

Friday, September 12, 2008

BAFFLE GRAB ON THE FLAKE

"We need change, all right. Change from a liberal Washington to a conservative Washington. We have a prescription for every American who wants change in Washington - throw out the big-government liberals."- Mitt Romney, Sept. 3, 2008 And then the gorilla run knee socks paint porno on the Cadillac. But school laughed and didn't we sing hats? Maybe you wonder what the preceding gobbledygook means. I would ask which gobbledygook you mean: mine or Mitt Romney's? If he's allowed to spew nonsense and people act as if he's spoken intelligently, why can't I? If he gets to behave as if words no longer have objective meaning, why can't I? I mean, baffle grab on the freak flake. Really. And people hear this Orwellian doublespeak ... and cheer. Why not? They have been taught that words mean what you need them to in a given moment. And all [that] costs us is language, the ability to have reasoned and intelligent political discourse, the idea that words do, and should, have weight, dimension and intrinsic meaning. Maybe you disagree. In which case, let me just say this: Piffle crack eat monkey snow." This is from both a clever and educational article by Leonard Pitt.

He lambastes Mitt Romney for what the Governor said in a recent speech. Mr. Pitt accuses Mr. Romney of spouting gobbledygook, which he then illustrates with statements like "Piffle crack eat monkey snow." It is true that college students in Literary Theory classes are taught that words can mean anything you want them to mean. They have no intrinsic, objective meaning. This argument is used to denigrate the Bible and claims made to understand it. Conservative Evangelicals believe the words of Scripture do, indeed, have objective meaning and that we can know what that is. Scripture is not gobbledygook. But gobbledygook does not make a sentence. There is no subject or predicate in gobbledygook. There is no structure, no syntax, no grammar in something like "Piffle crack eat monkey snow." That is just a string of words. Mr Pitt is really accusing Mr. Romney of using normal sentences to say things that are untrue. This he says is intellectual dishonesty. He says Mr. Romney's sentences do violence to language and logic. Gobbledygook does that. Mr. Romney's statements do not do that. The Governor's sentences are fine. He just uses them to say things Mr. Pitt disagrees with. That does not make Mr. Romney's statements nonsense as statements. What Mr. Pitt is really accusing the Governor of doing is doublespeak. This means the Governor uses words with a different or opposite meaning than usual and does not tell anybody that. People hear him say one thing, when he is really saying something else by the same words. Did Mr. Romney do this in his speech? This is dishonest when it happens and it happens all the time but it did not happen with this speech in question. To me, Mr. Romney spoke the truth because I agree with him, i.e.- I agree with the definition of the words as he used them. Mr. Pitt, hearing the same speech, heard something else because he disagrees with Mr. Romney. His words meant something different to Mr. Pitt. It would be good if we need could get every one to agree on the definitions of the words they use. That once was far more possible in America say 100 years ago, even 50 years ago, than now. Most people agreed on the meaning of words like freedom, justice, God, marriage, peace, morality, human rights, common good, patriotism, poverty, honesty, charity and truth. Folks may not have agreed with the meaning, but they agreed on what the meaning was. And that was because some 100 years ago, most Americans shared a common language and Religion and the same basic moral and social values (even when they did not follow them). Hence, words meant the same thing to most of us. Gobbledygook and Doublespeak were not the problem we have now. Although we need to get every one to agree on the definitions of the words they use, I believe those days of sharing a common language and Religion and the same basic moral and social values by the majority are long gone.

http://www.sunjournal.com/story/281874-3/Columnist/Romneys_classic_case_of_intellectual_dishonesty/

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 15:36