

'New York Times' Launches All-Out Attack on Christianity

Apparently, *The New York Times* is in favor of faith in the public square—if the purpose is to mock it. Editors at the *Times* poured gasoline on the fire of Atlanta's latest controversy with an editorial that should shock even their most liberal readers. Just when you thought the media couldn't sink any lower, the *Times* takes on the same First Amendment that gives it the freedom to print these vicious attacks on Christians.

In a stunning column on Jan. 13, the newspaper argues that men and women of faith have no place in public management of any kind. The piece, which shows a remarkable disinterest in the facts, claims that Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran didn't have permission to publish his book on biblical morality. Not only did Cochran have permission from the city's ethics office to publish his book, but he only distributed it in his personal capacity at church—where a handful of his coworkers attend.

But the shoddy journalism didn't end there. Editors insisted that Cochran's book was full of "virulent anti-gay views"—when in fact, the 162 page book only mentioned homosexuality twice. And both times, the conversation merely echoed the Bible's teachings on the subject. For that—privately espousing a faith that a majority of Americans share—Kelvin was fired.

"It should not matter," *The New York Times* conveniently suggests, "that the investigation found no evidence that Mr. Cochran had mistreated gays or lesbians. His position as a high-level public servant makes his remarks especially problematic, and requires that he be held to a different

standard." And what is that "standard," specifically? That he has no First Amendment rights? If so, that's the height of hypocrisy for these editors, who just days ago championed the press's freedom to ridicule religion in the public square. Apparently, *The New York Times* believes in the freedom of the press to attack faith, but not the public's right to hold a faith in the first place.

"Nobody can tell Mr. Cochran what he can or cannot believe," the editors say (somewhat ironically, since that's what they seem to be doing). "If he wants to work as a public official, however, he may not foist his religious views on other city employees who have the right to a boss who does not speak of them as second-class citizens." At no point did Kelvin Cochran "foist" his views on anyone. And if you follow the *Times's* suggestion to its natural conclusion, then there's no place in this country for Christians in any position of authority!

This week, hundreds of Cochran supporters spilled into the rotunda of the Georgia Capitol to stand up to the city's religious intolerance—and then marched to Mayor Reed's office where they left nearly 50,000 petitions from citizens across the nation. Together with Atlanta's religious leaders, black and white, Republicans and Democrats, I urged Americans to fight this notion that Christians have to check their faith at the workplace door:

"This past weekend the world marched in Paris recognizing that free speech is the cornerstone of a truly free society. A realization is now sweeping Europe that political correctness has become lethal and it is an avowed enemy of true freedom. But whether a journalist in France satirically writes about religion or a fire chief in Atlanta, Georgia writes about the sacred teachings of his faith, the silencing of either is a threat to the freedoms of all ... Chief Cochran has spent a lifetime, ready at a moment's notice to fight the fires that threatened lives and property, today he stands ready to fight

the flames of intolerance fueled by our own government that threaten our most fundamental freedoms.”

It’s time for the city of Atlanta to end its campaign of discrimination against Christians, whose only crime is exercising the same liberties our forefathers came to these shores to protect. *The New York Times* is calling for public servants to be held to a different standard when it comes to their freedom of speech and religion. But I think most Americans are quite happy with the standard that we’ve had for the last 226 years—the First Amendment!

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