



Michael Giltz

Freelance writer and raconteur

Posted: May 20, 2009 10:51 PM



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American Idol? Try Christian Idol



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SPOILER ALERT: This post reveals the winner of season eight.

When it comes to American Idol, does Jesus take the wheel?

I've been supporting Kris Allen for months but it wasn't because he was a Christian. (I didn't know he was a worship leader or has done missionary work in numerous countries around the world. And I'm pretty sure he didn't know I was an altar boy for years and now collect the money when

the basket is handed around at my church on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.)

But for a theory about how Kris pulled an upset over the wildly popular Adam Lambert, the Christian vote is a pretty good one. It's certainly one factor. (So is talent, Tiger Beat ready looks and viewers who get tired of being told someone is a lock when they haven't even voted yet.) In fact, look at seasons past and where there's a clear Christian vs secular showdown, the Christians have been winning handily. Take that, Charles Darwin! Sometimes the survival of the fittest goes to the person with the best telephone prayer chain. Check it out. (And please keep in mind I'm not talking about their personal faith, just our perception of it from what we told on the show at the time they were competing. Someone I describe as worldly might be exceptionally devout while the contestant prominently sporting a cross might be at the juke joint on Saturday and never even make it to church on Sunday.)

Season One featured wholesome Kelly Clarkson vs the worldly, media savvy Justin Guarini. Clarkson won big time and set the standard for Idols to come.

Season Two: Clay Aiken and Ruben Studdard both held forth on their faith. Ruben had an edge perhaps from the tight-knit black churches that came out strong for him. But this was a Christian vs Christian finale so you can't draw any conclusions from this one.

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Season Three: trailer park gal Diana Degarmo vs Fantasia, who had all those years of experience singing in church to draw upon. Fantasia wins it.

Season Four: Good ole country boy Bo Bice (who looks like he might have been smuggling moonshine before getting tapped for the show) vs Carrie Underwood. Her signature tune? "Jesus Take The Wheel. The winner? Duh.

Season Five: Katharine McPhee vs Taylor Hicks. This felt like a secular showdown to me: McPhee was a Broadway baby with a dad in the TV industry and Hicks loved the blues/rock circuit. But is it any coincidence he won thanks to constant shout-outs to the Soul Patrol?

Season Six: Blake Lewis vs Jordin Sparks. Blake Lewis likes to beatbox and is down the with the latest sounds. You can easily picture him partying down to all hours of the morning. Sparks is an evangelical Christian sporting a purity ring. The winner? Sparks.

Season Seven: David Cook vs David Archuleta. Cook got his start in a Christmas pageant in the second grade. David Archuleta is a Mormon and that actually might have hurt him since there is little sense of community and indeed a lot of antagonism for Mormonism from other Christian sects. Just ask Mitt Romney. The winner: David Cook.

Season Eight: Adam Lambert vs. Kris Allen. Lambert has performed in road show productions of secular Broadway musicals like Wicked. Kris Allen has done missionary work in Burma, Morocco, Mozambique, South Africa, Spain and Thailand. The winner? Missionary man Kris.

Obviously, this is a playful analysis of the people who make it to the finals. And no one gets to the finals without millions of viewers supporting them week after week. So don't cry foul or horrible prejudice when your favorite gets to be on stage for four months, becomes a household name and gets tens of millions of votes. Anyone who makes the final 12 has at least an outside chance of stardom. Still, the next time there's an *Idol* final, I'm not gonna listen to their singing, I'm gonna look into their soul. Maybe, just maybe the one that appeals to the heartland more has the better shot.

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If I invited Kris Allen to a dinner party, he'd show up and ask if he can chip in instead of bringing a casserole. Kris Allen brings nothing to the table.



Michael Giltz: American Idol - The Finals: Adam Will Win It All

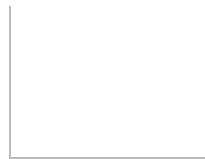
Well, Kris Allen gets to join Clay Aiken and David Archuleta as *Idol* contestants who never were put into the bottom two but failed to win it all.



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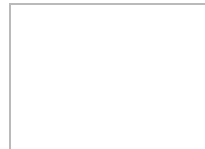
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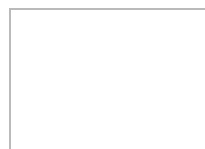
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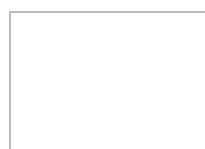
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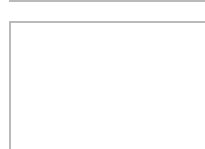
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Now is the time for celebration and I, for one, will be in the audience tonight doing just that... celebrating a stellar season of *American Idol*, and the crowning of a champion.

It's a great spot for Lambert to be in because it brings all the attention to the "problem." I just don't think the "problem" in this case is homophobia.

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[COwoman](#) [I'm a Fan of COwoman](#) [permalink](#)

I think it is rather ironic that Adam did not win. I have not watched this season nor the last at all. I went after it was all over and watched Adam Lambert. I ended up watching every single performance. He is the best thing ever. Fantasia was awesome, but Adam has better range and can sing anything and make it his own. Fantasia had a harder time with that.

Adam Lambert is also really good looking. I don't care if he is gay or bisexual or straight. He has smoky Elvis type eyes and his nose is gorgeous!! He has "it". I love watching him, he is a very good performer and will only get better as he gains experience with a music audience rather than a theatre

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audience.

One of the ironies is the talk around whether girls will still want to watch him because he might be gay. Well I have news for all those people that say that. All those Calvin Klein models you drool over, almost everyone of the male models we like to fan ourselves over are GAY!! Imagine that!! I can still appreciate talent and beauty whether it is a woman or a man and I don't give a rat's a** if they are gay or not. Although the androgynous David Bowie thing is really still in fashion.

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NationalWaterCooler *I'm a Fan of NationalWaterCooler* [permalink](#)

Why did Entertainment Weekly feel free to out Adam Lambert but not their other cover stars?

http://www.nationalwatercooler.com/nationalwatercooler/NationalWaterCooler/Entries/2009/5/23_Outting_Entertainers_Weekly.html

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Jude55807 *I'm a Fan of Jude55807* [permalink](#)

last vote wasn't even close, <http://anchorsnews.com/2009/05/idol-results-it-wasnt-even-close-kris-beat-adam-by-wide-margin/>

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BoyInBOYCOTT *I'm a Fan of BoyInBOYCOTT* [permalink](#)

When Hannity needs an opening act for some lame tour, or a supermarket in Arkansas needs a "STAR" singing in their parking lot in a YEAR kris will be you Christian guy to call.

Seculars will enjoy Adam...btw did you know WE are the fastest growing "faith/non faith" group in America. MORE people LEAVE churches then join each year.

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Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger *I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz* [permalink](#)



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Yep, I DID know that atheists/agnostics are the fastest growing group when it comes to issues of faith. Did you know independents are the fastest growing political group and will probably pass Republicans in number of registered voters before the next Presidential election? That means Democrats will be #1, Independents will be #2 and Republicans will be #3.

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chelan *I'm a Fan of chelan* [permalink](#)

Why did Clay Aiken win then all the gays must have been voting.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 01:53 AM on 05/22/2009

Nunyabiz1 *I'm a Fan of Nunyabiz1* [permalink](#)

Clay Aiken didn't win.

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David Poon *I'm a Fan of David Poon* [permalink](#)

Kris is way too young to have ever done missionary work in Burma. It's Myanmar.

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I prefer not to use the name insisted on by a brutal regime. Free Burma!

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Bulbul *I'm a Fan of Bulbul* [permalink](#)

I say Burma.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 07:26 AM on 05/23/2009

Bulbul *I'm a Fan of Bulbul* [permalink](#)

Repeat, I posted on your previous article by mistake.....

I congratulate the winner Kris and also Adam , a winner...my favorite was Matt ! Imagine my shock seeing Megan up on the stage, yet again and singing a difficult song, and of course, her voice was all over. She was not even a comic relief, Tatiana was , this is an insult to all the good ones, that if you have the looks you go up the stage !

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chelan *I'm a Fan of chelan* [permalink](#)

Then what happened to the cute blonde girl she was amazing and so cute ?

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lindasha *I'm a Fan of lindasha* [permalink](#)

Personally, I wanted Kris to win because I got so tired of the judges acting like Adam had already won it. Nothing so complicated as religion or sexuality, just the judge's attitude.

Both guys are great, they'll both make beaucoup money, it's all good.

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Bulbul *I'm a Fan of Bulbul* [permalink](#)

True, Simon , yet once again let Adam down , may be he did not want Adam to win after all. Last year he did the same thing , but Cook deserved to win.

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nee *I'm a Fan of nee* [permalink](#)

So true! And I think Adam was buying into it.

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spiderbucket *I'm a Fan of spiderbucket* [permalink](#)

I'm a Christian but Christian "Rock" sucks just like this show and it's fans - and the people who write about it.

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bugsbonzai *I'm a Fan of bugsbonzai* [permalink](#)

I know this was supposed to be a lighthearted romp, but it still strikes a chord. First, your "Christian" links are super weak in most instances, almost fabricated out of thin air. I went to church every Sunday for 20 years, took summer bible school, went to weekly youth group, and went on numerous outreach programs that helped the poor. But now that I've come to, as George Carlin calls it, "The Age of Reason", I would be thoroughly secular if I were to sing in a competition. I wouldn't call upon that past because it's not representative of who I am in the present.

But this year is different. When it comes to this year, bigotry wins over talent.

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Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger *I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz* [permalink](#)



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I think if there was uglier bigotry, then Adam Lambert would never have been so popular for months on end, celebrated even after photos making it obvious he was gay and getting to the finals with Kris and beating out 100,000 other people to get there. As a gay guy, that sounds pretty positive to me.

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Tallulah Morehead - Huffpost Blogger *I'm a Fan of Tallulah Morehead* [permalink](#)

"Season 2: But this was a Christian vs Christian finale so you can't draw any



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conclusions from this one."

NONSENSE. Everyone knew Clay was gay just as we all know about Adam. It was God VS The Gays that year too.

I didn't know that Kris (How ironic is it that the Christian boy misspells his own name, when it's root word is "Christ"?) had done missionary work around that world. That moves him from on my lists from the "Bland, unmemorable" list to the Evil List, as he's not content to merely be insane, he must try to spread his mental illness with others. Missionaries are evil.

It is the 21st Century. It's long past time for mankind to outgrow the evil that is "Faith".

Reply Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 05:06 PM on 05/21/2009

wietog I'm a Fan of wietog permalink

Yes. Faith is insidious. It rejects rational thought, & replaces common sense. On the one hand, sure, churches are community centers where bakesales for the poor & feel-good sing-alongs seem to be innocuous & useful to society. On the other hand, the construct, dogma & judgment are incredibly dangerous.

We need to separate not only church & state, but religious "philosophy" from community gatherings. Secular community centers need to be supported as well as secular charities.

As for Adam - you CANNOT deny his star power. He has it ALL. Powerful, unique & professional voice. Incredible looks - tall, dark, handsome & engaging. Great personality. Fantastic stage presence.

I hardly caught an episode this year, yet could see his star rising easily, as many have.

Then there's Kris. BORING. We have seen this type of guy everywhere forever. Nothing unique. In fact, how did he get this far anyway?

The truth is that people on the coasts are busier & less prone to voting. Younger & older people vote. Perhaps the gay communities didn't band together here as they could have.

It's probably for the best, anyway. The winner is bound by certain contracts and is tied to AI directly. Maybe Adam will be better off.

You are going to see him on Broadway, in Vegas, probably world-wide. This is a powerhouse.

And seriously - can we get over this gay thing yet? Who cares!!! Fans have no better chance to get with a heterosexual star. Personal choices are just that.

Good luck to both, but man!

Reply Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 06:41 PM on 05/21/2009

chelan I'm a Fan of chelan permalink

I like boring its safe we are sick of the drama. I didn't watch the finale but its more than about him being gay. There not enough Christians to have voted in Kris so quit blaming them mostly woman vote and they are not attracted to gay men

Reply Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 01:29 AM on 05/22/2009

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RadicalRuss I'm a Fan of RadicalRuss permalink

For Season 2, while both Ruben and Clay had the God card, don't forget that Clay was "teh gay" for those Christian viewers.

I think the true theory is the Southern AT&T Text Messaging theory, only with the Christian vote acting as tiebreaker. In Idol voting, you're allowed to call or text in ten votes per line. However, calls get you busy signals and you have to keep redialing to get just two votes, much less ten.

Text messaging, though, gets no busy signal and you can send in ten of them in the time it would take to get through one Idol phone call. Now, understand that anyone can call, but only AT&T subscribers can text, and AT&T's subscriber base is largest in the South.

So when watching Idol Season 9, ask yourself, "Who would a 13-year-old girl in Mobile vote for?"

Evidence?

- 8) Allen (Arkansas) vs. Lambert (California)
- 7) Cook (Missouri) vs. Archuleta (Utah)
- 6) Sparks (Arizona) vs. Lewis (Washington) (Religion wins tiebreaker)
- 5) Hicks (Alabama) vs. McPhee (California)
- 4) Underwood (Oklahoma) vs. Bice (Alabama) (Religion breaks tie)
- 3) Fantasia (North Carolina) vs. DeGarmo (Georgia) (Religion breaks tie)
- 2) Studdard (Alabama) vs. Aiken (North Carolina) ("Not gay" breaks tie)
- 1) Clarkson (Texas) vs. Guarini (Pennsylvania)

What are the chances you'd get three finalists from Alabama and only two from California? Or that ten of sixteen finalists would be from former Confederate States and zero from the Northeast?

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Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger *I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz* [permalink](#)



Great analysis. I'll keep it in mind.

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jaggok *I'm a Fan of jaggok* [permalink](#)

We lost the election but dammit we won American Idol.

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JayEsbe *I'm a Fan of JayEsbe* [permalink](#)

Gee, I wonder why God seems to give those wicked pagans so much more talent.

"Christain Idol", hilarious oxymoron/reality.

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Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger *I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz* [permalink](#)



Everyone knows the devil has more fun (and better music).

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dine100 *I'm a Fan of dine100* [permalink](#)

The population in California far outweighs the population in Arkansas...so if they REALLY wanted to see Adam as the next American Idol, they would have voted more. I think Kris got a majority of Danny's votes this week (if they indeed voted). But all in all, I am pleased. I voted for Kris...Adam was already a star in his own right, a professional....Kris was just the boy next door. I think it's more about "the boy/girl next door" and not someone already in the business.

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