

Once Again, 'The New York Times' Misunderstands and Mocks Evangelical Christians

In a year-end op-ed piece for *The New York Times*, Katherine Stewart alleges that, "The Christian nationalist movement today is authoritarian, paranoid and patriarchal at its core. They aren't fighting a culture war. They're making a direct attack on democracy itself." Such claims are as ludicrous as they are misleading.

According to Stewart, when evangelicals like Lance Wallnau compare Trump to King Cyrus in the Bible, they are actually wanting Trump to be a king. Indeed, she claims that, "in Mr. Trump, they have found a man who does not merely serve their cause, but also satisfies their craving for a certain kind of political leadership."

Evangelicals, whom she slyly characterizes as "Christian nationalists," want a king, not a president. They want someone to impose their views on the nation. They are theocratic, not democratic. That's why Trump is their man.

She writes, "I have attended dozens of Christian nationalist conferences and events over the past two years. And while I have heard plenty of comments casting doubt on the more questionable aspects of Mr. Trump's character, the gist of the proceedings almost always comes down to the belief that he is a miracle sent straight from heaven to bring the nation back to the Lord. I have also learned that resistance to Mr. Trump is tantamount to resistance to God."

Let's analyze these claims one at a time, as factually and as dispassionately as possible.

First, with regard to the Cyrus comparison, I can say without

equivocation that those using the analogy did not use it with reference to Trump ruling over the nation like a king. As evangelical Americans, we trace our roots back to those who overthrew British rule. We reject a king over America just as much as we reject attempting to set up a theocracy where religious leaders rule the land by fiat and force.

The Cyrus analogy had to do with the unlikelihood of someone like Trump being president, just as it was unlikely that God would use someone like Cyrus (an idol-worshiping, non-Israelite), to restore the Jewish exiles from Babylon.

Wallnau even read Isaiah 45 to Trump at a gathering of evangelicals during the primaries, including these words: "For the sake of My servant Jacob, Israel My chosen one, I call you by name, I hail you by title, though you have not known Me" (see Isa. 45:4).

In other words, God was raising up Donald Trump, a non-evangelical, non-Christian, to help America and, in particular, to help evangelicals. It had nothing to do with him reigning as a king.

Second, these evangelicals are not paranoid. We are fighting a very real battle for our liberties. We are standing up for the rights of our children. Even *Time* magazine published an article on June 29, 2016 titled, "Regular Christians Are No Longer Welcome in American Culture." And already in 2003, David Limbaugh could write the book, *Persecution: How Liberals Are Waging War Against Christians*.

There's a reason I have urged fellow evangelicals to rise up and speak up in 2019. (For a fair, academic evaluation, see George Yancey and David A. Williamson, *So Many Christians, So Few Lions: Is There Christianophobia in the United States?*)

Third, we evangelicals are fighting a culture war. We are not fighting "democracy itself." To the contrary, we believe the democratic principles of our country are being undermined by

radical ideologues who have a very different vision for America.

We see a rise in mobocracy, not democracy. We see a push towards socialism, which will destroy the democracy. We see an anti-Constitutional, even anti-American vision from the radical left that is destructive, and we see Trump opposing that.

For good reason, Tom Gilson has started the new year writing about, "Leftist Totalitarianism: Your 'Freedom of Conscience' Under State Control." For good reason, Dennis Prager has warned about where the left wants to bring us in 2019.

It is the radical left that is attacking Democracy. Evangelicals are trying to protect it.

Fourth, it is downright disingenuous to speak of American evangelicals as "Christian nationalists," with all the ugly connotations such a term stirs up.

I don't know a single evangelical leader who would use such a term, nor do I know any who would prefer being labeled as such. (I can only speak of those I know.)

The truth be told, Stewart could just as well label liberal and "progressive" Christians as "Christian nationalists," since they too speak about what is right for America, they too believe that their candidates would do the best job for America, and they too claim to be following the principles of Jesus.

Fifth, these evangelical leaders are not standing up for patriarchy. They are resisting radical feminism, which ultimately hurts women more than anyone. They are pushing back against the "Shout Your Abortion" movement, against the war on the unborn. They are pro-woman and pro-family.

Sixth, virtually all evangelical leaders I know wish that

Trump would not call people dogs, that he would not be so nasty and demeaning in his tweets.

They like the fact that he fights back. They like the fact that he takes on the media. But they often groan over the way he does it, and I can say with confidence that quite a few evangelical leaders have urged him to reconsider some of his methodology, even if their words fall on deaf ears.

But, as one black evangelical said during the primaries (this was quoted to me by a colleague), "I'm not voting for his morality or his spirituality. I'm voting for his constitutionality."

Seventh, Stewart forgets that most of us voted for Trump because we were voting against Hillary. He was not the first choice for most of us. And yes, given the circumstances, we do believe he was elected with God's help.

But since he has been elected, the Hillary-type forces (by which I mean the liberal media, the Democratic Party and the leftist agenda) have only become more extreme. More anti-Christian. More anti-democracy. More anti-freedom.

Should we now hope that Trump is removed so that these forces come to power? And would the resistance to Mike Pence be any less intense?

In reality, Stewart has things upside down, since it is really the radical left that wants to take over the nation and rob us of our liberties. And evangelicals see Trump, with all his massive flaws and blemishes, fighting against this hostile takeover. And for that we are glad.

What's so un-Christian about that?