

WATCH: Stories of Heroic Faith Amid Persecution in the Underground Church

You may not know their names or see their faces on this side of heaven, but the global persecuted church is out there, and they are asking for prayer. From China to Afghanistan to Israel to Nigeria, men and women of God are giving their lives for the sake of the gospel going forth in the nations.

Todd Nettleton serves as the voice for many in the persecuted church, and is Chief of Media Relations for the Voice of the Martyrs, USA. In a video interview for *Charisma News*, Nettleton was overjoyed to share the heroic acts from believers in the underground church that will leave you with goosebumps.

Right now in Afghanistan, Christians are coming together in the underground church to advance the gospel to their Afghan brothers and sisters. As the country has seen what Taliban rulership looks like they are starting to question their Muslim faith and are wondering if there is more. Now the underground church is mobilizing to share with those questioning the Quran about the passionate love of Jesus. They are sharing how God loved them so much that He sent His one and only Son to die for them, a message vastly different than the violence they experience everyday.

In Northern Nigeria, Christians are under a constant fear from terrorist groups like Boko Haram. A Nigerian pastor was kidnapped and tortured for 30 days by Fulani Islamic militants. By the grace of God, Pastor Emmanuel survived. He suffered the worst beatings on Sundays because they knew it was a holy day for him.

Although the Christian villages are often targeted, Pastor Emmanuel went back to his church after being released from captivity because he didn't want to go into hiding leaving his congregation without a shepherd. He is truly willing to lay his life down for his friends.

In the video, Nettleton also talks about the persecution of Christians in Israel and the hardships with finding Hebrew Bibles and maintaining church buildings.

It is humbling to hear the stories of the men and women who the world is truly not worthy of just like the Bible talks about the heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:13-16 says, "These all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Those who say such things declare plainly that they are looking for a homeland. And certainly, if they had been thinking of the country out of which they came, they might have had the opportunity to return. But they desired a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them." {eoa}

Shelby Lindsay *is an assistant editor for Charisma Media.*

End Times Expert: Global Leaders Warn Food Shortages

Will Worsen

You have probably noticed that food prices just keep going up at the grocery store. Many people believe that this is just a temporary phenomenon, and those people would be wrong.

In fact, things are really going to start going haywire when a lot of the food that is supposed to be on our store shelves in 2023 doesn't show up. Of course, the reason that food isn't going to be there is because it isn't being grown in 2022. This summer, food production in the United States is constantly being slammed by one disaster after another.

Sadly, most Americans still don't understand that this is going to deeply affect all of us in the months ahead.

Let me start my discussion by talking about the endless drought that is scorching crops all over the western half of the nation.

At this point, it is becoming clear that corn and soybean yields will be way down in 2022:

Drought is shrinking crops from the US Farm Belt to China's Yangtze River basin, ratcheting up fears of global hunger and weighing on the outlook for inflation.

The latest warning flare comes out of the American Midwest, where some corn is so parched stalks are missing ears of grain and soybean pods are fewer and smaller than usual. The dismal report from the Pro Farmer Crop Tour has helped lift a gauge of grain prices back to the highest level since June.

In one form or another, corn and soybeans are in thousands upon thousands of products that Americans consume on a daily basis.

If the supply of corn and soybeans is way down, that means that prices will be way up.

Anyone that has taken ECON 101 can figure that out.

Meanwhile, the drought is also taking a devastating toll on ranchers. Many of them have been selling off their herds while they still have something to sell, and that has helped keep short-term meat prices stable.

But the size of our national cattle herd just keeps getting smaller and smaller, and that is going to mean much higher beef prices in the years ahead.

“In response, ranchers have been forced to sell their animals early, thinning the numbers of older cows. By some estimates, US beef-producing cattle herds could be slashed by up to 20% if the ranching industry gets rid of its older, calf-producing cows.”

“The implications of fewer cows giving birth to calves are that over the next few years there will be higher beef prices,” said Peter Bozzo, vice president of Chef’s Warehouse, a food purveyor to high-end restaurants.

Sadly, those in the western half of the nation aren’t going to get any relief any time soon.

In fact, it is being reported that a sizzling heat wave will be baking the entire region throughout this week.

“Some of the hottest temperatures of the year are on the way for the West Coast and possibly staying dangerously hot through Labor Day as a mega heat wave builds in for the long term.”

More than 55 million people are currently under heat alerts from Southern California through the San Joaquin Valley and into portions of the Northwest, including 20 of the most populated cities up and down the West Coast.

“Temperatures could exceed 110 degrees in parts of the Southwest, where an excessive heat warning is currently in

effect," the Weather Prediction Center wrote.

Meanwhile, we are witnessing historic flooding along the Mississippi River, and this will have a substantial impact on nearby agricultural production.

"Portions of central Mississippi and the lower Mississippi Delta saw more than a foot of rain between Aug. 21 and 25, and flash flooding will affect some agricultural commodities in these areas."

But what we do know is that some crops that were wiped out were literally just about to be harvested.

"Numerous row-crop fields were saturated, and preliminary reports suggest that the crops most compromised will be early-planted cotton and soybeans that were nearly ready for harvest before the weather deteriorated."

Switching gears, fish are being killed in vast numbers by an algae bloom that has suddenly erupted along the west coast.

In fact, we are being told that this is the very first algae bloom that has ever been recorded in San Francisco Bay.

"Environmental nonprofit San Francisco Baykeeper is reporting that an algae bloom is happening across the San Francisco Bay, something they believe is unprecedented in the history of the bay. Additionally, in the past week Baykeeper said it's received an increasing number of reports of dead fish around the bay that the group suspects the algae bloom is to blame."

Baykeeper reported that hundreds of dead fish were visible Sunday at the Oakland Yacht Club. On Thursday, Baykeeper reported dozens of fish in the middle of the bay between Dumbarton and San Mateo bridges.

Day after day, so many strange things are taking place.

Why do you think this is happening?

Lastly, I wanted to mention the fact that there has been yet another fire at a food production facility in the United States.

This time, it was a poultry business in Montebello, California:

A commercial fire burned a poultry business in Montebello Sunday afternoon.

QC Poultry, at 1111 W. Olympic Blvd., sustained building damage and several commercial vehicles may also have been burned, a spokesperson for the city of Montebello said.

Footage from the scene shows burn damage near the building's windows and doors, as well as at least one unit from the Monterey Park Fire Department present to assist.

As I have detailed in previous articles, in recent months there have been dozens of fires at food production facilities in the United States.

But I suppose that is just another "coincidence," eh?

And all of this is happening in the context of a rapidly growing global food crisis that threatens to cause historic famines all over the world for years to come.

Global leaders keep telling us that there will be food shortages in the months ahead.

I am taking those warnings quite seriously, and I believe that all of you should be taking those warnings quite seriously as well.

For the original article, visit . {eoa}

Michael Snyder's book titled *7 Year Apocalypse* is now available on . In addition to his new book, he has written five other books that are available on , including *Lost*

Prophecies of the Future of America, The Beginning of the End, Get Prepared Now! and Living a Life That Really Matters (#CommissionsEarned). When you purchase any of these books, you help to support the work that Snyder is doing, and one way that you can really help is by sending digital copies as gifts through Amazon to family and friends. Time is short, and he needs help getting these warnings into the hands of as many people as possible. He has published thousands of articles on The Economic Collapse Blog, End Of The American Dream and The Most Important News, and the articles that he publishes on those sites are republished on dozens of other prominent websites all over the globe.

Is it Biblical for Christians to Celebrate Labor Day?

Read Time: 2 minutes 21 seconds

As you spend time with family, go to parades or barbeque by the pool you might be wondering what Labor Day has to do with Christianity. The purpose of the secular holiday was to celebrate the working class, and all they had done to make America great through social and economic achievements.

The first Monday of every September, American workers celebrate Labor Day. In 1887 states across the country started to pass laws recognizing the holiday and by June 28, 1894 the United States Congress passed an act making Labor Day a national legal holiday.

On the Department of Labor's website they say, "American labor has raised the nation's standard of living and contributed to the greatest production the world has ever known and the labor

movement has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideas of economic and political democracy.”

Through the labor movement, child labor laws, livable wages and safe working conditions have been passed.

As followers of Jesus who have been bought and paid for through the cross we no longer have to work or strive to gain God’s approval. We are counted righteous through our faith in Jesus. There is something to be said about working hard and giving glory to God through what we put our hands to.

What does the Bible have to say about work?

- Colossians 3:23 says, “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as for the Lord and not for me.”
- Proverbs 14:23 says, “In all labor there is profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.”
- Proverbs 16:3 says, “Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts will be established.”

Looking back throughout history there are many men and women whose faith in God led them to do wondrous works for the Kingdom of Heaven. Benjamin Franklin took his daily prayer out of Proverbs 8, earnestly asking God for wisdom throughout the day and even attributed that to his success.

Franklin was self-taught and used by God to shape the country. Here is a list of just some of his accomplishments:

- Noted 18th century scientist
- Founded the first U.S. hospital
- Started the first insurance company
- Printer and publisher in Colonial America
- Inventor
- Took eight trips across the Atlantic charting and measuring the Gulf Stream
- Author
- Started a society to abolish slavery

- Politician
- Philanthropist

What a wonderful thing to know that as God's children it is His greatest desire to use us to change the world. We don't work for God because we are pressured to but we work hard to represent the character of Jesus as vessels of the Holy Spirit.

Whether you're an artist, student, mom, teacher, businessman, writer or mathematician you have talents that can be used to glorify God here on earth. Let the world know followers of Jesus by their love, hard work, dedication and consistency in the workplace.

On this Labor Day, American Christians can rest in the finished work of the cross that not only do we get to celebrate the work that has been done in American history but the finished work of the cross that gives us eternal salvation. {eoa}

Shelby Lindsay *is an assistant editor for Charisma Media.*

A Spiritual Shifting: Americans Awakening to Dangers of Globalism

When 250,000 people gathered on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. on Sept. 26, 2020 for The Return: National and Global Day of Prayer and Repentance, many hoped that the first day of national repentance since the Civil War would inspire God to intervene in America's political quagmire,

reversing the nation's nosedive toward judgment.

At critical moments in American history—from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War—from George Washington to Abraham Lincoln, presidents on dozens of occasions sought God's miraculous intervention via national days of repentance.

The last such event, before The Return, occurred in 1863 at the height of the Civil War when Lincoln called for a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, asking God to intervene in the nation's bloodiest conflict, saying: "... the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins... We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have ... vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become ... too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins..."

Two days later, Confederate General "Stonewall" Jackson was fatally wounded in a freak accident by one of his own guards. Two months later, the South lost the Battle of Gettysburg. In God's mercy, the war soon ended. Having seen how many prayed, fasted and repented, God restored America, and Lincoln—often named in polls as one of America's best presidents—went on to free African American slaves, ending the scourge of slavery.

Today, a century and a half later, when America seems intractably divided and our country is facing countless threats, including nuclear attack from Russia, China and North Korea as well as megadrought, intensifying natural disasters, soaring inflation and a looming global recession or worse, we believe the Holy Spirit is working a bigger plan with an

eternal impact.

America Awakening to the Dangers of Globalism and Rising Antichrist System

Since The Return, after witnessing the devastating pandemic, riots, violence and massive societal changes, much of America and the church has awoken to the dangers that powerful globalist forces, both within America and abroad, pose not only to the future of the United States, but to freedom, liberty and democracy worldwide.

Several years ago, while working with former U.S. Rep. Trent Franks who was chairman of the Congressional EMP Commission to harden our electrical grid and make it resilient against electromagnetic attack, he told me (Rev. Kevin Jessip) that the biggest battle America would face is the one for religious freedom and liberty, and for freedom itself.

A recent Freedom House report found global freedom is facing a “dire threat” and the “global order is nearing a tipping point, and if democracy’s defenders do not work together to help guarantee freedom for all people, the authoritarian model will prevail.” The authors noted that the “present threat to democracy is the product of 16 consecutive years of decline in global freedom.”

Today, globalists in America and worldwide are openly advocating for technocratic global governance, as we saw during the pandemic, with political influence transferred to the hands of unelected scientific and medical experts.

Many Bible prophecy experts believe this new system of governance could be a precursor to the form of totalitarian world government the book of Revelation reveals will arise when the Antichrist comes to power during the Tribulation and people are unable to “buy or sell” (Rev. 13:17) without the “mark of the beast.”

America, and the world, now finds itself at a defining moment as the Holy Spirit is awakening the body of Christ and hope is growing that the forces behind the World Economic Forum's "Great Reset" plan—and what President Joe Biden described as the "New World Order" that America must lead—will be confounded, as the end-times awakening millions are praying for ignites.

Reverberations from The Return

After attending a recent screening of *The Return*, co-Founder Rabbi Jonathan Cahn's new movie—*The Harbingers of Things to Come*—Rabbi Cahn and I (Rev. Jessip) began an ongoing conversation about the spiritual impact of *The Return* that was seen by about 42 million people around the world.

Following the historic U.S. Supreme Court decision in late June that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, declaring that the right to abortion no longer exists, our conversation intensified, as we realized that a string of serendipitous events unfolded on that day that only the Holy Spirit could have orchestrated.

We discovered that at the very moment our shofars were sounding on the National Mall, former President Donald Trump was nominating Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court, who would ultimately be the final vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Now we are also seeing decisive steps forward for the return of prayer to our schools, stronger families and a return to biblical marriage.

At the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America "Messiah 2022" conference July 3-9 at Messiah University in Grantham, Pennsylvania, Rabbi Cahn, senior rabbi at the Beth Israel Jerusalem Center in Wayne, New Jersey, spoke about the reverberations of *The Return* upon America and the world.

"Fifty years ago, we took the right to kill children," Rabbi Cahn told the MJAA. "Fifty years later, it is being taken away. Praise God. That Jubilee (defined as 'a year of

emancipation and restoration provided by ancient Hebrew law to be kept every 50 years by the emancipation of enslaved Hebrews') was the reversal of what had been done since the last Jubilee. So, the 50th year after the Supreme Court (legalized abortion) is the Jubilee and they have undone what they did 50 years ago."

"And it all happened through a man named Donald Trump. No matter what you think of him, one way or another, it only happened because he was president. Three of the six Supreme Court justices who voted on this ruling were appointed by President Trump. You may say, 'But he is not a godly man. He's a crazy man.' Well, God is sovereign. He'll use whom He'll use. You never know with God. Just when you think it's hopeless, God has a tendency to show up. The vote on this was 6-3, but the vote that actually overturned Roe v. Wade was 5-4. It happened by one single vote. It only happened because of the last Supreme Court justice that Trump appointed (Barrett)."

In his book *The Paradigm*, Rabbi Cahn wrote that Trump was a Jehu (the Israelite king who dismantled the system of Baal worship that Jezebel put into place which sanctioned the killing of the nation's children) figure to America.

In a July 2, 2019 letter to Trump, I wrote that King Jehu was a leader who came to power in times similar to these: "He was one of those decisive, ambitious, calculating, passionate men whom God, from time to time, raises up to change the fate of nations and to fulfill His will. ... He had a sense of destiny about him... The nation was reeling from the impact of a wicked, fallen government. ... But King Jehu failed in his mission. The bottom line proved to be pride and self-achievement. ... A nation that had so desperately bound together in hope for a new direction began to fall under divine judgement."

Rev. Kevin Jessip is the co-founder and president of The

Return International, president of the Global Strategic Alliance and chairman of Save the Persecuted Christians. He is an adviser to national and global leaders within the business, political and faith communities. After years as an executive for one of the world's largest publicly traded companies, Kevin was called into a deeper ministry, where he began as a youth evangelist over four decades ago, to become a dedicated leader for national and global repentance. Find out more at [and](#) .

Troy Anderson is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated investigative journalist, bestselling co-author of The Military Guide to Armageddon, Trumpocalypse and The Babylon Code, and former executive editor of Charisma magazine and Charisma Media and reporter at the Los Angeles Daily News. His latest book, The Military Guide to Disarming Deception, was released August 9. He is the executive editor of The Return International and vice president of Battle Ready Ministries. Find out more at [, and](#) .

Jonathan Cahn: 'Altars Must Be Broken' for Worldwide Revival to Come

Rabbi Jonathan Cahn says if there is to be worldwide revival in these end times, altars must be broken. He doesn't mean literal altars—as there are in churches—but metaphorical altars that have infiltrated the lives of believers and non-believers alike and have transformed our culture into a den of iniquity.

It's part of the reason why he wrote his latest and perhaps

his most important book, "Return of the Gods," which releases today, Sept. 6. In the book, he reveals that the gods of the ancient pagan world have now returned to the modern world, to the West and specifically to America. He reveals the "Dark Trinity" of these gods that are now at work transforming and paganizing American culture. The same ancient gods that reign over the ancient world now lie behind everything from the sexual revolution, abortion, woke-ism, the revival of the occult, the war on gender and the spread of the rainbow throughout our culture. Rabbi Cahn says not only do we need to know what we are dealing with concerning the "gods" or the principalities of the enemy, but we also need to realize that we, as believers, have the power to overcome them.

Rabbi Cahn says in these last days, we are no different than Moses, Elijah, the Maccabees or Jesus' disciples, who all faced their own challenges in dealing with pagan gods in their own time. We, like those individuals and groups, can look to our Savior to destroy Satan and his army who have brought mass deception to our culture.

"We all know that we are dealing with something very biblical here," Rabbi Cahn told Stephen Strang in a recent episode of "The Strang Report."

"These are the last days and this is an end-times template. But we have to remember who we are. We have the power of the One True God. We must live powerfully. The power of God is the only antidote for the spirits of the gods.

"It doesn't matter if we are in the minority or not. Look at the great people of God and how they stood against all of these things. They would not bow down. The principalities are trying to make God's people bow down. It's always been about that. We have to say, 'No,' we won't bow down to Baal, we will not bow down to political correctness, we will not bow down to anything but the One True God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is the God above all.

“We have the power to overcome. But we have to fight. We can’t be silent. We cannot be intimidated by the gods.”

Rabbi Cahn says that in ancient times, the sign of revival was that God dealt with these pagan gods—as is evident by the stories of Moses, Elijah and the Maccabees—as that their “altars were broken.”

One of the biggest altars in our culture today, Rabbi Cahn says, is abortion. He says he doesn’t believe it’s by accident, but the day he finished “Return of the Gods,” June 24, was the same day the Supreme Court overturned the highly controversial Roe v. Wade, which had been a federal law since 1973.

“I believe that God has given us encouragement and given that to us a sign,” Rabbi Cahn says. “That’s a broken altar, and revival is about broken altars. There can be revival, but we have to deal with these things. ... We are dealing with what they dealt with, it’s very biblical. What we have to remember is what is the power that drove them (the pagan gods) out. We have that power.”

Rabbi Cahn says individual believers must do their part and rid themselves of anything that could be blocking the power of God in their own lives.

“If there is anything in your life that is linked to this (pagan gods), whether it’s pornography, whether it’s abortion or whether it’s a million other things, get it out of your life,” Rabbi Cahn says. “Do that you so you be a vessel of the power of the Living God. Then you can rise up in power and there can be revival. ...

“We are not supposed to be sitting around on the defense and be OK with being quiet. That’s exactly what the principalities want. They want to shut up the gospel. It was the gospel that cast them out (in biblical times). They have a target on the gospel and a target on believers. But we cannot be intimidated

and we cannot bow down.” {eoa}

Shawn A. Akers is the online editor for Charisma Media.

Larry Tomczak’s Week in Review: Drawing From 18,250 Days of Ministry to Inspire You

Five decades ago, Larry Tomczak left the AFL-CIO headquarters to plunge into God’s new assignment for his life.

Be encouraged from Larry’s quotes and notes so you finish well!

Retired Pentecostal Pastor: The Deceptive ‘Respect for Marriage Act’

I’d like to alert U.S. readers to the radical Left’s deceptively named “Respect for Marriage Act.” This alarming legislation will effectively impose “LGBTQS+ marriage” on all 50 states if just 10 weak-willed Republican Senators cave to its Leftist ideology.

The bill (H.R. 8404) passed the U.S. House of Representatives on July 19 of this year. Now, the Senate appears to have enough politically-correct Republicans to join the full Democrat caucus to pass it at the federal level, before the 2022 Midterm elections.

The legislation repeals the Defense of Marriage Act, which was approved in 1996 by overwhelming bipartisan majorities in both chambers of Congress. It was signed into law by President Bill Clinton to recognize and protect natural marriage in federal law. Now, H.R. 8404 would seem to force every state to accept the definition of marriage of other states, pushing a “lowest common denominator” on all of the states.

For example, should any state legislature or court choose to recognize polygamy, it seems every state would be effectively forced to accept that new standard, without regard for the well-being of its children and families. It also appears to increase the threat of legal liability to those who may decline to affirm any perverse form of marriage.

The deceptive language of the bill actually destroys traditional marriage and the right for our states to sovereignly establish and embrace their own laws of American freedom. It mocks the religious values of our founders and Western civilization, itself.

Disrespect for Marriage

Rather than showing “respect for marriage,” H.R. 8404 demonstrates a direct “disrespect” for biblical teaching regarding natural marriage—the union of one man and one woman (Gen. 1:27 and 5:2; Matt. 19:4-6). It also betrays state sovereignty by weakening state authority and adding more power to the federal government.

Already, secular activists are looking at ways to legally approve polygamy (more than one spouse), polygyny (more than one wife), and polyandry (more than one husband). Pedophilia,

meanwhile, is being sanitized by immoral iconoclasts, and instead of condemning the sexual actions of adults with children the almost unspeakable malady is being alarmingly justified as merely the private actions of “minor-attracted persons” (MAP).

Where or when will this sexual perversion stop?

The Hebrew Prophet Isaiah warned, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness...” (Isa. 5:20, NIV).

Thirty-five states have laws or constitutional amendments protecting traditional marriage. Jeopardizing our religious liberties and stripping these states of their fundamental right to uphold the will of their voters, this H.R. 8404 will haunt our nation’s leaders and hurt its future. Imagine the potential consequences to their own children and grandchildren.

Please urge your congressional leaders to uphold natural, traditional marriage and religious freedoms! Tell them to “Say NO” to an even bigger federal government and to vote NO on this radical “disrespect for marriage act.” {eoa}

Gary Curtis served in full-time ministry for 50 years, the last 27 years of which he was part of the pastoral staff of The Church on The Way, the Van Nuys, California, Foursquare church. Now retired, Gary continues to write a weekly blog at and frequent articles for digital and print platforms.

“Satanic Ghoul:” Bi-partisan Analysts Shred Biden’s “Hellish” Speech

Read time: 2 minutes 18 seconds

Imagery has an important place in culture, from Bible verses to political rallies, the imagery of a situation can make or break it.

After President Biden’s speech on Thursday, Sept. 1, commentators on both sides of the aisle are criticizing the president for the choice of background and his divisive speech.

While campaigning before the 2020 election, then-candidate Biden tweeted, “We need a president who chooses unity over division.” Most Americans would agree with that statement, yet the president’s speech attacked half of America.

“MAGA Republicans do not respect the constitution,” he said. “They do not believe in the rule of law, they do not believe in the rule of law, they do not recognize the will of the people.”

“MAGA forces are determined to take this country backwards,” he added. “Backwards to an America where there is no right to choose. No right to privacy. No right to contraception. No right to marry who you love. They promote authoritarian leaders and they fan the flames of political violence.”

The dark, red imagery was made even more dystopian with the placement of two Marines stationed in the background. While other presidents have done this in the past, the imagery of it was unsettling to many. This action brought even more criticism upon the president, as the military is supposed to

be apolitical.

Even CNN's Brianna Keilar tweeted criticism of the decision to use military forces in a political speech:

Whatever you think of this speech the military is supposed to be apolitical. Positioning Marines in uniform behind President Biden for a political speech flies in the face of that. It's wrong when Democrats do it. It's wrong when Republicans do it.

– Brianna Keilar (@briakeilarcnn) September 2, 2022

President Biden was right about one thing in his speech, there is a fight going on for the soul of America, and it is not the fight between political parties. There is a spiritual battle going on, a fight against the cross and all that God represents is being waged by Satan and his followers.

Political commentators on the right took a spiritual approach to the speech and setting, with conservative commentator Allie Beth Stuckey calling the president a "Satanic ghoul," and others describing the set as "hellish."

Satanic ghoul

– Allie Beth Stuckey (@conservmillen) September 2, 2022

The Bible says in Ephesians 4:29 to "Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, that it may give grace to the listeners."

There was no grace or building up in the president's speech last night. There was division, animosity, untruths and veiled threats. This revelation of what is in the leadership of this countries heart demands Christians pray for that leadership.

First Timothy 2:1-4 has the apostle Paul exhorting all that read and hear his letter to pray for the leaders of countries

so that they may lead with righteousness.

This speech that brought division can be used as a rallying cry for Christians to join together across the country and pray for the restoration, salvation and renewal of the leadership of America. {eoa}

James Lasher is a Copy Editor for Charisma Media.

Why Believing Conspiracy Theories Corrupts Your Christian Witness

Reading Time: 6 minutes, 28 seconds

Today's world is being shaped by lies in terrifying ways. In recent weeks, for example, we have witnessed Vladimir Putin's disinformation campaign to justify the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

But it's not just officials in the Kremlin making spurious claims; during the pandemic we've also been bombarded by falsehoods. Conspiracies appear in our search results, while scrolling on social media or in conversations with friends and family.

What were, at one time, beliefs held by extremists, fringe groups or eccentric uncles—*the earth is flat, the moon landings were faked, I know who really shot JFK*—have now filtered into the mainstream consciousness, aided by technology that makes sharing content easier. In a world that can be confusing, complex and at times seemingly out of control, conspiracies offer us the illusion that we can

understand reality without too much effort on our part.

Christians in the US, in particular, have been linked to conspiracy theories, with real-world consequences. In two surveys from the Public Religion Research Institute, white evangelicals were found to be one of the most likely religious demographics in America to buy into one or more of the claims of the political conspiracy theory QAnon. The theory has been found to have shaped the motivations of Americans involved in the storming of Capitol Hill, which resulted in the deaths of at least two people.

QAnon started with cryptic posts on an online message board, but it soon went mainstream. The conspiracy theory alleges—among other claims—that a vast Democrat pedophile ring operates out of a pizza parlour in Washington DC. In the ‘canon’ of QAnon, Donald Trump is the leader of a movement resisting this hidden evil and there will be an apocalyptic moment (referred to as a ‘storm’) that will sweep away morally corrupt elites.

Why Do Christians Believe Conspiracies?

Pervasive distrust makes conspiracies plausible. When the government lies or the media misreports, distrust can fuel paranoia. When people cannot trust their leaders, they turn to other sources of information. Now we have ‘alternative facts’ to counter ‘official narratives.’

Scandals in the media in recent times, as well as innocent mistakes made by reporters, may also be fueling people’s changing perceptions of journalism as a force for good. This can lead to a mass exodus from traditionally trusted sources of information. This paranoid posture encourages conspiracies, not because people want to believe lies, but because they believe they’re already being fed them.

Confirmation bias also makes us susceptible to conspiracy theories and, in this respect, Christians are no different

from non-Christians: we interpret our world downstream based on what we believe upstream. For example, if you believe the earth is flat, you're more likely to engage and share information that confirms this belief. This process is aided by algorithms online that serve you more of the content you usually click on and share. Because the world is fast-moving and we're all prone to confirmation bias, information that doesn't fit our worldview is swiftly dismissed rather than interrogated and weighed. "That isn't real, it's photo shopped," is an easy response to an image that challenges our understanding of our world and our place within it. Heading upstream to question our foundational beliefs can be a long and painful process, one that many would prefer to avoid. And so lies beget lies.

More Scandalous Than Any Conspiracy

Finally, Christians may wrongly assume our faith acts as a key to omniscient knowledge. The reasoning goes: because we know *the* truth, we must know *all* truth. Just because scripture presents an alternative understanding of ultimate matters—of human sin, death and salvation in Jesus—it doesn't follow that anything claiming to be an 'alternative' take is true. Alternative and conspiratorial explanations of politics, pandemics or vaccines are not automatically more plausible.

In the New Testament, the apostle John reminded early Christians that "the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). With one eye on the Bible and the other on our world, conspiracy theories about hidden evil might seem attractive. After all, wasn't there a hidden plot in Esther? Didn't Daniel fall prey to a conspiracy against him? But we must ask ourselves another question: what did God intend when He gave scripture to the Church? Unlike conspiracies, scripture doesn't entertain our quest for control or provide answers to our predictions and suspicions; in fact, it's full of mystery. Perhaps John wrote Revelation not as a secret code for the next world order, but to help us

imagine living true to the coming kingdom in *any* world order.

In 1943, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was reflecting on how German Christians embraced Hitler. He concluded that “stupidity is a more dangerous enemy of the good than malice... Against stupidity we are defenseless.” He was making the point that some Christians had exercised extremely poor judgement when deciding where their allegiance lay. But despite Bonhoeffer’s assessment of the situation, he checked himself: “Nothing we despise in other men is inherently absent from ourselves.”

It is easy to shame strangers—and even friends—who share conspiracies, but I read that quote from Bonhoeffer as an invitation to embrace a different approach. We can make a stand for what is right in ways that do not belittle others—and which might actually help to change their minds. Contempt only serves to coerce people into ‘correct beliefs’ through shame.

One way we can live in love with our neighbors who buy into any conspiracy theory is by learning the humility to more regularly say: “I don’t know.” Conspiracies offer a sense of superiority, of being ‘in the know.’ We disrupt that misplaced confidence by embracing the posture that confesses our limitations. No one is completely correct in the beliefs they hold, theologically, politically or otherwise.

Neither do we enjoy finding out we’ve believed a lie; we all appreciate being given the dignity to change our minds without shame.

We can also learn the art of persuasion. Minds are changed over time. Arguments are not persuasive but combative. Picture truth not as one massive boulder we roll down a hill at someone in an argument, but instead, as one of those annoying pebbles that get stuck in your shoe. Eventually, you have to stop walking, take off the shoe and deal with the pebble. Persuasion is the act of placing pebbles of truth in people’s

shoes. They can come as questions, honest conversation or empathy that seeks to understand someone else's perspective.

When Conspiracies Come to Church

Within this landscape, it is likely that conspiratorial outlooks are held by some in our churches. And while I may be advocating for a compassionate approach, when it comes to discussing conspiracy theories with Christians, I would err on the side of caution. It is imperative that non-believers who come to our churches to explore Christianity do not leave thinking they must embrace these theories to enter the kingdom of God. It may not be the task of those in the pulpit to denounce political conspiracies week in and week out, but the church does have a role to play in forming Christians who are bearers of truth. Paranoia is not the lens through which Christians should view the world, or as Philip Yancey once said: faith is "paranoia in reverse."

Ironically, Christianity is more scandalous than any conspiracy. It takes an act of God in us to confess that all reality hinges on a Jewish peasant hanging on a criminal's cross in a backwater province of the Roman Empire. The church confesses that this man is the Creator God incarnate, the God of Israel, resurrected, reigning over and reconciling the entire cosmos to Himself. But while the grace of God brings us to recognize that Jesus is Lord, it doesn't provide transcendent knowledge about what's going on in the White House; we have brains and experts for that.

Conspiracies may confirm our suspicions and allow us to feel we're in control, but they corrupt our Christian witness. So rather than reducing the complexities and chaos of the world to a few neat theories, why not embrace our faith and "the peace of God, which transcends all understanding" (Philippians 4:7)?

In this process we must not sever our connections with people

who believe conspiracies, because when Jesus said, “love your enemies” and “love your neighbor” (Matthew 5:43-44) he kept a door open for change; one we must not shut through contempt or cynicism.

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Spirit-Filled Pastor: ‘There is a Cost to Revival’

When speaking at the recent Turning Point USA Faith event in San Diego, Calif., Pastor Shane Idleman made this eye-opening statement for not only pastors, but the entire body of Christ:

“Pastors, without boldness and brokenness, we will accomplish little. Leonard Ravenhill once said, ‘You must weep before you whip.’”

Idleman is obviously looking forward to a Great Awakening in the body in the near future, but he says revival won’t come without a cost and that believers must surrender to the Cross to bring about such a revival.

“If it took praying and fasting to get the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, let me submit to you that it’s going to take prayer, fasting, brokenness and humility to maintain it,” Idleman says. “Don’t fall into the trap that ‘God can’t use me.’ Seek the heart of God and be filled with

the Holy Spirit.

“People call me political. I preach the gospel and I stand up for difficult things. If you stand up for the truth, you will be political. Get over it. That’s a badge of honor. Politics just means leading a group or governing people. God’s Word has plenty to say about that. ... We want to make a difference in our culture, but you have to have boldness and humility.”

Click [here](#) to watch the video for the rest of Pastor Idleman’s incredible message.