

Rep. Madison Cawthorn Defends Sharing His Faith

It appears the Daily Beast was the first to report it, but the news was absolutely shocking, even terrifying. Yes, “Madison Cawthorn, the North Carolina Republican who will become the youngest member of Congress in history, has admitted he tried to convert Jews and Muslims to Christianity.”

How could such a thing happen in the 21st century? How could a self-righteous, religious fanatic make it into the hallowed halls of the House?

As I tweeted in response to the shocking news,

Oh, the horror! A newly elected House Rep., Madison Cawthorn, is a Christian who – get this – actually practiced his faith and tried – gasp!! – to win Jews and Muslims to Jesus. Time to panic! Sound the alarm! This dangerous man is now in Congress! (Seriously, good for him!)

– Dr. Michael L. Brown (@DrMichaelLBrown) November 17, 2020

It turns out that in an interview Monday with the Jewish Insider, Cawthorn spoke of his devout Christian faith, explaining that he had also read the Quran in case he ever met a Muslim who was curious about Christianity. And, he was thrilled to share, he had actually seen some Muslims become Christians.

But this, he stated, was what Christians are supposed to do: “If all you are is friends with other Christians, then how are you ever going to lead somebody to Christ? If you’re not wanting to lead somebody to Christ, then you’re probably not really a Christian.”

Precisely. Sharing the Christian faith with non-Christians, in

a loving, noncoercive way, is part of what Christians do. For followers of Jesus, this should be as natural as breathing. It is part and parcel of who we are and part of the mandate He left us. In the oft-quoted words of Jesus, we are to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15b).

Coincidentally, about the same time the Jewish Insider interview was being released, I was writing an article on the gospel being our first and greatest priority. The article ended with several powerful quotes, including this one from C. H. Mackintosh (1820-1896): “No Christian is in a right condition, if he is not seeking in some way to bring souls to Christ.”

Put another way, committed Christians share their faith the way committed Jews observe the Torah and committed Muslims follow the Quran. These are foundational elements of each one’s respective faith.

What about sharing the gospel with Jews? The Jewish Insider asked him that question:

“I have,” he said with a laugh. “I have, unsuccessfully. I have switched a lot of, uh, you know, I guess, culturally Jewish people. But being a practicing Jew, like, people who are religious about it, they are very difficult. I’ve had a hard time connecting with them in that way.”

That makes perfect sense. It is harder to change the views of someone who is also deeply committed to their faith.

This, however, was too much for MSNBC’s Chris Hayes. He said that “this is a really anti-Semitic thing to say. It’s like the original anti-Semitic thing to say and doesn’t rely on any codes or tropes. And the entire GOP should condemn it. But of course they won’t, and I’m willing to bet it gets 1/20th of the coverage of Omar’s tweet? This speaks to something pretty profound about how the two parties are viewed and whose

‘extremism’ gets attention.”

So, for doing what Christians have done for 2,000 years—sharing their faith—Cawthorn is an anti-Semite and an extremist, and “the entire GOP” should condemn his heinous act.

In reality, there’s nothing anti-Semitic in Cawthorn’s words and attitudes. As noted by Tablet Magazine’s Yair Rosenberg, “Twice as many Jews think you can be Jewish and *not believe in God* than think you can be Jewish and believe Jesus was the messiah. It’s not anti-Semitic to say this out loud! It just means you’ve talked to some Jews and noticed what most of us believe.”

Bingo. Rosenberg hit the nail on the head. The vast majority of Jews reject faith in Jesus, in particular, religious Jews.

Ironically, Jesus Himself was Jewish.

His name was Yeshua, and He was called “Christ” because that was the Greek way of saying “Messiah.”

He was a rabbi, not a reverend, His mother’s name was Miriam, and His first followers were Jewish men with names like Shimon and Yochanan and Yaakov and Yehudah.

The Jesus movement actually started out as exclusively Jewish, with the big question arising: Can you be a Gentile and believe in Jesus, or do you have to become a Jew first (Acts 15)?

That’s why, every writer of the New Testament, with the possible exception of one, was Jewish. And that’s why Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. For it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

Cawthorn, who seems to have a genuine love and respect for the Jewish people, was simply living out his faith, sharing the

gospel indiscriminately with others. That included atheists, Muslims, Jews and others. That's what Christians do.

Thankfully, rather than cower to this anti-religious hostility, Cawthorn has pushed back, tweeting,

I am being attacked because I share my faith with others? Is the left fully anti religious freedom now?

This is dangerous for America!

– Madison Cawthorn (@CawthornforNC) November 17, 2020

Good for young Cawthorn.

As a Jewish follower of Jesus myself, I am grateful beyond words that Christians shared their faith with me in 1971.

And I am not alone. Other Jewish believers in Jesus, like ACLJ attorney Jay Sekulow or conservative commentator and novelist Andrew Klavan, are also glad that someone shared their faith with them.

In a free country like ours, that is what we get to do. Talk or not talk. Accept the gospel or reject it. Share our beliefs or keep them to ourselves.

It's a free country, and this is an essential part of our freedom.

Personally, I hope Cawthorn will have some success sharing his faith in Congress. God knows that plenty of Congressmen need Jesus, too. {eoa}