



## Christians hold differing views on values

With conservative Christian powerhouses Rick Santorum, James Dobson and Glenn Beck visiting Lancaster this past week, it is important to share a reminder that Christians do not hold a singular political perspective, biblical interpretation, worship expression or theology, nor can any one person or sect claim to represent a "true" form of Christian faith.

There are many of us who love Jesus and also believe that the Incarnate God does not disempower women from having authority over their own reproductive choices. There are many of us who go to church and also affirm the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex community -- not secretly, but out loud. There are many of us who do not idolize the straight married household but celebrate single, interracial, same-gender, remarried children or childless families and households.

There are many of us who do not believe that taking prayer out of schools has doomed our country. We know, we wrestle with and we pray for the complex systems of power, money, personal greed and corporate abuses -- displayed by Christians and non-Christians alike -- that challenge the health of this democracy.

Please be encouraged: Santorum, Dobson and Beck do not represent all Christians.

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## Gottfried uses selective arguments

Prof. Paul Gottfried, in his Saturday column, is so far off the mark, it's difficult to know where to begin. He seems more concerned that I am a professor at a "first-rate liberal arts college" -- which naturally makes me liberal. And then he asserts that I am a "celebrity" -- that's news to my family -- and only a liberal professor could be one of them. He confuses the expression of an opinion, regardless of its content, with being "politically engaged." In this case, he insists that my commentary is decidedly liberal.

First, I am allowed to have an opinion and to express it. The question is whether I am partisan or unfair in my characterizations. I hear about an equal number of comments that I favor one party over the other or that I am a conservative or liberal. And no fair reading of the columns I have co-written for more than a decade could find that I have supported one party or one ideology over another.

Second, one of the opinions I hold is that the popular vote should replace the Electoral College. Gottfried does not mention that scores of polls have been done over the past 20 years showing large majorities in favor of popular vote. My support of popular vote is not based on a desire to see the Democrats win the presidency, but because the original purpose of the Electoral College has changed since it was placed in the U.S. Constitution and because each person's vote should have the same weight.

He asserts that a polling question was worded by me to gain support for that position. Actually the question was constructed by one of the nation's

most respected survey research methodologists, not me. The question was neutral in its content.

I did not hear any complaints about question wording from conservative Republicans when we released polls showing Rick Santorum winning in 1994 and 2000 or Tom Corbett and Pat Toomey ahead in 2010 or from liberal Democrats when we showed Ed Rendell in 2002/2006 or Barack Obama in 2008 leading in their respective races in the state.

Third, I use the words liberal and left wing as much as the words conservative or right wing.

Fourth, he makes the point that, since I interpret survey data for a variety of media outlets or do media commentary, that makes what I do politically suspect. Many professors provide commentary to the media. I am just one of many, and obviously some provide more analysis to the media than others. On the face of it, the comment makes no sense.

Fifth, Gottfried missed the point I made repeatedly as to the reasons why Santorum supported Specter in the latter's Senate primary race against Toomey in the 2004. The reason: Specter and Santorum had been colleagues for years and had worked closely together to promote the interests of the state. Also, even though Specter initially had opposed Santorum's candidacy in 1994, he ended up providing decisive help to Santorum in what was a two-point victory over Harris Wofford. In short, Santorum was not just being faithful for political reasons but because of the relationship the two had developed over many years.

Gottfried is entitled to his own "opinions," but not at the expense of the facts.

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