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Newt Too Political? Who Knew

Michael Sean Winters | May. 4, 2011 Distinctly Catholic

"Morning Briefing [1]There is an interesting item in the "Morning Briefing" about an Iowa church deciding to cancel an appearance by Newt Gingrich at an event where a screening of his documentary about Pope John Paul II is being shown. The event organizers said they were worried the event would become "too political."

I wonder why anyone would think such a thing? Just because Newt was not screening his movie in Alabama or Oregon, but Iowa? Maybe starting a series of screenings there, then onto New Hampshire and thence to South Carolina? What's political about that?

There is also the matter of Mr. Gingrich's qualifications as a church historian - or any other kind of historian for that matter. This man of ideas, which he undoubtedly is, has some very wrong-headed ideas about history, American and otherwise.

I am not one of those who think Gingrich converted to Catholicism for political reasons. I suspect he converted for the same kinds of reasons most people do: His wife is Catholic, he attended Church with her and liked it, etc. I do not see any political benefit to running in a GOP primary as a Catholic convert. Evangelical voters respect cradle Catholics for their religious commitment, but the idea of converting to Catholicism is a different animal. So, I think Newt's conversion was sincere, but like everything he does, it takes on a political context even if it was not motivated by politics to begin with. So, welcome him to the altar rail, to be sure, but I wouldn't let him use a screening of his movie as a vehicle for reaching voters in the state that has the first votes in the GOP nominating process.

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[1] http://www.seattlepi.com/default/article/Iowa-church-nixes-Newt-s-appearance-1363405.php