s Washington Post.

Presidents Day may seem somewhat contrived, an attempt to work a three-day weekend into the month when our two greatest national leaders were born, with the goal of making February a little more tolerable. But somewhere under the annual glut of ads for improbable bargains, there’s real meaning to the day, especially in this year of rancor, division and shameless deceit. It is to be found in the lives of the two men who are the focus of the holiday: George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Their examples have endured; when they cease to matter to us, we will be in trouble.

George Washington’s most important contribution to the new nation may have come from the example he set. He was, in the words of historian David Hackett Fischer, a model of “integrity, self-discipline, courage, absolute honesty, resolve, and decision, but also forbearance, decency, and respect for others.” This did not necessarily make him a popular figure with everyone. Rather, it made him an honored, respected and trusted one — the only president to win every electoral vote in both his elections and the one who set an important precedent by stepping down (with genuine relief) after two terms. Washington had no need to talk of how “strong” he was. His strength was self-evident.

Abraham Lincoln was born poor yet proceeded to rise to the top with the kind of sureness and dignity that does honor to a democratic country. He had little formal schooling, but he educated himself into a command of the English language that puts modern speechwriters to shame. He was a practical politician and sometimes did things he found

distasteful. But on the vital issues of his day, he was knowledgeable, eloquent and solidly principled. In a time when a large national party had been pushing to exclude the Irish Catholics and Germans pouring into the country, he voiced praise for immigrants. When Southern leaders threatened secession, he stood firm against expansion of slavery. He shared with Washington the virtues of honesty, integrity and respect for his fellow citizens. By the time of his death, Lincoln was worn by work and care, by family tragedy and by the horrors of the life-or-death decisions he faced every day, with little relief. He gave his life for his country.

Just over a week before his inauguration, our new president announced that he would leave the running of his business interests to his two eldest sons. Not that he couldn’t handle everything himself, he assured us. “I could actually run my business and run government at the same time,” he said.

In the weeks since, it’s possible that he has learned, the hard way, that the presidency is not a part-time job. We hope that Congress has also learned something in the past month: that with truth, openness and integrity becoming scarce commodities in the White House, and with ethnic nationalist and other anti-democratic forces gaining in many countries, an inescapable challenge is looming before the House and the Senate, the same one presented to another Republican Congress 154 years ago by a president who always spoke with honesty and courage:

“We cannot escape history,” Lincoln said then. “We . . . will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down,



### OTHER VIEW

# Otter right on refugee ‘reference’

“Jesus said to him: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father, but by me.”  
John 14:6

The above couple of sentences from Christian scripture may be among the best known throughout the world. Last week

I was thinking about it when driving home from work one cloudy day. Earlier in the morning I had seen a photograph from the Capitol in Boise. A group of very liberal Christians and some

other assorted fellow travelers were lobbying for an apology from Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter. How do I know they were liberals? Just one glance at the picture. I can spot a lefty from one thousand yards. “Women in comfortable shoes,” as the late Robin Williams called them, and the men (even those in robes) all have the look of literature professors. These are people who confuse Christian faith with Democrat Party as if the two distinct entities were one and the same.

Otter, as some of you already know, is being condemned by the comfortable shoe crowd because he remarked Christian refugees should be given preference over newcomers from other faiths. Maybe it’s because Idaho and the United States are still overwhelmingly Christian cultures. This “diversity only makes us stronger” claptrap isn’t backed up by any scientific evidence (I thought liberals put all their faith in empirical knowledge).

Christians in the Middle East and North and Central Africa are among the most abused people on the planet. As boatloads of migrants were sailing to Europe the Christians in many cases were tossed overboard and drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. Gosh, just what I want, to welcome murderers.

Otter isn’t being apologetic, cynics will argue, because he isn’t facing anymore elections. Seriously, do you think his position harms him in any sense with the majority of state voters? Truly courageous politicians would follow his lead and adopt his position on refugees. While the overwhelming number of Mohammedans aren’t likely planning on jihad upon arrival I suspect not one Christian refugee arrives here planning violence in the name of Jesus. When he was young, the governor considered seminary before instead following a business career. Obviously he’s famil-

iar with John 14:6, which is often cited when we talk about heaven. As in whom gets passage and whom gets denied. Since Jesus didn’t say “I am the way and so is Buddha and that Mohammed guy and possibly L. Ron Hubbard,” then any serious Christian realizes the gate is narrow. Narrow enough for professed Christians and especially for those who haven’t accepted Jesus as Lord. And I don’t believe John 14:6 is available to a wide interpretation even for those who’ll claim the Bible isn’t literal but only a series of suggestions.

So, for all of you Episcopalians, Unitarians and Presbyterian U.S.A. congregants, then what is the argument against Gov. Otter? Are you claiming we simply should set up a turnstile and enshrine first come, first serve? If Christians are hiding in the mountains of Asia and deserts of Africa to avoid crucifixion, roasting and slavery do we ignore their plight? Or is your goal to bring all seven billion of the people on the planet here? Not to mention overcrowding; how do you believe these seven billion would get along packed into the United States like sardines? Would the Mohammedans be tossing infidels overboard for a little more elbow room? How would our already deeply indebted government provide for all seven billion? Do you believe a few seminars and a smile would suddenly end tribalism? Maybe translate John Lennon’s “Imagine” into all languages, link arms and have a national group sing! Lennon sang about creating a paradise by eliminating religious faith. Would we all adopt some designated form of paganism and then pray to the sun, moon and some rocky outcroppings for guidance?

Some of the liberal clergy from the liberal denominations fudge John 14:6. When I was a college student 36 years ago I had a philosophy professor who was also a pastor in the Presbyterian U.S.A. faith. The man liked to argue with me and one day suggested all faiths were equal because God would reveal himself to varying people in various ways. Is this something Presbyterians believe? Have you ever heard this line: If all faiths are true then none of them are true? Why would God incarnate confuse Christians by maintaining He alone is the only path to heaven? Is the Prince of Peace being hypocritical because the claim creates tension and friction between sundry religious people?

None of this bothers my Jewish friends. A few summers ago we

were invited to a dinner party at the home of a Jewish family in Maryland. Needless to say we were among the few gentiles at the table. During a freewheeling discussion of faith our hosts and their friends explained they didn’t believe in heaven and were simply commanded to lead a good life. Maybe it explains why Jews aren’t waging holy war, bombing buses or crashing planes into tall buildings. They aren’t insulted by one of their own suggesting He is God and therefore the only course to an afterlife they didn’t expect.

Which gets me back to the governor’s statement. Government has few defined responsibilities, but public safety is on the short list. If you had the ear of the president (and a governor likely has a better opportunity than most) you would advise the safest course. A governor doesn’t want fresh corpses on his or her watch. This isn’t to say (we always have to qualify these things to appease Lefty) every Mohammedan is a bad dude. We acknowledge some professed Christians, Zoroastrians and Hindus may not always be nice people. However, none of these folks are making war in Europe and the Americas based on their faiths.

When I came to Twin Falls people at work told me the trail along the north side of the city was a pleasant place to go for a walk. They warned me to avoid the trail on the south side. Not because everyone walking or cycling the second trail is robbed, raped and/or killed but because there appear to be fewer social ills on the northern trail. In other words, fewer bad guys lurking in the more open northern shadows. From the logic espoused by the literature professors and women in comfortable shoes I should walk the southern trail because we wouldn’t want to hurt the feelings of any potential cut-throats.

As for John 14:6, I believe what He said. In the current political climate at my day job I can’t get away with saying much about it publicly. People would be calling for my dismissal because it’s “exclusionary” and “hateful.” Gov. Otter is looking forward to retirement, and I don’t have the wherewithal to join him anytime soon. There are people in this country who are more than willing to throw Christians overboard or drive them into the mountains or deserts. A shame so many so-called Christian leaders won’t look out for their own flocks.

Bill Colley is the host of Top Story at News Radio 1310 AM.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Time to embrace the popular vote

Dear Mr. Trump,  
Let me be the first to wish you luck on your new reality show. Tee hee! A very wise teacher once said “If you don’t have skill, better pray for luck!” Judging by your two weeks in office, sir, I’m thinking luck better be in your prayers, (and in ours). And just in case you are all about pleasing only those who voted you into office, just remember 2.9 million American voters did NOT vote for you, so 2.9 million voters can vote you out.

You have a few good ideas, but you need to put the bulldozer away and use a little tact. Plus, ditch the juvenile lying, which just takes away your credibility and frankly makes you look silly. Did you not read Pinocchio? As to the electoral method

of counting American votes, whether you are 2 or 92, Republican or Democrat, black, white or polka dot, plain ol’ common sense must tell you that leaving 2.9 million votes on the table in any election is somewhat like eating pigs feet. It’s just, just . . . not right! The popular vote does away with gerrymandering (an “alternate fact” word for cheating). Stacking the deck in a dictator’s favor is the way it is done in third-world countries. The electoral college has out lived its usefulness, time for change! A count of the popular vote leaves less room for stacking that deck, to the left or right. Webster can then take the word gerrymandering out of their American dictionary. Think about it, the electoral college left 2.9 million votes unaccounted for. Does that sound anywhere near correct to you?

Sue Harr, Buhl

### Have your say

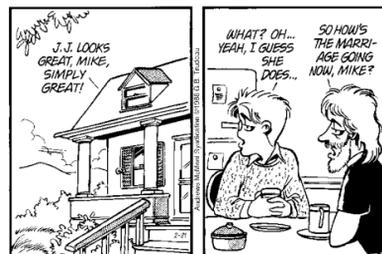
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### Doonesbury by Garry Trudeau



### Mallard Fillmore by Bruce Tinsley

