

Faith Obscured: What This 28-Year-Old, Jewish MIT Grad Thought Being a Christian Meant

This story might seem hard to believe for some, but I heard it firsthand from a good Christian friend, whom we'll call Sam. And upon reflection, it's not far-fetched at all.

Sam's daughter is dating a 28-year-old Jewish man, a graduate of Tufts and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Shortly before Christmas, Sam, who has been a pastor and served in various ministry capacities over the years, had an opportunity to talk with this young man about the gospel.

To Sam's shock, he learned that, not only did this well-educated Jewish man have no understanding of the gospel message, but he also had a deeply flawed view of what it meant to be a Christian.

As far as he knew, being a Christian meant that you held to certain conservative political viewpoints. These included gun rights and voting for Trump (or, more broadly, Republican), along with a number of other conservative political values.

As for the message of salvation, Sam said that this young man "had not been introduced to the gospel of faith and repentance in Jesus." He heard it for the first time when Sam spoke to him just a few days ago, and it was only at that point that he understood what it meant to be a Christian.

How do we explain this?

On the one hand, we are products of the families in which we are raised, the schools in which we study, the news sources we

read and the social (and social media) circles in which we travel, often living entirely within our own echo chamber.

So, raised in a Jewish home, this young man would not have heard the gospel, nor was he likely to hear it in the (presumably) liberal educational environment in which he studied.

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Not only so, but it's very possible that, in his sphere of news and social interaction, Donald Trump is a Nazi and all his supporters are militant, potentially violent, white supremacist, Christian nationalist insurrectionists.

Little wonder, then, that he would have a distorted view of the meaning of "Christian." But that's only part of the story.

The fact is, all too often, especially during the last eight years, many of us who are Christian conservatives have proclaimed our loyalty to Trump (or our candidate of choice) more loudly than our loyalty to the Lord. Many of us are better known for our MAGA (or, similar) hats than for our personal testimonies. And many of us are far more vocal about conservative political issues—such as gun rights or secure borders—than we are about our faith.

No wonder so many nonbelievers are so confused about who we are and what is most important to us.

To be sure, we are in the political and cultural battle of a lifetime, and Christian conservatives have every right to stand up and to speak out and to take political action. In many ways, the future of our nation depends on us doing these very things.

We really do face life-and-death issues, and without a doubt,

there is an all-out assault on both our freedoms and our children. To fail to speak and act is to be negligent during a time of crisis.

But when we make the secondary or tertiary thing the main thing, our messaging becomes confused.

What are we best known for? What are we most passionate about? What are the hills on which we will die, literally or symbolically? If we could convey one message to the watching world, what would that message be?

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I openly voted for Donald Trump in 2016 and 2020 (although I endorsed no candidate and am a registered Independent), so that is not my issue here, even though some old childhood friends cut me off because I supported him.

That's regretful, but inevitable. We will never please everyone.

But when it comes to politics, I have done my best to shout to the world at the top of my lungs, *"Jesus is my Lord and Savior, the one who died for me and who rose again, the one to whom I owe everything. He gets my heart, my soul and my life, to the very last breath."*

Then, about 100 decibels more quietly, "And I voted for such-and-such a candidate."

Unfortunately, it's all too easy to get caught up in the volatility of the culture wars or the intense emotions of the latest political battle. All the more is this true if you feel that your country is being stolen, pulled out from under your feet.

But this story of the 28-year-old Jewish man is a strong reminder that we must get our messaging on target, both privately and publicly. And it is a rebuke to those of us who

have focused so intensively on winning an election that we have completely lost sight of winning souls by changing their hearts and their minds.

So, by all means, let's impact the nation through politics and culture and education and the media and social media and every means at our disposal. Let's make a positive difference in this world, let's get the best candidates in place and let's get out the vote.

But let us never take our eyes off the prize of all prizes: Jesus, the Son of God and the Savior of the world. And let us make Him known to a watching (and often hostile) world.

Without Him, we are doomed, individually and corporately.

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