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‘God Is Going to Have to Forgive Me’: Young Evangelicals Speak Out

By Elizabeth Dias

• Nov. 1, 2018

The role of evangelical Christianity in American politics has been a hotly discussed topic this year, intersecting with front-burner issues like immigration, the Supreme Court and social justice. Often the loudest evangelical voices are white, male and ... not young.

With just days left before the midterm elections — two years after President Trump won the White House with a record share of white, evangelical support — we asked young evangelicals to tell The Times about the relationship between their faith and their politics.

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Nearly 1,500 readers replied, from every state but Alaska and Vermont. Hundreds wrote long essays about their families and communities. They go to prominent megachurches as well as small Southern Baptist, nondenominational and even mainline Protestant congregations. Some said they have left evangelicalism altogether.

We read every submission and spent many hours interviewing respondents. Here's what we learned:

Young evangelicals are questioning the typical ties between evangelicalism and Republican politics. Many said it had caused schisms within their families. And many described a real struggle with an administration they see as hostile to immigrants, Muslims, L.G.B.T.Q. people, and the poor. They feel it reflects a loss of humanity, which conflicts with their spiritual call.

Plenty of young evangelicals believe Mr. Trump has helped to achieve their biggest goals, like curbing abortion rights and advancing religious liberties. But they are sensitive to other issues. Many feel politically independent, or politically homeless. There is a fight for what the term 'evangelical' even means, and they are living it.

And the struggle is not just with political leaders, but also within their religious communities.

The six young evangelicals featured here, all deeply involved in their churches, offer the textured sound of the rising evangelical voice in America, one that is often drowned out by white elders. The interviews and quotations from submissions have been lightly edited and condensed for clarity.

We are opening the comments section, and hope that you will add your own voice.



Image

Credit Scott McIntyre for The New York Times

Alexandria Beightol

22, Democrat, Marco Island, Fla.

I was pulled out of Smith College in 2015 when I told my parents that I was rethinking the legitimacy of anti-gay theology. I thought, “God is going to have to forgive me. I am not going to die in this culture war.”

I was Republican like them. Before, I supported whatever my church told me about candidates and issues. I never questioned or read outside material on these subjects. I secretly started borrowing books from the library.

I gave a communion message in 2016 — it was, “Our God chooses to die the death of all these marginalized people. He dies like Matthew Shepard, like a kid at the hand of the state. He was a refugee.” My church reprimanded me for “abusing the pulpit.” Other members used it to openly stump for Trump and say hateful things about Muslims and L.G.B.T. citizens.

The world I was dreaming about was not the world my church was dreaming about. The world liberal evangelicals want to see is the one conservative evangelicals hope doesn’t happen.

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I'm worried that we've done immense harm to the marginalized in the name of God. You realize it is not good news at all if you are just baptizing certain inequalities or biases.

I don't feel so much like I am leaving conservative evangelicalism. I worship like one, I talk like one. It's not like I can pull myself out of this relationship. I feel incredibly guilty for attending a church I can't invite people to. But I love the community that raised me. A lot of evangelical parents are judged by the successful transmission of values to their children. I haven't wanted to shame them.

I am very excited to vote for Andrew Gillum. It is not that you have conservative evangelicals suddenly becoming liberal. It is more a realizing that you could be practicing something that isn't even Christian at all.

Image



CreditAudra Melton for The New York Times

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Rebekah Hopper

26, Independent, Cincinnati

My parents are very much among the white evangelical demographic that voted for Trump, and still proudly support him. I've never told them I've voted for Democrats. Whenever they read this, they'll find out a lot.

Last year I was in the car with my mom and her husband. Trump had said something. I said, "Well he's racist and homophobic." They were quick to dismiss that. That was the most I've ever talked politics with my mom. It was five minutes.

I am a devout believer of Jesus, but I voted for Hillary Clinton because I believed she would be a good leader for this country. Politics is more than just one issue, we have to look at all aspects of each candidate and discern who could represent us best. Donald Trump represents nobody but himself.

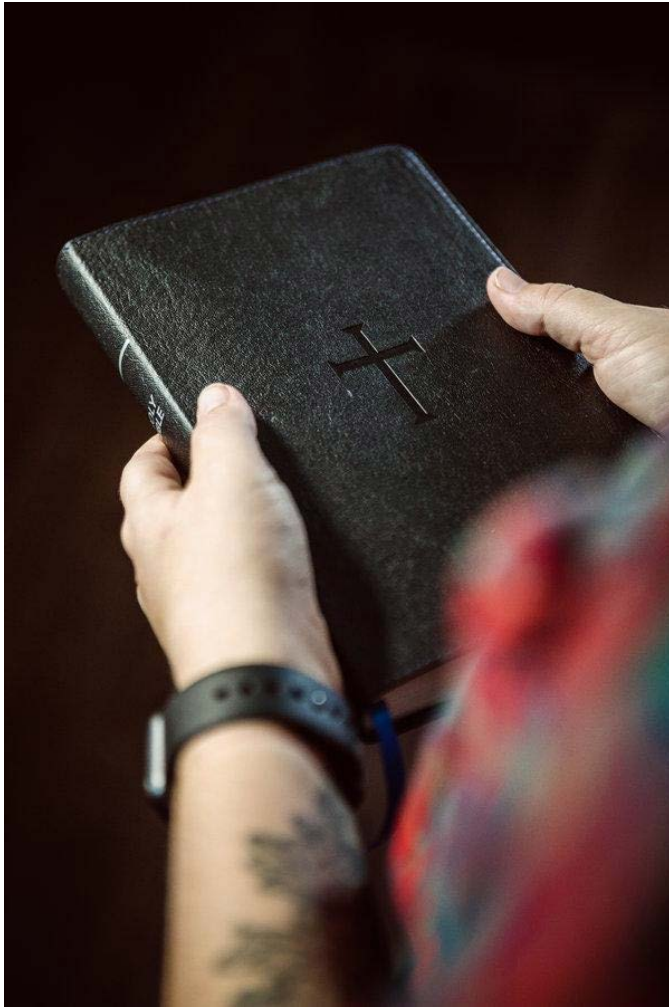
There are a lot of old white men in the Republican Party that use Christianity as a weapon to get themselves elected, but I'm here to tell you that we do not fall for them. The Jesus those men depict is not the Jesus that healed the sick and broke down social barriers. We are not a part of those men's religion, and my hope is people will see that.

I don't consider myself Republican or Democrat. I am pro-life. It's not just abortion, it's people in prisons being treated terribly. I went to the Women's March knowing I wouldn't agree with a lot of what they are saying. But there's inequality in the workplace, there's sexual abuse.

Image

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The Bible Ms. Hopper has used for many years. She doesn't consider herself Republican or Democrat. Credit Audra Melton for The New York Times

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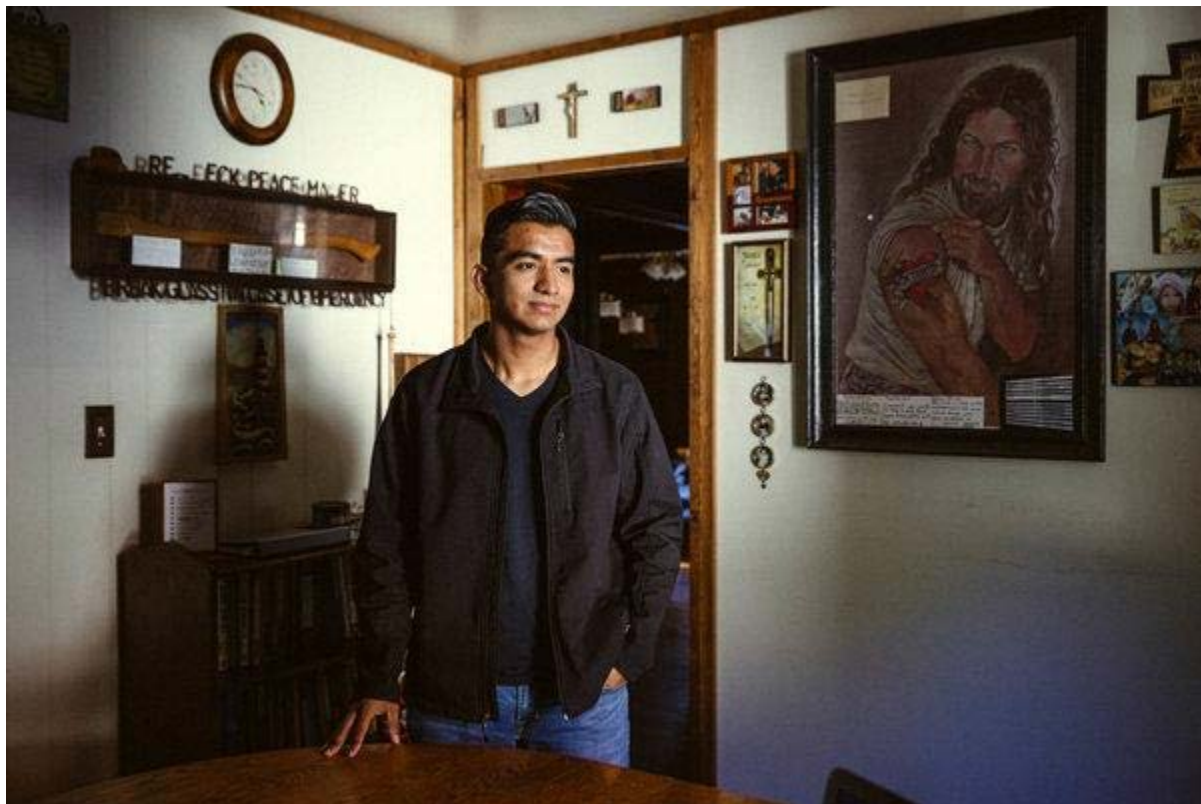
<https://rvcdems.com/category/talkingpoints/>

The mission statement of the coffee shop where Ms. Hopper works, which is part of an urban Christian ministry. Credit Audra Melton for The New York Times

This is the first time I'll vote down ballot. If Issue 1 gets passed, that is a huge victory, reducing drug use from a felony to a misdemeanor. I've canvassed for it.

I don't know if I feel betrayed. My eyes have been opened. Like if you have a best friend and you find out something crazy about them. I'm still working through the shock of that. There are a lot of people who are going to go to heaven who voted for Trump.

Image



Credit Audra Melton for The New York Times

Eduardo Sandoval Ruiz

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23, Republican, Louisville, Ky.

My family moved here from Mexico in 1999. My parents are pastors, and we have been Pentecostal-evangelical for a very long time.

Being socially conservative, yet immigrants, has been interesting at best and conflicting at worst. Most people in my parent's church are recent immigrants. We agree with most of what Donald Trump says about God and faith, but we do disagree with what he says about immigrants and any misconduct that he and others may try to justify in his personal life.

Being an evangelical Christian, I have to compromise. I am choosing to prioritize my core Christian beliefs over the immigration policies the G.O.P. is pushing right now. That is a point of tension.

I don't talk politics to anyone, not even my family. We talk about Christian values.

I know Trump has brought back prayer. Knowing that our leaders believe those same core beliefs as us is something that brings calm. We know they have our best interest in mind.

I can see their point of view that they don't want illegal immigration, being afraid of foreigners taking over, there being a sense of control at the border. But I grew up in a Latino family. We are here to make a better life for our families.

The left will probably win the next election, but I am always hopeful that God is doing big things in this country regardless if it directly involves politics or not.

Image

CreditNick Cote for The New York Times



Hannah Flaming

27, Republican, Paxton, Neb.

I've always been Republican, and yes! I am really happy with my vote for Trump.

His election was huge since half my family could not see why the other half voted for him, going so far as to say it changed their opinion of us. It's hard enough to be just a Christian, but as a Republican it's even harder.

No one cared about us until Trump. We have a farm, south of Paxton. It's a town of about 600 people. Popcorn is one of our more specialty crops. Wheat, soybeans. We were tired of having corn drop 40 cents a day. Finally somebody gets it. So our community is upbeat.

In the Kavanaugh hearing, I thought, this girl is lying. Then I talked with my sisters, who helped me see that I was looking at it through the lens of a Republican, not the lens of a Christian. She deserved just as much grace as Kavanaugh did.

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As a Christian, I drive around the town now and see the billboards that say, “Jesus is lighting the way.” But before, when you’d say you are a Christian, that would signal you are a critical, judgmental person. I feel a little bit more safe now, going into places and saying, “I’m a Christian.”

Image

A grain dryer displays the family motto on Ms. Flaming’s farm. Credit Nick Cote for The New York Times

Image

Ms. Flaming’s family grows popcorn on their farm in Paxton, Neb. Credit Nick Cote for The New York Times

What are the misconceptions about young evangelicals? That we are hypocritical, heretics, with pitch forks and ropes to lynch anyone opposed to our beliefs. No. We are not this bigoted, noose-tying faith.

I’m worried we will be silenced by others who shout very loudly.



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A grain dryer displays the family motto on Ms. Flaming’s farm.CreditNick Cote for The New York Times

Image



Ms. Flaming’s family grows popcorn on their farm in Paxton, Neb.CreditNick Cote for The New York TimesCreditCayce Clifford for The New York Times

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Curtis Yee

22, Democrat, Sacramento

Because I live in California and attend a Chinese church, my experience is different from what I see in the news.

When I see professing Christian leaders like Jerry Falwell Jr. or Franklin Graham speak about how great Trump is, it concerns me that the nuances I see in my small cultural enclave may not exist elsewhere in the country. Who are these people? Do they actually wield that much authority?

I am an only child from a Chinese-American family. Stereotypically, Chinese-Americans are not as outspoken about social/political issues — or uncomfortable subjects in general. There's a focus on respecting elders, authority. Pair that with

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Christianity, and people are not necessarily as inclined to engage in political activism.

I don't think I diverge theologically from my parents in major ways, but while my family is quicker to blame "the liberals," I'm able to see that they aren't evil, just people trying to do things in a different way. We diverge mostly on how to biblically address social issues: DACA, #MeToo, immigration.

It's been frustrating to see people in my church community not engage, particularly on those issues which the Bible seems to speak about directly, like racism and sexism.

For governor in California, my inclination is to like Gavin Newsom. I'm Democrat by default, simply by the way things have gone with the Republican Party over the past few years, but it is an uneasy alliance. As a Christian I feel ties with the Bible first.



CreditAudra Melton for The New York Times

Jayna Duckenfield

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24, No Political Affiliation, Atlanta

As a Christian it is absolutely a part of my duty to vote. I am registered to vote in Atlanta and I plan to vote for Stacey Abrams. It's the first time I'll vote Democrat. She is black and a woman. I am also both of those things. That's really important to me.

When I have white friends or colleagues, and they assume that I align fully with the Democratic Party, I try to be as tactful as possible. Wait, should I be fully Democratic? But as a Christian there will be things I don't fully agree with.

As I've gotten older I realized I couldn't be silent any more. Both the murder of Botham Jean in Dallas, Texas, and the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh have caused me to question the legitimacy of my voice and safety in American society. I was incensed — a black man was shot in his own home.



A sparrow tattoo on Ms. Duckenfield's wrist. Credit Audra Melton for The New York Times Image

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Stickers from past elections inside Ms. Duckenfield's car. Credit Audra Melton for The New York

Both of these stories directly and indirectly communicate something about black people and women. Our worth hangs in the balance. As a Christian, I understand and believe that I have inherent worth, but politically it's still a battle.

I grew up in a Christian home, nondenominational, and am still following Jesus today and attend church regularly. My parents tend to lean more on the conservative side of things whereas I have a more liberal bent.

Climate change is honestly one of the biggest issues my parents and I disagree on. I think they still believe it's all made up.

Produced by Tanner Curtis and Rebecca Lieberman.

Lara Takenaga, Isabella Grullón Paz and Margaret Kramer contributed reporting.

Reader Comments

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As of this posting, there have been approximately 1100 reader comments to this article. We reproduced below only those comments that have received at least 25 “likes” from other readers. In a number of instances people have replied to those comments, and we have included most of those replies.

John Ranta

New Hampshire [6h ago](#)

I wish the NYT would stop using the term "religious liberty" to describe the desire of conservative Christians to impose their faith on all of us, in our public spaces. Certainly you understand that conservative Christians do not mean religious liberty for all. They dread the thought of any other religion's beliefs being imposed on them. Hence their constant drum beat against "Sharia law", for example. What "religious liberty" really means, to conservative Christians is the establishment of a Christian American theocracy. Conservative Christian's "religious liberty" is an exclusionary, stifling agenda. Please, NYT, do not play into their hands. Instead of calling it "religious liberty", try the phrase "imposition of Christianity". That would be both more accurate, and less propagandist.

14 Replies

[muddyw commented 5 hours ago](#)

m

muddyw

upstate ny [5h ago](#)

Thank you. You expressed my thoughts far more eloquently than I could.

[sam ogilvie commented 5 hours ago](#)

s

sam ogilvie

wilkesboro, north carolina [5h ago](#)

@John Ranta Excellent point. As a Christian, this is abundantly clear to me, and thousands of others who share my worldview. We see the wisdom in the separation of church and state in matters of governance, and wish to maintain that arrangement. Taking a look at the many denominations within my faith, the acrimonious arguments over doctrine and theology, and the pharisaical and self-righteous immaturity of Christian leaders with the loudest voices and largest bully pulpits, I can't imagine what a fractured country we would have if theocrats prevailed. Today's divisions would definitely be mild in comparison.

[Glenn Thomas commented 5 hours ago](#)

G

Glenn Thomas

Edison, NJ [5h ago](#)

You have hit the nail on the head. It began with the fight that led to the Hobby Lobby decision. They are trying to rewrite the 2nd amendment and the meaning of Freedom of Religion. They do not understand or refuse to understand that this freedom applies only to the personal sphere, not the public sphere under which falls the marketplace and the workplace. They are free to practice their religion in their own lives, but they are not free to impose it on the rest of us. Until they understand this, they will rightfully be characterized as self-righteous bigots.

[jay commented 4 hours ago](#)

j

jay

charleston, sc [4h ago](#)

@John Ranta I thought exactly the same thing. "Advancing religious liberties" was what our forefathers did when they escaped Old World persecution and founded this country. Using bigoted interpretation of doctrine to create 2nd class citizens is the exact opposite of advancement of religious liberty.

[Bill Mount commented 4 hours ago](#)

B

Bill Mount

Boston [4h ago](#)

Thank you, John Ranta. The religious right is a greater threat to the true nature of our country than all the supposed socialists added together. They need to be stopped.

[Shane A commented 4 hours ago](#)

S

Shane A

25704 [3h ago](#)

@John Ranta Not all Christians feel this way. Many of us truly believe religious liberty to mean just that. Believe what you want. Let's talk about the differences in our faiths. Let's take something away from it. That said, I understand the optics. I understand the message being heralded by church leaders. And I can tell you many of us are not pleased at all. There is a growing movement of younger pastors and leaders moving away from this closeted bigotry and hypocrisy. That gives me some hope. In the Bible, Jesus warned of false prophets and we see that clearly today. And you're right, to say this country was founded on religious freedom is ignorant. Ask the Native Americans, Jews, or Catholics how free they were to worship. I can only hope that Trump has served as a wake up call to many Christians to recognize what has become of the theology of their faith. That many stand and fight for change. That large numbers will say that this is not what we are about and ostracize those peddling this garbage.

[Jim commented 3 hours ago](#)

J

Jim

NL [3h ago](#)

Amen! Practice whatever religion you want but keep it out of my life. The founders of our nation DID NOT envision a Christian nation. That is fallacy. Go back and reread your history books.

[Helene S commented 3 hours ago](#)

H

Helene S

Rochester NY [2h ago](#)

@John Ranta Thank you, Mr. Ranta. I am disheartened by these young peoples' repetition of the "persecuted Christians in America" mantra their leaders have drummed into them. Being jailed for your religious beliefs, having your church destroyed by the government, having your church turned into a museum -- as was done in the Soviet Union -- that's religious persecution. Having the Walmart clerk greet you with "Happy Holidays" is not religious persecution.

[Barbara Snider commented 3 hours ago](#)

B

Barbara Snider

Huntington Beach, CA [2h ago](#)

@John Ranta Well said. Giving churches - of any denomination - a tax exemption has been a very bad idea. It is a form of money changing, which is denounced in the Bible, in that if you go and give, you get a tax break. Evangelical churches make their mission the destruction of original and logical thought. They turn people into sheep. Reading the thoughts of these young people really gets how confused they are. I hope these young people learn to trust their logic, which they don't right now, instead of church dogmas.

[sherry commented 2 hours ago](#)

s

sherry

Virginia [2h ago](#)

@John Ranta Thank you. I think to begin eradicating this perception, we need to go back in history and admit the true story of the Puritans.

[observer commented 2 hours ago](#)

o

observer

Ca [2h ago](#)

@John Ranta Well stated. When the christian religious right speaks of religious liberties it is imposition of their beliefs on the rest of us. Many evangelicals believe theirs is the only true religion. They are hostile to the others, including immigrants. Some even justified slavery. The gop and some white evangelicals are twisted when they say we have more religious freedom today. Hate crimes directed at jews is up by 55 percent since trump and the gop

[tom commented 1 hour ago](#)

tom

midwest [1h ago](#)

@John Ranta exactly. You should see their persistent efforts out here in flyover country.

[left coast finch commented 1 hour ago](#)

l

left coast finch

L.A. [1h ago](#)

@Shane A “There is a growing movement of younger pastors and leaders moving away from this closeted bigotry and hypocrisy.” Please including

“moving away from politics” in your movement. You’re free to do religion in your home or church but definitely not in the political sphere.

[GG commented 1 hour ago](#)

G

GG

New Windsor [1h ago](#)

@John Ranta My thoughts exactly. One good thing about the support of President Trump among them is more than anything else it exposes their hypocrisy and how little they really care how a President lives so long as he passes their agenda. I found the comment that Trump brought prayer back and the statement that being a Christian in America is hard the most disappointing.

[Jan Major commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Jan Major

Amsterdam [7h ago](#)

It's perplexing that so many Evangelical parents referenced in this article support Trump and seem to feel he represents their beliefs. As far as I could find, he doesn't go to church, doesn't practice the evangelical form of religion or any other, rarely references religion and espouses un-Christian sentiments.

10 Replies

[Jim commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Jim

PA [6h ago](#)

@Jan Major - Whenever I find myself unfortunate enough to be discussing Trump with an evangelical supporter, I take great joy in feigning

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seriousness while asking “Wait... what denomination is he again? What church did he attend in New York? It’s slipping my mind.” I pretend like it’s a harmless question that I am seriously trying to answer. Hilarity ensues.

[Westcoast Texan commented 6 hours ago](#)

W

Westcoast Texan

Bogota Colombia [6h ago](#)

@Jan Major They vote for Trump because he says he is against legal abortion. He has no beliefs but knows he will get their vote if he claims he is religiously against legal abortion. American presidential politics are largely abortion politics and have been since abortion was legalized by the supreme court. That is the only issue that tens of millions of Americans care about.

[Alan Chaprack commented 5 hours ago](#)

A

Alan Chaprack

NYC [5h ago](#)

@Jan Major Trump "rarely references religion"? He's certainly familiar with...what was that again?....oh, yeah...Two Corinthians.

[Farfel commented 6 hours ago](#)

Farfel

Pluto [6h ago](#)

I can't even imagine the mind that generates this: "We agree with most of what Donald Trump says about God and faith."

7 Replies

[Concerned commented 5 hours ago](#)

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C

Concerned

Planet Earth [5h ago](#)

@Farfel Really! Donald Trump, God and faith in the same same sentence is silly.

[Paul-A commented 4 hours ago](#)

P

Paul-A

St. Lawrence, NY [4h ago](#)

@Farfel I personally can't understand it either. But then again, many straight people can't even "imagine the mind" of a gay person like me. So I'm not sure that being so curtly dismissive is the best way to try to build dialog and understanding.

[Darren commented 3 hours ago](#)

D

Darren

Michigan [3h ago](#)

@Farfel When has Trump EVER said anything sincerely about God and faith? His god is himself, and his words and actions show that he has never read or understood the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

[Charlie B commented 6 hours ago](#)

C

Charlie B

USA [6h ago](#)

I can understand Evangelicals being willing to overlook Trump's narcissism, his foul mouth, and his lies. But when they choose to overlook his hatred of

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the poor, and his diabolical policy of tearing immigrant families apart, I wonder how they can call themselves Christian. I hope these young people can find a way to pursue their love of Jesus by emulating his love of the poor and the stranger. There's no way to reconcile that with being a Republican.

5 Replies

[Therese B. commented 4 hours ago](#)

T

Therese B.

Larchmont, New York [4h ago](#)

Exactly! They seem to forget that Jesus was born as a homeless refugee and later was a feminist for his times by introducing respect and equality for women.

[Candlewick commented 3 hours ago](#)

C

Candlewick

Ubiquitous Drive [3h ago](#)

@Charlie B You state; "I can understand Evangelicals being willing to overlook Trump's narcissism, foul mouth and lies..." Seems, they are overlooking several of the Commandments they allegedly hold dear: Worshiping another God; having no other God (the god of Trump); lying and a perverted tongue; Ephesians 4:20 (Let no profane words come out of your mouth). No, these folks are not Christians- in word or deed. They are simply folks who are trying desperately to hide behind their own racist and bigoted thinking by using the name of God (sounds quite familiar).

[SWolp commented 3 hours ago](#)

S

SWolp

Highland Park, NJ [3h ago](#)

@Charlie B at least not in today's Republic party.

[Scooter commented 6 hours ago](#)

S

Scooter

WI [6h ago](#)

Why is it that churches are still allowed non-profit status, since they are busy providing political influence. They should be taxed to at least even the playing field of their involvement in politics.

1 Reply

[Slim Wilson commented 5 hours ago](#)

S

Slim Wilson

Nashville, TN [5h ago](#)

Because the Johnson Amendment prohibits non-profits (all non-profits, not only churches) from endorsing political candidates. But it does not prohibit non-profits from engaging in political speech. I understand that that can be a very fine line. I'm a pastor and preacher and I could, for instance, describe the qualities of a candidate whose policies I feel conform to biblical principals. But I could not say the name of a candidate who embodies them and encourage that person's election. Likewise I could condemn the actions of Donald Trump and say his name but I couldn't follow with "So vote for Bernie Sanders ." Ultimately the Johnson Amendment is a game we play. And the truth is that lots of churches and preachers violate it all the time but those violations are rarely if ever prosecuted. There are churches that have even invited the IRS to come after them. But resources at the IRS make going after 501c3 organizations a very low priority.

[Sunspot commented 7 hours ago](#)

S

Sunspot

Concord, MA [6h ago](#)

Times Pick

Very interesting and refreshing. As someone who teaches at a Jesuit college, I would welcome a similar investigation into young Roman Catholics. My students tend to cherish their Christian faith, yet are very concerned about social justice and about climate change. A few years ago, students organized a demonstration on campus in favor of marriage equality -- viewing it as a matter of Christian love. Most say that they are repelled by everything that Donald Trump says and does.

8 Replies

[Laura commented 5 hours ago](#)

L

Laura

Detroit [5h ago](#)

I was going to post essentially the same thing. I'm Roman Catholic and have raised three kids who still practice. I also teach community college. I have observed the exact things you are talking about. There are young Catholics who speak just like their very conservative parents, but my own kids and the students I teach are much more socially progressive and view pro-life in larger terms than just abortion. It's been surprising to me, as I live in a very Republican community that came out strongly for Trump.

[Bruce Stafford commented 4 hours ago](#)

B

Bruce Stafford

Sydney NSW [4h ago](#)

@Sunspot, What you wrote underlines the widening gap between what the Catholic Church still teaches, and what the bulk of Catholics actually believe. There's been lots of finger pointing at Evangelicals, but it's good to keep in mind that not a few conservative Catholic clerics implicitly supported Trump in 2016, merely because he said he was "pro-life". (Trump has said lots of things, hasn't he...).

[Jasmine Armstrong commented 4 hours ago](#)

J

Jasmine Armstrong

Merced, CA [4h ago](#)

@Sunspot good idea. Educated by the Jesuits at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, social justice, preference for the poor, mercy for those who are disabled or sick or immigrants is very dear to my heart, and guides the way I view this administration: with horror.

[Mick commented 6 hours ago](#)

M

Mick

New York [6h ago](#)

All these church going, God fearing people need glasses. They need to see they voted for a man married three times. A man with no moral compass. A man who's mouth needs a good cleaning. A man who treats people like animals. This is not a religion I want part of.

5 Replies

[Robert James commented 5 hours ago](#)

R

Robert James

Cambridge, MA [5h ago](#)

@Mick They didn't vote for a Christ-figure ... they voted for a Crusader.

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[Charlotte commented 4 hours ago](#)

C

Charlotte

Bristol, TN [4h ago](#)

@MickBut he is antiabortion, and that is all they care about.

[opinions for free commented 2 hours ago](#)

O

opinions for free

Michigan [2h ago](#)

@Mick I don't think lumping multiple marriages with trump's many sinful failings is quite appropriate. Many people I know have had a hard time maintaining a marriage due to no fault of their own. I am sure he was the reason his marriages failed... but the "married three times" comment paints too many other good people with the same brush.

[Peter commented 6 hours ago](#)

P

Peter

NY [6h ago](#)

All houses of worship need to pay taxes if their leaders are going to influence congregations on who and what to vote for.

3 Replies

[Shamrock commented 4 hours ago](#)

S

Shamrock

Westfield [4h ago](#)

@Peter No person of the Christian faith or any other person of faith in the US is exempt from taxation. If they were, I'm sure church membership would soar.

[Alex commented 3 hours ago](#)

Alex

Washington D.C. [2h ago](#)

@Shamrock 501c3 organizations are not taxed, as long as they do not endorse political candidates... which they do... ALL THE TIME... so they should be taxed

[indisk commented 2 hours ago](#)

i

indisk

fringe [2h ago](#)

@Shamrock Did you read his comment? He is talking about non-profit no-taxes status that churches hold.

[S North commented 7 hours ago](#)

S North

Europe [7h ago](#)

Wait, Trump brought back *prayer*? This statement just goes to show that people don't believe their own eyes, they believe their own prejudices. Great article.

4 Replies

[Jordan commented 5 hours ago](#)

J

Jordan

Chicago [5h ago](#)

@S North These people are too young to remember the prayer fights of the 90's and early 00's. The only president they paid any attention to was Obama and he was clearly a godless heathen who never prayed.

[chris Griffith commented 5 hours ago](#)

c

chris Griffith

OK [5h ago](#)

@S North Obama prays in public. Trump does not.

[Tullymd commented 4 hours ago](#)

Tullymd

Bloomington Vt [3h ago](#)

Trump got me to pray.... that he and the Republican Party and the evangelicals all disappear. They go against the teachings of Jesus and all he stood for. When Trump. et al separated 2000 children from their parents that was proof positive that the silence of evangelicals was anti Christian and a stain on for what Jesus preached.

[Daniel Ross commented 4 hours ago](#)

D

Daniel Ross

Jasper, Indiana [4h ago](#)

Times Pick

I am a 41-year-old executive minister at a 2,000-person multi-site Christian church ("evangelical") in rural southern Indiana. I am a little beyond the age

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of a "young evangelical" at this point, but I am still not in the demographic of the older generation who overwhelmingly backed Trump and the GOP in 2016 and beyond. I am old enough to have lived through and remember the Clinton years vividly. I remember evangelical rage in my small west Tenn. town and church during those years and hearing how much "character counts." The past three years or so have been extremely disheartening for me, personally, as I have witnessed, not just begrudging, but fervent support for a man who is 180 degrees from what I was raised to believe made a good leader. To see the people who raised me in the faith (which I still hold) so easily toss aside truth in the name of political power is maddening and full of sorrow. For the first time next week, I will cast my ballot for several Democrats as I simply cannot abide the disgusting turn the GOP has taken in its endorsement of Trump-ism. I agree completely with what Ms. Hopper said in the story, "There are a lot of old white men in the Republican Party that use Christianity as a weapon to get themselves elected, but I'm here to tell you that we do not fall for them." Thanks to the NYT for sharing these points of view and for helping people see there's more to evangelicals than Falwell, Franklin Graham, etc.

10 Replies

[Liz commented 4 hours ago](#)

L

Liz

Indianapolis [4h ago](#)

@Daniel Ross Especially heartened to hear this from a fellow Hoosier!

[shirls commented 3 hours ago](#)

s

shirls

Manhattan [3h ago](#)

@Daniel Ross Thank you for your honesty. You've given me hope that we can overcome this dark time and return to the 'light'.

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[Barbara Snider commented 3 hours ago](#)

B

Barbara Snider

Huntington Beach, CA [2h ago](#)

@Daniel Ross Good thinking. It is hard to see something or someone you really believe in differently. Just don't judge them too harshly.

[Patty O commented 5 hours ago](#)

P

Patty O

deltona [5h ago](#)

Times Pick

I can empathize with the writers who feel they are unable to have an open and honest relationship with their parents due to their political ideologies. My family were not evangelical, but devout catholic. I find that the younger generation in my family are mostly liberal, while the parents and grandparents are still staunchly religious and conservative. I'm not really sure if any one incident caused me to shed religion altogether. It happened gradually and started with the scandals within the Catholic Church. But political differences were probably the final straw. I have a cousin who is gay. She is a beautiful, loving, kind person. I don't understand how family members can say that they love her, yet still vote to deny her the right to marry the person she loves. I don't understand how a person can be pro-life, but be okay with taking babies away from their mothers at the border. I don't understand how you can strive to be Christ-like, yet treat immigrants and poor people as less than human. Or not want people to have access to doctors. Or not want children to have free lunches. I don't understand how you can live the values espoused in the bible, and vote for a man who lies, cheats, who never goes to church, who's never asked God for forgiveness. Donald Trump is the epitome of everything Jesus preached against. I'm honestly asking, how do you reconcile that?

9 Replies

[Andrew commented 4 hours ago](#)

A

Andrew

Hong Kong [4h ago](#)

I don't quite agree with you logic regarding marriage, which was instituted not simply for love, but is a firm commitment to support an environment for children. However, I fully agree with your other points. I encourage you to dig into the Bible and you will find that both Old and New Testaments have a firm commitment to helping the needy, the fatherless, the widows and the aliens among you (Deut 24:21 among others). Jesus condemns adulterers and those who bear false witness (Matthew 19:18). Those who put their trust in Trump are acting as enemies of God.

[KLC commented 3 hours ago](#)

K

KLC

Toronto [3h ago](#)

@Patty O I think that the fact that you don't understand it is the most reasonable, healthy response to the paradox of words and actions in so many religions. When I come across the inconsistencies of church dogma, I see this as humans leading humans - therefore faulty and worthy of critique. I wonder if God gets exasperated when humans use God to force their will, esp. when the actions which are the opposite of Love. I believe God is Love. I believe in the Golden Rule. As soon as a preacher goes against that, I assume they have lost the plot.

[Alex commented 2 hours ago](#)

Alex

Washington D.C. [2h ago](#)

@Andrew So if you and your wife can't have children, then you're not really married? If you plan not to have children in life, then you cannot marry? If you're gay, then you can't enrich children's lives by becoming a math teacher? or a soccer coach? Marriage is a social contract that transcends children; it should serve everyone in society, not just children.

[Dan commented 6 hours ago](#)

D

Dan

Canada [6h ago](#)

It has always amazed me that someone claiming to be a Christian can still spout hateful racist, homophobic views while at the same time being critical of morally decent non-Christians just because they do not share their religious beliefs.

3 Replies

[Clayton Marlow commented 4 hours ago](#)

C

Clayton Marlow

Exeter, NH [4h ago](#)

@Dan My two cents: If we can free ourselves from religion and simply rely on our critical thinking skills these skills become honed the more we use them - we get better at it. Once we get better at it we come to realize our strengths and limitations better. We get better sifting through what's fake and what's real in everything. simply not believing in god enhances what we are. If you're inherently good, which most of us are the world will not suffer for it. Things are still rich and wonderful or stale and pestilent depending on the world we have control of.

[Lisa commented 4 hours ago](#)

L

Lisa

Texas [3h ago](#)

@Dan I agree 100 percent. I'm not a religious scholar but when I ask myself what would Jesus do....it not anything I see DJT doing. I'm pretty sure Jesus didn't say it was ok to lie to get your way. I'm pretty sure Jesus wanted to help the poor and marginalized. I believe that love thy neighbor includes people with different color skin. I believe that life is sacred, all lives, not just the unborn. When Pat Roberts said we should go along with the murder of a journalist because the arms deal money was good.....My interpretation of thou shall not kill doesn't have a money loophole. Thou shall not kill unless there is enough money involved then it's ok...just doesn't seem like something Jesus was teaching.

[Jeanne hutton commented 4 hours ago](#)

J

Jeanne hutton

Tybee Island ,Georgia [3h ago](#)

Not just non-Christians! I was invited to attend a mega evangelical church for the baptism of a relative. The sermon was a lengthy dialogue on how to identify “ Counterfeit Christians”. The pastor targeted the followers of the Mormon and Jehovah Witness religions to name a few. The smug nodding and obvious approval of the congregation was appalling. I choose not to return for the remainder of the five Sunday “How to Identify a Counterfeit Christian” series.

[Socrates commented 7 hours ago](#)

Socrates

Downtown Verona. NJ [7h ago](#)

It's always refreshing to see signs of intelligent life and critical thinking. These folks should ask themselves: How would Jesus vote ? Given that Jesus was a Jewish, socialist-minded mensch dedicated to the common good, it's inconceivable that he would be siding with Randian vulture-

capitalists dedicated to greed, voter suppression, 0.1% welfare and Whited Sepulchers who enjoy ripping healthcare away from millions while aiding and abetting the abortion of the Earth's climate. The answer is obvious for those with a human conscience.

[K. Johnson commented 7 hours ago](#)

K. Johnson

Buffalo, NY [7h ago](#)

Times Pick

Thank you to the NY Times for bringing these voices to light. I loved reading about the complexity of their views, the nuance, and the struggles they are going through as they examine their faith and their political views. Everyone should read this article... maybe it will help others to see that we are all complex beings and that the issues are not as black-and-white (and we are not as divided) as those in power would have us believe.

[ProSkeptic commented 5 hours ago](#)

P

ProSkeptic

NYC [5h ago](#)

Times Pick

As a not-so-young, recently converted evangelical Christian, I want to thank the Times for running this story. The term "evangelical" has come to mean, at least in these pages, "bigoted, narrow minded and mean-spirited." Unfortunately, it's easy to reach that opinion when you look at the words and actions of many people who identify themselves as evangelical Christians. These young people speak from the heart, and even where I might disagree with them, I respect them. I can only hope that a new generation of leaders will arise to combat and replace the current crop of hucksters, power players and demagogues who call themselves "Christians." In the words of the New Testament, they are nothing more

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than Pharisees and idolators, who place the rewards and gratifications of this earth far above God's heavenly kingdom.

[SMK NC commented 9 hours ago](#)

S

SMK NC

Charlotte, NC [8h ago](#)

Despite some of the overt barbarity contained in the Bible, our society is rife with many who call themselves “Christians” and espouse a model directly in conflict with the notion of separation of church and state. So many are quick to cite, chapter and verse, Jesus’ teachings, yet they cherry pick those same citations to fit whatever argument they’re making. Ironically, they’re most judgmental about those that don’t share their beliefs but freely and willfully overlook the transgressions of this administration if it serves their political goals. Those who wear their religion on their sleeve are, to me, among the most dangerous and hypocritical actors in this nation’s current nightmare. I’m encouraged to hear that some within the evangelical community think that the words and actions of the most prominent “spokesmen” “reflects a loss of humanity, which conflicts with their spiritual call.” It’s a welcome move away from the religious sanctimony that, beginning in the 1980s, has increasingly wormed its way into the political realm despite the Constitution’s abjuration that religion should play no part in the governance of our nation. Perhaps this younger generation will return to the practice of the more compassionate of traditional Judeo-Christian teachings.

[organic farmer commented 7 hours ago](#)

O

organic farmer

NY [7h ago](#)

These young people need to know there are other deeply committed Christians who firmly believe that being a follower of Jesus means feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, protecting the vulnerable, healing the

sick, treating others as we wish to be treated, embodying the gifts of the spirit. Seeking peace, paying attention to what Jesus actually said about the rich, the political leaders, those that loudly proclaim their religion in public. These young people need to know about the Christian Left.

[JET III commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

JET III

Portland [6h ago](#)

Abortion is the single issue that most divides Americans. I stand on one side. These people stand on the other. I respect their views on abortion, but I cannot side with them. Should they get their way, they will deprive other human beings of the control of their bodies. Evangelicals see this is as a righteous cause. So did slave owners in the 1840s and 1850s. It's a fair analogy.

6 Replies

[Robert David South commented 5 hours ago](#)

R

Robert David South

Watertown NY [5h ago](#)

@JET III Being emphatically pro choice comes with a huge political cost for the Democrats. I hope those for whom this issue is paramount understand the sacrifices that are being made for them.

[JKM commented 4 hours ago](#)

J

JKM

Mississippi [4h ago](#)

@JET III Absolutely a fair analogy...the only question, who is the abolitionist and who is the slave owner?

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[Abby commented 3 hours ago](#)

A

Abby

Massachusetts [2h ago](#)

@Robert David South You might be able to compromise on the issue, but you're a man. Also, what I wish most about the abortion issue is that the pro-life side would recognize that Democrats want to advance practices that would greatly reduce the need for abortions, like birth control and sex ed. Nobody likes or wants abortions! But there is hard evidence that there are preventable measures. Yeah, I'm gonna say it: Look at Europe.

[Josh commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Josh

New York [7h ago](#)

I grew up in a partially evangelical household (my parents were peripatetic when it came to their Christianity). Politics always was roiling under the surface of the religious commitment. I became an atheist in the context of studying science and have only looked back to wonder at the way in which religious belief influences people's outlook. The thing I still don't understand is how a personal commitment to certain Christian values gets translated into a political argument about establishing laws to enshrine these positions. Take, for example, the issue of civil marriage. Why are so many evangelicals concerned with the way the state recognizes the family arrangements of others who are not in their church? What ever happened to being "in the world but not of the world"? Abortion rights is another dizzying issue for me. Evangelical Christians say that they view abortion as murder, but I have yet to see any pro-life group argue for public health programs to lower infant mortality and maternal death. Instead, the entire aim seems to be to criminalize and shame women. Couple that with these groups' inability to talk about anything but abstinence before marriage when it comes to sex education, and I just don't understand how this all comports. If you truly believed that every abortion was murder, wouldn't

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you try to support programs that are shown to reduce the abortion rate? Why is their main appeal to shutting down women's health clinics by any means necessary?

7 Replies

[Matthew commented 5 hours ago](#)

M

Matthew

Nottingham [5h ago](#)

@Josh If you start from the assumptions of the fire and brimstone versions of Christianity (of course, not all evangelicals do), trying to ban civil marriage makes sense. If you thought your neighbours would be damned to eternal hellfire if they didn't have a church wedding, *wouldn't* it be your duty to try to save them from themselves? The problem is the assumption, not the conclusion they draw from it. Where abortion is concerned, on the other hand, yes, there's an outright internal inconsistency in the logic.

[Naomi commented 4 hours ago](#)

N

Naomi

New England [4h ago](#)

@Josh That so many anti-American advocates seem to be completely indifferent to far more common causes of preventable fetal deaths always horrifies me too. If abortion is murder, then denying adequate care to pregnant women, resulting in fetal death or devastating injury -- that ought to be manslaughter or depraved indifference. Anyone who thinks abortion is murder ought to be out there fighting for action against environmental toxins and microbes, birth defects, and domestic violence (a woman's highest risk for murder is during pregnancy). They ought to be at the barricades fighting for the best contraception access, pre-pregnancy counseling, prenatal care, maternity coverage, nutritional and housing support, assistance for disabled children, and research on preventing fetal death, disease and prematurity. Where were they when lead poisoning in

Flint, Michigan was causing miscarriages and permanent fetal damage?
How can anyone oppose abortion, but ignore simple public health measures so that babies are born healthy, to healthy mothers, to be cared for in secure and loving homes?

[Naomi commented 4 hours ago](#)

N

Naomi

New England [4h ago](#)

@Josh That so many anti-abortion advocates seem to be completely indifferent to far more common causes of preventable fetal deaths always horrifies me too. If abortion is murder, then denying adequate care to pregnant women, resulting in fetal death or devastating injury -- that ought to be manslaughter or depraved indifference. Anyone who thinks abortion is murder ought to be out there fighting for action against environmental toxins and microbes, birth defects, and domestic violence (a woman's highest risk for murder is during pregnancy). They ought to be at the barricades fighting for the best contraception access, pre-pregnancy counseling, prenatal care, maternity coverage, nutritional and housing support, assistance for disabled children, and research on preventing fetal death, disease and prematurity. Where were they when lead poisoning in Flint, Michigan was causing miscarriages and permanent fetal damage? How can anyone oppose abortion, but ignore simple public health measures so that babies are born healthy, to healthy mothers, to be cared for in secure and loving homes?

[Dan commented 7 hours ago](#)

D

Dan

Stowe, VT [7h ago](#)

Times Pick

What struck me most in reading these young evangelicals stories is that 'information' was the key to their respective emergence from their bubbles.

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For all of the bad that social media is unleashing in our society, it was refreshing to hear that facts and values are what is moving these young people to speak out. It was shocking too hear that the young woman, Alexandria, had to sneak around to read books. It was hard not to think about the book I read when I was their age, Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451.

1 Reply

[LBS commented 3 hours ago](#)

L

LBS

Chicago[3h ago](#)

@Dan I doubt that these young people who rethought the positions that they had been taught in their families and/or evangelic churches got their information from social media. It is far more likely that they got it in school or from a library. Since they responded to a call from the NYTs, they might have gotten information here. Unfortunately, social media creates filter bubbles which prevent most people from exposure to ideas with which they disagree.

[Aging Engineer commented 5 hours ago](#)

A

Aging Engineer

Indianapolis[5h ago](#)

Times Pick

I saw myself in my 20s as I read these stories. Raised in a Southern Baptist family in Louisville, I went off to college in Boston in 1970 still believing much of what I learned in Sunday school and embracing the attitudes of my Kentucky peers. But I changed quickly in college when exposed to other ideas, new friends not raised in the Bible Belt, and of course the existential threat of Vietnam War draft. At age 66 I am an atheist, a Unitarian, a father and grandfather to brown-skinned kids, and a hard core liberal Democrat. I changed and the young people described in this article will change, too.

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The first step is finding the courage to leave the area where you were raised. You can return later as I did with your eyes opened and your heart filled with desire to change things.

2 Replies

[EdnaTN commented 4 hours ago](#)

E

EdnaTN

Tennessee [4h ago](#)

@Aging Engineer "The first step is finding the courage to leave the area where you were raised"agree wholeheartedly.

[Jay Dwight commented 2 hours ago](#)

J

Jay Dwight

Western MA [2h ago](#)

@Aging Engineer Salutations from a fellow Unitarian, and thanks for speaking out.

[inquiring minds commented 3 hours ago](#)

i

inquiring minds

Durham, NC [2h ago](#)

Times Pick

I am not religious nor is anyone in my family. I work in a clinic that serves mostly immigrants, and many of those undocumented. I have been surprised to find just how many of my young co-workers are devoutly Christian, and many of them of the evangelical persuasion. It has helped a lot of my own biases seeing them in action, observing how different they are from the rhetoric of their leaders, whose views they say don't represent

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them. Rather than shun the poor or immigrants as being takers and criminals, they are some of their fiercest advocates. They spend their days serving the poor and the marginalized, unconditionally and without judging their stories. You know, like Jesus would do. As for the young woman in Nebraska who happily supports Trump, I would say "Jesus is lighting the way," sure rings hollow when her fearless leader displays open hostility towards half of our country, and his words and policies are separating small children from their parents, closing the door to refugees seeking asylum, endorsing torture of our enemies and violence towards the press, banning the presence of incredible human beings in our country merely because they are Muslim, and denying equal rights to our fellow Americans because of their gender or sexual orientation. I recall a very enlightened Christian reminding us that "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." I urge her to ponder that.

1 Reply

[Elizabeth Dias commented 15 minutes ago](#)

E

Elizabeth Dias

Political Correspondent [10m ago](#)

@inquiring minds Immigration and refugees are definitely a dividing point in the evangelical community, and often because many evangelicals prioritize the type of work you describe: "Rather than shun the poor or immigrants as being takers and criminals, they are some of their fiercest advocates."

[Marie commented 6 hours ago](#)

M

Marie

Boston [6h ago](#)

The conflation of religion and politics where, as one said, "a lot of old white men in the Republican Party that use Christianity as a weapon to get themselves elected" and then as bludgeon to hurt others is a scourge on the world. These people aren't using their faith to deliver heaven on earth

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but as means of controlling others and forcing them to live as they wish them to. RE: "Other members used it to openly stump for Trump and say hateful things about Muslims and L.G.B.T. citizens." That is not a church, it's a political action committee masquerading as religion hiding behind the facade of a church. Alexandria's communion message is one that I understand as a Christian. RE: "I am a devout believer of Jesus, but I voted for Hillary Clinton". But for Clinton? Because Donald Trump hews closer to Christ's life and teachings? The thing is too many of those who claim to be Christians, of any sort, are all too willing to accept superficial aspects of their religion but give up any claim to the true meanings of Christ and Christianity of love, forgiveness, acceptance, caring, compassion, sacrifice, and belief. There was seldom on this earth a more liberal person than Jesus Christ. Liberal does not mean a lack of belief or invalidation of law or commandment. Liberal means love and faith and the sanctity and value of the each person. It is the distrust and lack of faith in others that causes conservatives to feel the need to control people.

2 Replies

[Robert David South commented 4 hours ago](#)

R

Robert David South

Watertown NY [4h ago](#)

@Marie It's always been used that way. The lands of America were originally taken in the name of Christ. The master of slave ships prided themselves on being Christians. When peasants rose up in medieval Europe, or just weren't quite obsequious enough, they were put down and slaughtered under religious justification.

[DC commented 2 hours ago](#)

D

DC

Oregon [2h ago](#)

@Marie I have never been able to see Jesus as a conservative. Jesus is a liberal to me.

[Sarah Andre commented 4 hours ago](#)

S

Sarah Andre

Austin Texas [4h ago](#)

Times Pick

This was an absolutely wonderful article. I am one of those people who holds a deeply negative opinion of evangelicals. I am thankful to see that many young evangelical Christians are thinking critically about the issues America faces today and am grateful to have my views challenged. Peace on earth requires that all people must endeavor to understand one another. The voices shared today humbled me and opened my mind.

[NeoAce commented 7 hours ago](#)

N

NeoAce

Detroit [6h ago](#)

If you're Evangelical Republican, and I asked you: "Who would Jesus would pick as a disciple, Donald Trump or Bernie Sanders?", would you be able to answer that with a straight face? The right increasingly depends on single issue voters, those who are willing to give away their health coverage and get in debt to give the rich a tax break, to elect someone against abortion, or immigration, or gun control, or LGBT rights, or even for the basic social compact that keeps millions out of poverty. The evangelicals are a prime example of this: they are willing to ignore the mysoginy, vulgarity, and pro-rich guy agenda for anti-abortion and anti-gay legislation.

3 Replies

[Snip commented 4 hours ago](#)

S

Snip

Canada [3h ago](#)

@NeoAce Jesus would pick Trump too but He'd be saying, "Repeat after me, Donald, 'It is harder for a rich man to enter heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.'"

[Rick commented 4 hours ago](#)

R

Rick

chapel Hill [3h ago](#)

@NeoAce I would rephrase the question. Among Trump or Sanders which one would choose to follow Jesus. Trump would fit well in Herod's enteroge.

[Eric commented 4 hours ago](#)

E

Eric

out there [3h ago](#)

@NeoAce Jesus hung out with tax collectors, immoral people, etc. He wasn't picky. Judas sold him out. Peter denied knowing him after he was arrested. Jesus didn't just pick the upright citizens in good standing. He might well have spent time with Trump over Bernie Sanders. (Although, to be fair, he really wasn't very political.)

[Jim commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Jim

PA [6h ago](#)

@Jan Major - Whenever I find myself unfortunate enough to be discussing Trump with an evangelical supporter, I take great joy in feigning seriousness while asking “Wait... what denomination is he again? What church did he attend in New York? It’s slipping my mind.” I pretend like it’s a harmless question that I am seriously trying to answer. Hilarity ensues.

[Frank Drobot commented 6 hours ago](#)

F

Frank Drobot

CA[6h ago](#)

When the tax exempt status of the religious industrial complex is hopefully and eventually removed there won’t be a need for articles such as this.

2 Replies

[Jim commented 5 hours ago](#)

J

Jim

NL[5h ago](#)

Amen!

[slimbobwe commented 3 hours ago](#)

s

slimbobwe

MD[3h ago](#)

@Frank Drobot Which unfortunately will never happen.

[Eva Zahraa commented 3 hours ago](#)

E

Eva Zahraa

Indiana [3h ago](#)

Times Pick

I grew up as the child of American evangelical missionaries in a poor Muslim country. My parents quickly learned that to make any kind of impact on people there (whether through the gospel message or the NGOs and businesses they started), they had to stop getting hung up on their politics, their ideologies, their notions of political correctness, their cultural pet peeves, their fine points of doctrine, and see through to the real issues. For our family, that meant wearing the hijab and conservative clothing, because respecting the culture around us was more important than our freedom to dress how we wanted. It meant not freaking out when we talked to people who denied the Holocaust, because arguing about it was a distraction from addressing the underlying needs for reconciliation and justice. It meant using the Muslim words for Jesus and other Biblical characters, because the actual stories and messages of Jesus were far more important than religious affiliation. I was shocked and confused when I went to a Christian college in the Midwest 2 years ago and found fellow Christians getting hung up on political issues and totally missing the pain and anger of the marginalized around them. I think true Christianity offers profound answers for responding to injustice. But it is so easy to get distracted and start mixing up your agenda with the powerful core ideas of sacrifice, forgiveness, and change.

1 Reply

[mary bardmess commented 1 hour ago](#)

m

mary bardmess

camas wa [1h ago](#)

@Eva Zahraa One of the things that creeps me out about the evangelical desire to convert is their willingness to go under cover to accomplish their aim. Leave people alone, for christ's sake. You are not the boss of us.

[Rob commented 2 hours ago](#)

R

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Rob

Nashville, TN [2h ago](#)

Times Pick

As someone who grew up Southern Baptist but has since left "Evangelical" Christianity, I am glad to see this article taking a thoughtful look at the generational differences in exercising the faith. My mother is the prototypical Trump voter, and we have fought bitterly since his election. She cried and said she will pray for me when I told her I was opposed to Cavanaugh. She questioned why I supported the rights of minorities because, as a white male, those people are "coming for [me]." A decades-long diet of Pat Robertson, Jerry Fallwell, Rush Limbaugh and Fox News has brainwashed their followers that the gays are coming for your kids, the Muslims are coming to blow you up, blacks are coming to kill your cops, and brown people are either taking your jobs or welfare queens--they can't decide. Men are the head of the household and the church and are not to be questioned--those women were asking for it by the way they dress and acted. Liberals are trying to make Christianity illegal. It sounds incredulous in print, but this is what she and many of her generation truly believe. I don't know that there is potential of changing their minds, but I feel a huge sense of relief knowing that I am not the only young person struggling with how "the church" has moved from a spirit of hope to a spirit of fear. I think back to those trendy WWJD bracelets and am encouraged that many young people are asking what He really would do, even if their parents don't approve.

2 Replies

[Edgar commented 1 hour ago](#)

E

Edgar

NM [1h ago](#)

@Rob. My 80 year old Catholic cousin is terrified that the invasion is coming to persecute him. Factoring in Mexico, he lives approximately 1700 miles from the women and children invading him. I just don't get it.

[Elizabeth Dias commented 17 minutes ago](#)

E

Elizabeth Dias

Political Correspondent [13m ago](#)

@Rob You definitely are not the only young person with this experience. As someone who reports on these topics, I often hear from folks like your mom. It is one of the reasons I wanted to hear from young people. Thank you for sharing.

[noley commented 5 hours ago](#)

n

noley

NH [5h ago](#)

Times Pick

This snapshot is encouraging. I wish, or maybe hope, it were more representative of how many born-again evangelicals think. But alas, it probably is not. Sigh. Evangelical Christians are typically taught to act as Christ would: be kind, loving, caring, tolerant, unselfish, accepting, etc. Yet, these basic premises of Christianity seem to be lost on the majority of those who identify as born-again Christians, many of whom support Mr. Trump, a man who cares about nothing but himself and his own gain. I was brought up in a very conservative evangelical family, and have since rejected all of the theology but still manage to work at being kind, loving, caring, tolerant, unselfish, and accepting, so this story provides some hope. I have too narrowly thought of evangelicals as a monolithic block of gullible people who refuse to think. At least maybe a few are awake and have their eyes open.

2 Replies

[JG commented 4 hours ago](#)

J

JG

Denver [4h ago](#)

@noley Whether you believe in Jesus or in any other God is totally irrelevant to one's behavior. Moral principles are not the exclusive domain of religious people. I have to say that the kindest, nicest and most ethical people I have ever met were agnostic, atheists and independent thinkers. Without moral principles as the foundation of our humanity we would have killed each other long time ago. Most people confuse organized religion with ethics. I don't have to believe in any God to live a principled life. I don't like any religion because it demands that I surrender my freedom to choose which renders me an obedient servant to that questionable authority.

[Elizabeth Dias commented 55 minutes ago](#)

E

Elizabeth Dias

Political Correspondent [51m ago](#)

@noley Appreciate this perspective. I think a lot of people share the view that evangelicals are this monolithic, unthinking bloc, as you put it. It is a reason I find reporting on religion and politics so fascinating--voices like these reveal the complicated layers that define people's lives.

[Holly T commented 7 hours ago](#)

H

Holly T

NYC [7h ago](#)

As a former Evangelical, this article spoke to me a lot, especially the quote about how each side thinks you are brainwashed by the other. I guess the moment of letting go came for me when I realized that this Evangelical idea was a lie: it's impossible for a person to show true love without a relationship with the Christian God (which is only to be found in the Evangelical church). I moved out of the South and encountered people of other religions or no religion who were dedicated to loving their families and

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communities in a wholehearted and sacrificial way. I remember in particular one Jewish lesbian Democrat (the antithesis of Southern Evangelical womanhood) colleague of mine who was an exceptionally devoted and loving person. The talk of the Evangelical bubble is real. It's a sort of mass delusion of exclusivity and it's natural corollary persecution. I still have faith in God but it's very different these days.

[Hannah commented 3 hours ago](#)

H

Hannah

Missouri [3h ago](#)

Times Pick

Oof. This was a good but hard read. I am 29 and grew up in an evangelical church, although I don't identify as evangelical anymore. I walked away initially because I couldn't reconcile myself to my old church's views on the LGBTQ+ community which was further complicated by my parent's work in conversion ministry. I am now also realizing, it was a toxic environment that lead to trauma in my own life that I am now exploring in therapy. This trauma has been echoed by many people in my life including my husband and close friends who grew up in the same church and have since left. This article reminded me that, while I tend to think my story is universal, there is complexity in growing up in the church and living as an adult afterwards. I do think, though, that being frank about how young people were treated growing up in the evangelical church is necessary. This was hinted at by Alexandria, "But I love the community that raised me. A lot of evangelical parents are judged by the successful transmission of values to their children. I haven't wanted to shame them." I hate that there is a lot of black and white thinking in these types of churches. Either you support Republicans or you don't. Either you believe gay marriage is a sin or you're a sinner too. A community is supposed to be a place where you question together. You grow together. That's why I walked away. Because it wasn't a community anymore. It was an echo chamber, and my questions were shameful.

2 Replies

[Brent L. commented 1 hour ago](#)

B

Brent L.

Ann Arbor, MI [1h ago](#)

@Hannah Thanks for your comments. Black and white thinking is a problem wherever it happens. An example for myself is that I am somewhat reluctantly pro-choice, and don't like when people say, "A woman has the right to do what she wants with her own body." It is too easily refuted by saying that a fetus is not her own body. I'd rather hear people say that it is an option for people in a difficult situation and has a difficult moral conundrum underlying it, rather than putting forward a slogan and refusing questions.

[Elizabeth Dias commented 1 hour ago](#)

E

Elizabeth Dias

Political Correspondent [1h ago](#)

@Hannah Thank you so much for sharing your story, and your insight that "A community is supposed to be a place where you question together." Are there new places and communities you are finding where you can question together, now that you have left the evangelical church?

[Paul Overby commented 7 hours ago](#)

P

Paul Overby

Wolford, ND [7h ago](#)

Times Pick

It is great to read these young people articulate their thoughts. They are asking questions, particularly about how to reconcile their religious beliefs

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with some seemingly contradictory positions of political parties. There are lessons there for both parties to consider! Hopefully they will see being a follower of Christ as something that informs and shapes their political and other decisions in life, and not let politics inform their Christianity. That would be good for both churches and politics. And for them.

[Jean E Cass commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Jean E Cass

Orland, ME [7h ago](#)

Times Pick

This article has given me great hope for the future of this country. These young people grasp the difference between the religiosity of politically-oriented Christianity and the actual practice of the teachings of the Christian faith. Since the 1980's, the increased encroachment of political interests on our Constitution's stipulation of separation of church and state has endangered all of us. Evidence that younger adult minds are battling to bring reason to the socio-political chaos my generation has created leads me to believe that history may show theirs to be the generation that restores kindness and compassion which are integral to our survival as a nation.

[J Jencks commented 8 hours ago](#)

J

J Jencks

Portland [8h ago](#)

Great article! I hope to see more like this in the future. It works because of the extensive quotes, letting them express themselves in their own words, instead of having them paraphrased (and interpreted) by the journalist. I've been thinking that most of the rise of the GOP in the Midwest and South since Reagan has to do with the way it has embedded itself into the local culture. It's become an integral part of people's identity. The DEMs need to challenge this directly, by participating OPENLY, as Democrats, in the daily

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life of those same social circles. This will undermine the GOP's pretense of being the only political affiliation appropriate to those communities. This needs to happen in churches, in local level politics like town councils and school boards, in talk radio, and in economic activities, such as greater involvement in chambers of commerce. Democrats promote values that are meaningful and aligned with many of the beliefs and values of these people. But the GOP has succeeded at pushing them out of the picture, and then vilifying them with straw man portrayals. As a non-religious person I am happy to see that the irrationality and superstition of religion is weakening among the youth and that fewer and fewer build their lives around it. But I respect their right to form their own views however they wish. In the end, they live mostly moral lives, just like non-believers like myself. And the DEMs are far more capable of supporting that morality.

12 Replies

[TRKapner commented 7 hours ago](#)

T

TRKapner

Virginia [7h ago](#)

@J Jencks Personally, I did not see their religious fervor (what you refer to as irrationality and superstition) weakening, it appeared to be quite strong in these examples. In fact, it is because their faith is strong that they're pushing back against the policies of the GOP that have been espoused by their churches. They are seeing a gap between their faith and the politics of their community that they are finding it harder to reconcile.

[DebraM commented 4 hours ago](#)

D

DebraM

New Jersey [4h ago](#)

@Shamrock I just wanted to point out that they DO view people who lack faith with derision. They think they are controlled by the devil, are going to

hell, and their policies are because of the devil. You need to talk to some people in conservative evangelical churches.

[J Jencks commented 4 hours ago](#)

J

J Jencks

Portland [4h ago](#)

@TRKapner - I mention the weakening of religious observance by the younger generation in general terms, not specific to the people mentioned in the article. In fact they are the exception. I was referring to a simple statistical fact that across the nation as a whole church attendance and close affiliation with religious groups is dropping among the young. As it looks to me, it is not their faith that causes these people in the article to push back against GOP policies. It is the very rational workings of their minds that recognizes the hypocrisy between the GOP's professions of faith, their pseudo-morality and their legislative actions. These young are demonstrating strong analytical abilities. I welcome it.

[cherrylog754 commented 7 hours ago](#)

c

cherrylog754

Atlanta, GA [7h ago](#)

"I supported whatever my church told me about candidates and issues." - Alexandria Beightol That's rather interesting insight. The church through its pulpit is advising its congregants about who they might vote for. What happened to the separation of church and state? I'm sure the young folks mentioned here are good citizens and well meaning. My only suggestion to them as an old timer is, when you go to church, pray for all mankind, particularly the poor and disenfranchised. And when you enter the voting booth let your values decide who is that candidate that best replicates those values, not some church doctrine. All excellent citizens represented in this article. Oh, don't forget to vote.

5 Replies

[Shamrock commented 6 hours ago](#)

S

Shamrock

Westfield [6h ago](#)

@cherrylog754 Can you imagine an article that asks a young person, tell me about your how your voting is affected by your Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, or Buddhist faith? The question would be considered ridiculous.

[Celeste commented 5 hours ago](#)

C

Celeste

Baltimore [5h ago](#)

@Shamrock No, it wouldn't. I would love to see such an article. Let's hear from Jewish Trump supporters. What, besides "Yay, Bibi!" are they thinking?

[shererje commented 4 hours ago](#)

s

shererje

MD [4h ago](#)

@Shamrock I don't understand why you keep harping on this idea. Any thinking person would be interested in what motivates people of any faith. What makes you so sure things are otherwise? Sounds like the beam in your own eye is getting in the way of clear vision.

[Westcoast Texan commented 6 hours ago](#)

W

Westcoast Texan

Bogota Colombia [6h ago](#)

@Jan Major They vote for Trump because he says he is against legal abortion. He has no beliefs but knows he will get their vote if he claims he is religiously against legal abortion. American presidential politics are largely abortion politics and have been since abortion was legalized by the supreme court. That is the only issue that tens of millions of Americans care about.

[Jay-Woo commented 56 minutes ago](#)

J

Jay-Woo

New York [47m ago](#)

Times Pick

I've read this thoughtful article and want to say this: I'm sorry. I am 61 and have been thoroughly steeped in the evangelical subculture--son of an evangelical minister, went to an evangelical college, worked at an evangelical camp in summer, ordained an elder in various churches we've attended, sent some of my kids to an evangelical high school and a couple went on to a prominent evangelical college. I know whereof I speak. I am here to tell you that evangelicalism is an ideology, not a systematic theology, much less a religion. Even though many who call themselves evangelical (I eschew the appellation) share similar metaphysical presuppositions, the thing that binds them together is decidedly not Christian love, much less the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but a Fox News-inspired version of the world that demands adherence to a rigid set of political and cultural positions and hates (yes, hates) those who oppose them (or who do not adhere them as fervently as they do). I regret my part in propagating a divisive ideology, so callous and unthinking that it virtually mocks the poignant, gentle and utterly self-sacrificing words and works of Jesus. 'Come unto me ALL ye who are weary and heavy laden...' I am sorry. I especially regret subjecting my children to so much that was patently non- or anti-Christian. Thankfully, they are all thoughtful millennials now (not unlike some in this article) and can figure out for themselves what it means to live as a follower of Christ.

1 Reply

[Elizabeth Dias commented 44 minutes ago](#)

E

Elizabeth Dias

Political Correspondent [41m ago](#)

@Jay-Woo Thank you for sharing this. I'm wondering, is this something you and other evangelical parents talk about now? What have you learned from your kids on this?

[Syliva commented 1 hour ago](#)

S

Syliva

Pacific Northwest [1h ago](#)

Times Pick

It truly puzzles me that many Christians feel they are being persecuted. It's true that there are many more nonbelievers surrounding them than in the past. I suspect some Evangelicals feel increasing unease being surrounded by a secular culture that supports notions like same-sex marriage. But to conflate the feeling of unease with actual persecution shows a stunning naivete. When was the last time in America that someone entered a church, shot 11 people, and yelled "All Christians must die!". I can't remember it. Even Dylann Roof entered the church to shoot Black people, not Christians. And as a nontheist myself, and someone who barely participates in the popular culture of TV, professional sports fandom, and processed foods, I often feel surrounded by a culture other than my own. I don't always like it. But that's not persecution.

[JB commented 6 hours ago](#)

JB

NC [6h ago](#)

I urge the NY Times to post the following notice on the wall of every one of its offices: "The plural of 'anecdote' is not data." Some of these profiles are thoughtful and interesting. But are they representative in any meaningful way of the opinions of a significant number of young people identifying as "evangelical"? There is absolutely no way to determine that. All that this article offers is a collection of anecdotes.

9 Replies

[moi commented 5 hours ago](#)

m

moi

tx[5h ago](#)

@JB You are correct. The evangelical youth I know (Texas) are just as bigoted, narrow-minded, and terrible as their parents- with the added bonus of playing fast and loose with the truth.

[nora m commented 5 hours ago](#)

n

nora m

New England[5h ago](#)

@JB Aw, just consider it qualitative research and you will feel better. Remember, you can never generalize from qualitative, but it does speak to the lived experience of those whose ideas are expressed. That's the goal, not showing cause, not being generalizable are okay as long as you understand the basic limiting factors.

[Eric commented 5 hours ago](#)

E

Eric

out there[5h ago](#)

I think that was the intention. It's too small of a sample to really draw definitive conclusions, but there is enough to share some of the stories. They draw conclusions right after "Here's what we learned." It's only in reference to these responses, which could be a little more clear.

[SDemocrat commented 5 hours ago](#)

S

SDemocrat

South Carolina [5h ago](#)

Times Pick

I am not young anymore, I am approaching 40. But most of my adult life has been changing denominations and searching for churches that do not demonize Democrats and put the President of a pedestal. It's also been increasingly hard to discuss political issues, not just party, but like lowering prescription drug price or teacher's salaries due to their indoctrination by FOX and church. My parents, both moved from Democrat to Republican and even further to far right people by retiring and watching conservative cable news shows almost 24/7. I'm still center left/center and feel alienated from the political chasm that has opened up between us.

1 Reply

[mary bardmess commented 1 hour ago](#)

m

mary bardmess

camas wa [1h ago](#)

@SDemocrat You are still young. Very young. I'm sorry about your parents though. Condolences. FOX has changed a lot of people.

[OldBoatMan commented 5 hours ago](#)

O

OldBoatMan

Rochester, MN [5h ago](#)

Times Pick

These splendid young people represent the future of America. They have grown up in Evangelical homes and they are comparing the orthodoxy of their churches and the reality of the Republican agenda with their own Christian values. They are thinking for themselves and drawing their own conclusions. Their genie has escaped and will never return to confinement. They will live in interesting times and the America I love will need their values and critical thinking.

2 Replies

[Glenn Thomas commented 4 hours ago](#)

G

Glenn Thomas

Edison, NJ [4h ago](#)

These young evangelicals may be providing a better direction for their faith, but their self-righteousness remains abhorrent to the rest of us.

[American in London commented 1 hour ago](#)

A

American in London

London, UK [57m ago](#)

@OldBoatMan I really don't hope these young people represent the future of America. We need more secularism, based in science and reality.

[J.M. commented 3 hours ago](#)

J.M.

Chicago [3h ago](#)

Times Pick

Thank you for this article. I'm a 2017 Liberty alum, and while I don't think that I would consider myself as evangelical, I can identify with much of this article. A lot is changing within the evangelical world - much of it under the surface. My generation has little tolerance for hypocrisy, hatred, or blind political allegiance - and we're pushing back. Just this week at LU, students protested over a racist Halloween costume that two of their peers wore. The administration tried to ignore it, but members of the student body wouldn't let them. During the presidential primaries, Jerry Falwell Jr endorsed Trump enthusiastically - but he came in dead last in Liberty's on campus voting precinct. Liberty's own student newspaper tried publishing criticism of Trump (and was censored by the university administration in response). Quite honestly, we will only be completely successful when the old guard dies completely. The "leaders" that claim to speak for all evangelicals are resistant to cultural change - and they directly or indirectly threaten or work to shut down any young evangelical that challenges the status quo. However this won't last forever - eventually younger, progressive evangelicals will be the majority, and will be able to reclaim and redefine what evangelicalism actually stands for. I just hope that there will be enough of us left to pick up the torch.

1 Reply

[Tim Kane commented 3 hours ago](#)

Tim Kane

Mesa, Az [3h ago](#)

@J.M. - The leaders of the evangelical movement that are pro Trump are that way because they accept money and power from the Republican hierarchy. That is, very rich right wing families. In exchange for these endowments they are expected to yank their flocks to the right. What the very rich right wing families want is the ever greater concentration of wealth and power on behalf of the wealthy and powerful. To do that, even in a quasi democracy like our own, they need mass of voters to vote against their own interests in favor of the rich. Essentially, they pay Falwell and Graham to do this. Up to now they have delivered. They helped elect

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Trump. The very rich right wing have embraced Trump because he delivered the dream-tax cuts for the rich. They probably don't like some of the other stuff Trump does, like Tariffs, but a lot of that, like the column of refugees from Central America is all window dressing for the masses. Up to now, Trump has delivered votes and tax cuts, so he's embraced. When he starts losing votes they might turn on him. Then again, they are going to need another Trump to show up for the next election for every election from now until the rest of lives end, so maybe they won't turn on him.

[Peter commented 3 hours ago](#)

P

Peter

Copenhagen, Denmark [3h ago](#)

When a white supremacist shot and killed nine people in a church in Charleston Barack Obama prayed and wept with the nation. Then he sang Amazing Grace. When a white supremacist shot and killed eleven people in a Pittsburgh synagogue Donald Trump blamed the media. I cannot for the life of me understand why GOP voters believe that Trump is a christian. Everything he says and does indicates the opposite.

5 Replies

[Shamrock commented 2 hours ago](#)

S

Shamrock

Westfield [2h ago](#)

@Peter One huge difference. Nobody blamed Obama for the murders in SC. The entire liberal media blamed Trump for the murders in PA.

[E.B. commented 1 hour ago](#)

E

E.B.

Brooklyn [1h ago](#)

@Shamrock And with good reason.

[Sudhindra commented 1 hour ago](#)

S

Sudhindra

New Jersey [1h ago](#)

@Peter a) Who better than them to know the true face of Christianity? - they see themselves in Trump. b) Who else would allow them to murder women in the name of life? c) Who else would let them preach their hatred of the other?

[Suzanne O'Neill commented 7 hours ago](#)

Suzanne O'Neill

Colorado [7h ago](#)

Times Pick

Excellent article that left me with a better understanding of the values of these individuals. As a country that has a long history of being majority Christian, it is interesting to see how many feel not welcome in expressing their Christian beliefs. Especially juxtaposed with the massacre in Pittsburgh and the reality that Muslims face as they try to express their values. It is a challenge to find a balance between living one's values and allowing others to live their values.

1 Reply

[Thinking commented 3 hours ago](#)

T

Thinking

Ny [3h ago](#)

@Suzanne O'Neill I like your post and I disagree with your wording of the last sentence, not with your meaning. My disagreement is based on the plain fact that I personally don't have the power to ALLOW people to live their values. Granted, there are people who have that power to exert over others. Mostly we don't. Based on that basic truth in my own teeny, tiny, full life I can focus on myself, finding out within myself how I feel and honestly and compassionately addressing my feelings. It is very challenging to feel comfortable within myself given the differences in human behavior, beliefs and values. For every single value I have there are people, millions of people, who have a different or opposite value. For example: It is not my job to change your values to make me feel comfortable. Millions of people disagree with that. How to live my values fully, and accept that others are going to live their values fully, whether I like their values or not? How to understand that it is a given in life that there is variety, in fact that is nature's way (!)? How to accept that when challenged I become afraid and have reactions that are not helpful to myself? It's an ongoing process. It is challenging. Like you said.

[Glenn Thomas commented 5 hours ago](#)

G

Glenn Thomas

Edison, NJ [5h ago](#)

You have hit the nail on the head. It began with the fight that led to the Hobby Lobby decision. They are trying to rewrite the 2nd amendment and the meaning of Freedom of Religion. They do not understand or refuse to understand that this freedom applies only to the personal sphere, not the public sphere under which falls the marketplace and the workplace. They are free to practice their religion in their own lives, but they are not free to impose it on the rest of us. Until they understand this, they will rightfully be characterized as self-righteous bigots.

[Eileen Fleming commented 6 hours ago](#)

E

Eileen Fleming

Clermont, FL [6h ago](#)

“The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.”-Martin Luther King, Jr. The term Christian was not coined until three decades after Jesus walked the earth. Until the day of Paul the followers of Jesus were called members of The Way: the way being what he taught! Churches in the USA have become big businesses that maintain the status quo and not so much about modeling the social gospel. The gospel [which literally means “good news”] that Jesus preached was a direct challenge to the politically powerful, the arrogant, self-satisfied, and self-righteous teachers of the law. Two thousand years ago the Cross had NO symbolic religious meaning and was not a piece of jewelry. When Jesus said: “Pick up your cross and follow me,” everyone back then understood he was issuing a POLITICAL statement, for the main roads in Jerusalem were lined with crucified agitators, rebels, dissidents and any others who disturbed the status quo of the Roman Occupying Forces. In the latter days of Nero’s reign [54-68 A.S.] through the domination of Domitian [81-96] Christians were persecuted for following the nonviolent, loving and forgiving Jesus. That Jesus was first left behind when Augustine penned the Just War Theory.

[Jean commented 5 hours ago](#)

J

Jean

Chicago, IL [5h ago](#)

Why is Christianity automatically associated with Republicans? I never see Trump and his family going to church. The Clintons went to church every Sunday. Obama attended regularly, too. Trump is divorced, has had affairs and appeared in porn movies (fully clothed.) He might spout Christian rhetoric, but his actions are far from being Christian. I would love to understand why some of these people think Trump has brought back prayer. Prayer never went anywhere. Dems go to church and many, like myself, are are against abortion. I just know that I don’t have the right to

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force my believes on someone else. I feel some of the people profiled are misinformed about what pro-choice actually means.

5 Replies

[Scott Cole commented 4 hours ago](#)

S

Scott Cole

Des Moines, IA [4h ago](#)

@Jean If Trump does go to church, it has nothing to do with faith or ethics. The bottom line: People believe what they want to believe.

[ALB commented 4 hours ago](#)

A

ALB

Dutchess County NY [4h ago](#)

@Jean Maybe they think the "thoughts and prayers" sent when someone is shot is "bringing back prayers"? If so that IS a lot of praying, as opposed to action.

[Bill commented 4 hours ago](#)

Bill

New Jersey [4h ago](#)

This is the first post I have read that really seems to get it, that hits the nail.... I believe in separation of church and state, religion is a personal belief, hence not something tangible that can be truly known.

[mary bardmess commented 1 hour ago](#)

m

mary bardmess

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camas wa [1h ago](#)

Times Pick

I do not understand what evangelicals mean by "advancing religious liberties". For whom? Foundational to evangelicalism is the belief that they alone know the truth and have a duty to convert others to their belief, or condemn them to sub-humanity and eternal hell. I do wish someone smarter and more eloquent than I would dig deep into this question. What does it mean when an evangelical wants to advance religious liberty? I doubt that the evangelical "religious liberty" includes me, a pro-choice live-and-let-live atheist.

[Julian Fernandez commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Julian Fernandez

Dallas, Texas [6h ago](#)

It is heartening, to say the least, to read of young evangelicals who have developed the critical thinking skills that have led them to reject the blind adherence to the GOP pushed from the pulpit these last 40 years. I dislike trafficking in bumper sticker ideologies, but to the vast majority of evangelicals, who have not made this leap, may I pose the question, how would Jesus vote?

2 Replies

[Shamrock commented 4 hours ago](#)

S

Shamrock

Westfield [4h ago](#)

@Julian Fernandez I always tell young people, think how Abraham would vote? Or how would Muhammad vote?

[DebraM commented 3 hours ago](#)

D

DebraM

New Jersey [3h ago](#)

@Julian Fernandez They believe that Jesus would vote with the Republicans and that is how they would answer your question.

[sam ogilvie commented 5 hours ago](#)

s

sam ogilvie

wilkesboro, north carolina [5h ago](#)

@John Ranta Excellent point. As a Christian, this is abundantly clear to me, and thousands of others who share my worldview. We see the wisdom in the separation of church and state in matters of governance, and wish to maintain that arrangement. Taking a look at the many denominations within my faith, the acrimonious arguments over doctrine and theology, and the pharisaical and self-righteous immaturity of Christian leaders with the loudest voices and largest bully pulpits, I can't imagine what a fractured country we would have if theocrats prevailed. Today's divisions would definitely be mild in comparison.

[Sande commented 1 hour ago](#)

Sande

IL [1h ago](#)

Times Pick

My (unsolicited) advice: Go out in the world, expose yourself to different people, ideas, beliefs. Get an education at a school that is not evangelical. Learn. There is a reason your parents and church want you sheltered, and it's not your safety. If you stay in your family/church bubble and don't explore the experiences and feelings of others besides white, evangelicals,

you will not be making an informed decision. And if your religion speaks of or treats anyone in a way you don't think Christ would speak of or treat the person, it's not Christian, it's serving a different agenda. I find the more stridently Christianity is professed, the more it is weaponized for other agendas. Just analyze what you are being told with Christ's teachings in mind. If, after all that, you are still evangelical, great. There are many ways to be a good Christian. Or not.

1 Reply

[EboniM commented 1 hour ago](#)

E

EboniM

Essex, New Jersey [58m ago](#)

@Sande I appreciate your statement, often seclusion is done to avoid exposure and to mold ignorance (in that one isn't exposed, have knowledge or understanding outside of those teaching the what they want them to know). It is important to go out see, learn and grow into a person of the world not just a person with the perspective of a small window of it. If you never meet a decent hard working Afro-American it can be easy to buy into the tales of us all being crime committing, welfare abusing waste of space. Just as if you never see the abuse that we go through and the fear even our small children feel about the police meant to protect us, Black Lives Matter seem pointless and police brutality doesn't exist. If you never mean a dreamer who came here in refuge who family has done all they can to contribute to a country they love and to bring their children up as productive members of the US society, you may think they are all very well rapist and killers.

[muddyw commented 5 hours ago](#)

m

muddyw

upstate ny [5h ago](#)

Thank you. You expressed my thoughts far more eloquently than I could.

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[Jim commented 4 hours ago](#)

J

Jim

PA[3h ago](#)

“I know that Trump has brought back prayer.” says one man, mistaking his hopeful thinking for facts. Can anyone out there name one person they know who prays today that didn’t two years ago, and the explain how the President caused this? Can you name one event where Trump “prays” (or pretends to) where Obama didn’t? What does “bring back prayer” even mean? It is the exact kind of meaningless Rorschach phrasing that Trump himself uses in place of actual meaningful statements.

4 Replies

[Andreas commented 3 hours ago](#)

A

Andreas

Atlanta, GA[3h ago](#)

@Jim I couldn't get over this comment either. Any elected president I remember had plenty of public prayer displays. Was it outlawed before? Is there a new law? It's the most ludicrous lie that keeps getting repeated.

[Dana commented 3 hours ago](#)

D

Dana

Houston[3h ago](#)

@Jim I have to say, as someone who has disliked Trump since long before he became President, I certainly have been praying more than before! But that type of praying for rescue aside, I agree with all your points. I would also add that as a Christian, I strongly disagree with any politician's attempts to insert religion into politics. They don't belong together.

[Norma G commented 3 hours ago](#)

Norma G

Indiana [3h ago](#)

@Jim. I was totally amazed and encouraged by your incite and viewpoint, here! Perfect and on target. Unbiased and someone who makes total sense! Thank you!

[Doc commented 5 hours ago](#)

D

Doc

Atlanta [5h ago](#)

There is hope for America. That's what I felt as I read these contributions. My Christain beliefs are well represented by wholesome leaders like Jimmy Carter and Andrew Young, men who have walked the walk. The politicization of Christianity by the Republican party seemed destined to create devils and they have succeeded. Spewing hate and discord, they roam the land, energizing vulnerable people who listen to them. The antidote can be found in the New Testament Book of Matthew and the principles espoused in the Sermon on the Mount. Nothing reads better today that Dr. King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Dr. King would be proud of these people and encouraged by the barring of their souls. America faces a "road to Damascus" moment on election day next week. There is still time to replace darkness with light.

[Tom commented 5 hours ago](#)

Tom

Purple Town, Purple State [5h ago](#)

@Westcoast Texan Trump is a bully, narcissist and liar, but he is also strategically checking off boxes to maintain his support. Anti-abortion, check. Anti-gun regulation, check. Anti-immigrant, check. Anti-Democrat, check. That gets him a solid 45% of the vote. Now all it takes is a Fake News and Voter Suppression campaign and voila- we now live in Trumpland and may for another 6 years.

10 Replies

[Jim commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Jim

PA[7h ago](#)

@Jan Major - Whenever I find myself unfortunate enough to be discussing Trump with an evangelical supporter, I take great joy in feigning seriousness while asking “Wait... what denomination is he again? What church did he attend in New York? It’s slipping my mind.” I pretend like it’s a harmless question that I am seriously trying to answer. Hilarity ensues.

[Westcoast Texan commented 6 hours ago](#)

W

Westcoast Texan

Bogota Colombia[6h ago](#)

@Jan Major They vote for Trump because he says he is against legal abortion. He has no beliefs but knows he will get their vote if he claims he is religiously against legal abortion. American presidential politics are largely abortion politics and have been since abortion was legalized by the supreme court. That is the only issue that tens of millions of Americans care about.

[Alan Chaprack commented 5 hours ago](#)

A

Alan Chaprack

NYC [5h ago](#)

@Jan Major Trump "rarely references religion"? He's certainly familiar with...what was that again?...oh, yeah...Two Corinthians.

[J. commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

J.

Ohio [7h ago](#)

I am heartened by these younger evangelicals who are thoughtful, and who are not mere puppets of church leaders who have been co-opted by the most corrupt, dangerous political operators in our history. They give me hope at a time when it is increasingly difficult to be optimistic.

[Eli commented 1 hour ago](#)

E

Eli

Tiny Town [1h ago](#)

Times Pick

I love my church. I really do. But it doesn't love me. For me, the election of Donald Trump upended any hope that I had for a church that could tolerate the fact that I'm gay. For a tiny window during the end of the Obama admin it looked like our main council was considering tweaking our official stance to something close to Pope Francis's "who are we to judge". So much of the media focus on the intersection of being LGBT and Christian misses voices like mine. I'm not asking the church to upend its policy of opposing gay marriage, or walk back any of it's social stances. I just want them to admit that there's ~5% (on the low side of estimates) of people who aren't cis-gendered heterosexuals and that our existence isn't some sort of mistake and we aren't damned from birth for something out of our control. I hope that whatever final judgement looks like, the fact that I've spent 25 years trying to be kind to everybody and live a Christ like life of service and empathy for the stranger is what matters. As long as my church will have

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very gay me, I'll stay and do the best I can to love and serve others. Maybe — probably — I'll be formally disciplined and barred from participation in services at some point. But I'm a better, kinder, more tolerant and patient person because of my commitment to living The Gospel.

[Becky Saul commented 7 hours ago](#)

B

Becky Saul

Cartersville, Ga. [7h ago](#)

The "Evans", as I call them did not exist when I was growing up. There has always been many denominations of the Christian faith but the Evans emerged during the seventies. They are more of a political party than they are a Christian group, in my view. Their issues are "Pro Life" which I interpret as Pro Birth. If their issue was truly Pro Life, they would be concerned about those whose lives are already shattered and need help to live. Supreme court, quack, quack, quack. I am touched by these young people who are thinking critically. If I went to a church or any place of worship and someone got up and began talking about politics and trying to tell me who to vote for and how to think, I would get up and leave.

[GeriMD commented 7 hours ago](#)

G

GeriMD

Boston [7h ago](#)

Thank you for allowing these young people to speak. The thoughtfulness and nuance were refreshing. A good reminder that whether we agree or disagree, starting from a position of curiosity and listening can help us all move forward rather than simply assuming we know what an evangelical is, believes, or votes. Jesus embraced the vulnerable and dispossessed—the poor, the foreigner, women, the questioning. And he railed against liars, hypocrites, “money changers”. Would be good to remember that.

[Curt commented 5 hours ago](#)

Curt

Montgomery, Ala. [5h ago](#)

Neat profiles. I hope the Times goes broader next time to include Catholics and mainline Protestants. I'm Catholic and love the church for its robust theology on the social gospel. It's what an authentic "conservative" politics would look like, conserving human dignity and liberating people from shackles that hold back their potential to love and serve. Jesus requires political support for the poor, immigrants, babies, public education, universal healthcare, a diplomacy-first foreign policy, gun control, science literacy, support for climate change realities, defense of the environment, SNAP, WIC, prenatal care, good childcare, adoption assistance, prison reform, abolition of the death penalty, living wages, work-life balance, lifelong learning, respect for our Jewish and Muslim and other brothers and sisters, respect for LGBT persons, decorum among our leaders, and anything that advances human flourishing. Statistically, I'm affluent and living in the richest nation in the world. Raise my taxes, I'll gladly pay.

1 Reply

[Bill commented 4 hours ago](#)

Bill

New Jersey [4h ago](#)

Thanks you'all.....great to see someone in Alabama feels that way!

[BrainThink commented 5 hours ago](#)

B

BrainThink

San Francisco, California [5h ago](#)

I was raised to be a Christian. Everyone in my family are Christians. I look at Evangelicals and believe that they are not Christians. They're political

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devotees that just happen to meet in a church, but they clearly are not living the values of Christians. I'm sorry, but after Trump, I will never recognize Evangelicals as Christians. They chose to relinquish the values of their faith for the perception of temporal political power, the literal golden calf. It's disgusting. They should ask their God and the rest of the Christian community for forgiveness, because brother, they are seriously lost in the desert by their own choice.

[mike moore commented 5 hours ago](#)

mike moore

Montecito, CA [5h ago](#)

One thing is made clear here: American Evangelicals, as a whole, are no longer Christians; they no longer follow Jesus. Jesus' words and teachings are few, and they are simple and straightforward. Among them: Heal the sick. Feed the hungry. Welcome the stranger. Love your neighbor. By these few measures, Evangelicals show themselves to be the antithesis of Christian, choosing instead to worship flag, country, and conformity. And they are, literally, forcing their children to choose: us or Jesus.

[Eileen Fleming commented 7 hours ago](#)

E

Eileen Fleming

Clermont, FL [7h ago](#)

@SMK NC Once upon a time being an Evangelical was about sharing the gospel [good news] that Jesus actually taught, such as Peacemakers are the children of God. During the reign of President Reagan evangelical became a matter of which lever to pull in a voting booth and Christian fundamentalism spread into the mainstream. Fundamentalists uphold belief in literal interpretation of scripture. The God people worship is always reflected in their politics. Fundamentalism runs through every religion, especially Islam, Judaism and Protestant Christianity. An unprecedented number of the fundamentally religious fill cabinet positions in the Trump

administration and VP Pence is a self-proclaimed “proud Evangelical Christian” despite the warning in Proverbs 16:18: "Pride precedes destruction; an arrogant spirit appears before a fall."

[nzierler commented 2 hours ago](#)

n

nzierler

new hartford ny [2h ago](#)

It is nothing short of astonishing that Evangelicals almost unanimously support Trump. And for one reason: he told them he is pro-life. They are willing to overlook all his hateful oratory, his adultery, his corruption, his pathological lying (yesterday he told a reporter that he "tries" to be truthful!!!). Is Trump pro-life? Not if you look at his history of being pro-choice. Doesn't matter to Evangelicals, so long as he nominates to SCOTUS judges who are pro-life. That is their singular mission and Trump's all in on pandering to them in exchange for their unbridled adulation of him.

3 Replies

[Syliva commented 2 hours ago](#)

S

Syliva

Pacific Northwest [2h ago](#)

@nzierler And the great irony is that ending Roe versus Wade will do less to end abortion than other policies - like ensuring access to birth control, evidenced-based sex ed, and health care. Ending Roe v Wade will do less to save babies than working to ensure clean water in the poorest parts of the world. So it seems like ending Roe v Wade should be a lower priority in the "baby saving" mission than these other things.

[J McMurry commented 2 hours ago](#)

J

J McMurry

Clarksville TN [2h ago](#)

@nzierler I think "almost unanimously" is a bit of an exaggeration. My wife and I did not vote for Trump and many who did are deeply troubled by him.

[William Case commented 1 hour ago](#)

W

William Case

United States [1h ago](#)

@nzierler Americans who oppose abortion consider it a form of infantile. From their point of view, abortionists murder a million babies a year. This is why many of them are single issue voters. They think the murder of one million Americans per year trumps all other issues combined.

[organic farmer commented 7 hours ago](#)

o

organic farmer

NY [7h ago](#)

These young people need to know there are committed Followers of Jesus that identify as the Christian Left. We take very seriously the instructions of Jesus, to feed the poor, protect the vulnerable, welcome the stranger, treat others as we wish to be treated, embody the gifts of the spirit. They need to know there are many other people who are Christian who not feel they are betraying their moral beliefs by the political activities of the current leaders.

[Christine commented 7 hours ago](#)

C

Christine

Michigan [6h ago](#)

This article and the people who spoke out give me great hope for our future. Thank you for digging more deeply into this very divisive issue.
Christine Langlois Age 66 Grand Haven, Michigan

[Alan Chaprack commented 5 hours ago](#)

A

Alan Chaprack

NYC [5h ago](#)

@Jan Major Trump "rarely references religion"? He's certainly familiar with...what was that again?....oh, yeah...Two Corinthians.

[Observer commented 3 hours ago](#)

Observer

Backwoods California [3h ago](#)

As someone who believes in the social philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth, but not his divinity, I'm amazed that anyone who believes he was the Son of God can vote for such a serial adulterer, worshiper of money, bearer of false witness, disparager of the sick, the poor, and the stranger, and hater as Donald J. Trump.

[WFGersen commented 7 hours ago](#)

WFGersen

Etna, NH [7h ago](#)

Mr. Ruiz' observation that "Trump has brought back prayer" is completely accurate... even those who do not attend church regularly are finding it necessary to pray for the future of our country under the leadership of an impulsive and divisive President. But my biggest takeaway is that these dedicated Christians are not voting for Mr. Trump as they are voting against the Democratic Party's pro-choice plank.

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[Sandie commented 2 hours ago](#)

Sandie

Tampa FL [2h ago](#)

@Rebecca the government never took away "Merry Christmas" and only banned compulsory prayer in schools. Anyone in America, is and always has been free to say Merry Christmas or to pray anywhere they like.

[Stef commented 2 hours ago](#)

Stef

Philadelphia [2h ago](#)

I grew up in a home of evangelical Christian Republicans. It always bothered me to hear my father spouting hate speech toward blacks, Jews, gays, liberals, even Catholics. Did he paid any attention in church? Where was the 'love thy neighbor as thyself' and 'judge not lest thyself be judged'? My father's hypocrisy drove me away from the church, but I never regretted my upbringing. Quite the opposite. To be raised with Jesus as your spiritual compass is a wonderful thing. It's just a shame all Christians don't act Christ-like. In the Bible, the Golden Rule, treat others as you want to be treated, does not contain a footnote, 'unless they're immigrants.' When trying to prove his point against gays, my father pointed out a verse in Deuteronomy about 'men should not lay with other men.' I asked my father if I could see his Bible. In the same chapter is a verse that says, 'if a woman should divorce her husband she should be stoned to death.' I asked my dad if he wanted to drive over to my cousin Nancy's house and stone her to death. Of course he didn't. Evangelicals like my father will point to one verse and say, this is God's word – but we can forget about all the other verses that don't support their agenda. It's encouraging to read how young evangelicals are questioning the double standards in the church. Don't accept everything our political and religious leaders say. As Einstein said, "The important thing is to never stop questioning."

[bill commented 2 hours ago](#)

b

bill

NYC [2h ago](#)

So Trump has brought back prayer. Where did it go? Did you forget or something, so that you had to have a hate-spreading liar remind you of it?

2 Replies

[robert zitelli commented 2 hours ago](#)

r

robert zitelli

Montvale, NJ [2h ago](#)

@bill Which prayers did trump bring back? Do we want all students to recite the "Lord's Prayer", "Hail Mary", "Act of Contrition"? We can't force religion on students in public schools.

[palvar commented 1 hour ago](#)

p

palvar

Philadelphia [1h ago](#)

@bill That comment made absolutely no sense to me.

[Rebel in Disguise commented 7 hours ago](#)

R

Rebel in Disguise

Toronto Canada [7h ago](#)

This is incredible journalism. Kudos to the NYT. It seems so easy for many of us to stereotype groups of people (oh, an American Christian, an

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evangelical, so that means she believes and behaves like ...). It's an automatic reflex that needs to be kept in check. From outside of America, one thing is crystal clear - the loyalty so many American Christians give to Trump and his values does severe damage to the work of spreading the good news of Jesus worldwide. A spy has gotten them to work for the other team and not even know it.

[Paul commented 7 hours ago](#)

P

Paul

Pittsburgh, PA [7h ago](#)

This article reaffirms that as the evangelical old guard dies off and is replaced by a new guard the outcome will be a more tolerant evangelical position. Or at least one can hope.

[David Anderson commented 5 hours ago](#)

D

David Anderson

North Carolina [5h ago](#)

A powerful voting bloc in America consists of evangelical Christians. As a serious thinker about the parables and aphorisms of Jesus, this confuses me. Much of their thinking does not fit into the Jesus I know insofar as was his understanding of planet Earth those of us on it and the dimension beyond. www.InquiryAbraham.com

2 Replies

[Shamrock commented 3 hours ago](#)

S

Shamrock

Westfield [3h ago](#)

@David Anderson You do realize every one of those “evangelicals” that you demonize would never say they could lead a life that meets the parables of Jesus. They all believe they fall far short of Jesus’ teachings. They all believe there are sinners and are saved only because of free grace as described by Martin Luther and Paul.

[David Anderson commented 2 hours ago](#)

D

David Anderson

North Carolina [2h ago](#)

@Shamrock Jesus emphasized that we must find God within by way of a search within. Here we can be critical of both historically codified and present day Christianity. Roman Christianity (Going back to the Council of Nicaea) took the easy way out. All one had to do is “believe” in Jesus to be saved.

[Rebecca commented 3 hours ago](#)

R

Rebecca

Cambridge [3h ago](#)

Times Pick

My family became christian when we came to the U.S. 20 years ago. Church community has been the family we didn't have in the U.S.. God has transformed my relationship with my parents and is the biggest part in our life. After college I started to go to non denomination church with diverse crowd and it is very different from the teaching the Chinese churches do. My parents are the the most loving people i know. However they support Trump. When I was young my dad will go to protest the gay parade in SF. But one thanksgiving i brought my gay friend to have thanksgiving with my family and my dad welcomed him and loved him. I think a lot Trump Christians are like my dad. They are good people but they are brainwashed by certain ideology by the Church. For years, they feel they are oppressed when government took away merry Christmas and prayer in the court. They

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are angry. I voted for Hilary and my idea is very left leaning. I support pro choice. However I often do see the media is very bias towards Christian and often have a condescending tone towards Christians and sympathetic tone towards Muslim. GOP is not the only reason why our country is so divided. I think media like New York Times should also take a hard look of themselves and try to be more objective. GOP is not going to do better and they are abusing people's anger but we can. I think NYT shd lead the charge.

4 Replies

[Sandie commented 2 hours ago](#)

Sandie

Tampa FL [2h ago](#)

@Rebecca the government never took away "Merry Christmas" and only banned compulsory prayer in schools. Anyone in America, is and always has been free to say Merry Christmas or to pray anywhere they like.

[rabbit3034 commented 2 hours ago](#)

r

rabbit3034

Bronx, NY [2h ago](#)

@Rebecca Do you mean social media or mainstream media? Mainstream media who just reports on what is happening? And what is currently happening, is a lot of racism, sexism, anti-semitism, xenophobia, etc (mostly from the President) and when the President does or say anything, the media covers him - because his position calls for it. Majority of US is not anti-Christians, but lately, the news is created by Christians not acting like Christ - and therefore the news cover it and it reflects a very negative view of Christians. I cringe when I see Christians do or say something that is very un-Christlike (especially from the GOP). I personally think these always existed and the President and GOP politicians just fan the flame,

but if these racists and sexists come from Christian values, someone needs to rebuke them.

[Marianne commented 1 hour ago](#)

M

Marianne

Brooklyn, NY [1h ago](#)

@Rebecca I grew up in a Vietnamese Southern Baptist church in Texas. My mom, brother, and nephew are still Christian. I don't see the media as biased towards Christians at all. They only point out the blatant hypocrisy of those who call themselves Christians but are actually spreading messages of hate and fear. I welcome that light. Those are the worst types of Christians, and a huge reason why I am no longer one. I also don't see what you mean by "sympathetic tone toward Muslim" unless you mean sympathetic to Muslim victims of violent white supremacists. Unfortunately there are people of all faiths who have been victims of hate crimes, which of course have been increasing under this president.

[John commented 2 hours ago](#)

J

John

St. Louis [2h ago](#)

I'd like someone to define "evangelical". I'm an old white male. I stopped identifying myself as a "Christian" because of the way that far too many "evangelicals" and "Christians" presented themselves in public, the positions they took, and the beliefs they espoused. Although I've stopped identifying myself as a "Christian," my beliefs remain unchanged. Here is how my faith is reflected in how I vote. The Bible tells me that everything belongs to God. I am to be a steward of what belongs to God. The Bible tells me that apart from God I can do "nothing." Anything I have and any good I do is all because of God. The Republican Party's refrain of "let me keep my hard-earned money" is directly contrary to these beliefs. When I read about Jesus, the overriding message from his life is that we are to

love our neighbors, and even our enemies. Period. We are to feed, cloth, and care for those among us who have the least. When I read about the early Christians I read about their sense of community and obligation to each other. I don't see Jesus in much of anything the Republican Party stands for. I see only law. I can see Jesus in what the Democratic Party stands for. (For those who think all of this is based on a "myth," please spare the comment.)

2 Replies

[bob wyre commented 1 hour ago](#)

b

bob wyre

indiana [1h ago](#)

@John Thank you!!!

[Marilyn commented 1 hour ago](#)

M

Marilyn

Columbus, Ohio [59m ago](#)

@John As more people who follow the teachings of Christ risk calling themselves Christian, the understanding of what Christianity represents will change. I am finding it useful to identify myself as a follower of Jesus rather than a Christian because, unfortunately, the two aren't the same.

[Suzanneke commented 7 hours ago](#)

S

Suzanneke

Amsterdam, The Netherlands [6h ago](#)

Thanks for helping me understand things better. It's always easy to judge when you don't know the facts. The reasons why politics is so tied up to religion (or the other way around) I will never understand, but that's fine. I

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don't need to understand everything. I just love to read the views from all these different people and the struggles they have with them. I respect them very much for opening up, having their own opinions and thoughts. As an atheist it's sometimes very easy to judge and to think all religious people from my age hate gays and abortion and all. It makes me feel very good to know they are critical as well and have opinions for their own. (That may sound condescending but please remember English is my second language and it's hard to express what I wanna say) Good luck to all of you, stay critical and ask questions! And thanks for sharing.

1 Reply

[Charlie commented 3 hours ago](#)

C

Charlie

Indiana [3h ago](#)

@Suzanneke "(That may sound condescending but please remember English is my second language and it's hard to express what I wanna say)" I would say you did a much better job at English than our President could do. Thanks for your thoughtful comments.

[Miranda A commented 2 hours ago](#)

M

Miranda A

Owingsville, Ky [2h ago](#)

I left Evangelicalism soon after Trump started his campaign and I saw evangelicals flocking to support this obvious racist piece of garbage. Jesus isn't a Republican. Jesus isn't a Democrat. Jesus is love. Jesus is a radical lover of all people, the Bible is so specific about loving and taking care of foreigners, the poor, the sick. The Bible is so specific that God is PRO-CHOICE (see Genesis where he gave commands and yet didn't force Adam/Eve to listen). Evangelicals who support Trump are nothing short of hypocrites. I don't know if I believe in Jesus or God anymore but I'll be

damned if I sit back and remain silent and watch white supremacists use Jesus to hide behind. I won't be apart of that hypocrisy anymore.

1 Reply

[mary bardmess commented 1 hour ago](#)

m

mary bardmess

camas wa [1h ago](#)

@Miranda A thank you. I hope you have company. We need more people like you.

[Indyguy commented 2 hours ago](#)

I

Indyguy

Indiana [2h ago](#)

"I know Trump has brought back prayer." With the exception of people praying because they know the country is going down the chute, I have seen no evidence that Trump is in any way interested in religion except as a means to convince the gullible to vote for him. I see many evangelical leaders genuflecting to Trump and the Republican Party because they see this as a way of strengthening their own power in this country and not because they actually believe that the Republicans really embrace their core values. It is unfortunate that so many people believe that their church leaders (and politicians) are really interested in preaching and following the good word, when the truth is they are more interested in power.

[Willis commented 7 hours ago](#)

W

Willis

Georgia [7h ago](#)

Interesting to read these experiences but the same old conundrum is clear: We have the United States Constitution and we have the Bible, along with the other holy books that people use to guide their lives. It seems, when convenient, the evangelicals choose to want to ignore the Constitution and the rights and protections it provides to all, regardless of religion, and follow only the holy books. It seems the "liberty and justice for all" foundation of the Constitution runs counter to many religious beliefs.

[todd commented 3 hours ago](#)

t

todd

watertown[3h ago](#)

I grew up attending church every Sunday, but hearing Rush Limbaugh played on my families' radio every weekday. The contradictions between the word of God and the words of Rush and his ilk were stark then and are only greater in contrast now that Mr. Trump is our president. Whenever I feel like I want to get through to my conservative (Registered Independent) parents about Mr. Trump's politics, I try to frame issues through the teachings of the bible. Sadly, Jesus takes a backseat to President Trump, Rush, Sean, Anne C, Tucker, etc. everytime. It breaks my heart. The Republican party does not represent the values of Christian America. It is plain to see that the values of Conservative America are to conserve and concentrate power in the hands of those who have traditionally held that authority.

[Future 2061 commented 2 hours ago](#)

F

Future 2061

small blue planet[2h ago](#)

I grew up as a Catholic and also explored other Christian Faiths. I came to learn two golden rules to live by which I think underlies many faiths including non-Christian faiths : Cause no harm to others, Earth, and other living beings whenever possible. Be helpful to others, Earth, and other

living beings whenever possible, as well. While I try to follow these rules I often fail. But I feel that in the present environment, Democrats are ahead of Republicans in terms of following these golden rules.

[Alex commented 2 hours ago](#)

Alex

Washington D.C. [2h ago](#)

@Andrew So if you and your wife can't have children, then you're not really married? If you plan not to have children in life, then you cannot marry? If you're gay, then you can't enrich children's lives by becoming a math teacher? or a soccer coach? Marriage is a social contract that transcends children; it should serve everyone in society, not just children.

[Jasmine Armstrong commented 4 hours ago](#)

J

Jasmine Armstrong

Merced, CA [4h ago](#)

@Sunspot good idea. Educated by the Jesuits at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, social justice, preference for the poor, mercy for those who are disabled or sick or immigrants is very dear to my heart, and guides the way I view this administration: with horror.

[Laura Nile commented 5 hours ago](#)

L

Laura Nile

Atlanta, GA [5h ago](#)

I grew up in a large Evangelical church in Oregon where practically the only Christians I knew were from my church. In the very secular state, the overarching message was always that "the world" had shifting values that would lead us astray, but God's values were rock solid. Having "Christian

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values" meant be pro-life, abstinent before (heterosexual only) marriage, and against evolutionary science in public schools, in the name of religious freedom. The evangelical embrace of Trump felt like a deep and painful betrayal. All my teenage years were spent living in the tight (and often shame-based) boundaries of "sexual morality" and then when it was politically convenient, these so-called "values voters" I was raised by elected a confessed sexual abuser. Every time I watch Jerry Falwell Jr. or Franklin Graham make excuses for Trump's hatred, bigotry, and sexual assault, it feels like a slap in the face. It's still hard to believe that organizations like Focus on the Family have chosen powerful sexual abusers like Trump and Kavanaugh over victims in need to love and support. The hypocrisy from the community that raised me is deeply painful to watch. I left the Evangelical church a long time ago, but I'm still a deeply committed Christian and thus still connected to Christians I fiercely disagree with. It's a painful season for many Christians who hate to see what the Church's witness to the world has become.

[Chris commented 5 hours ago](#)

C

Chris

ATL[5h ago](#)

Choosing a political party based on one's beliefs is a complex issue. The political decision of the majority of the evangelicals is not based on the teaching of Christ but rather who speaks louder about God and often people like Trump speaks loud and a lot about God and church while their actions clearly say otherwise. White older evangelicals have been brainwashed by false preachers for too long. These young people give a hope that the true Christian values live on with this evangelical community.

[nora m commented 4 hours ago](#)

n

nora m

New England[4h ago](#)

@Jan Major What I found stunning was the claim that Trump has returned prayer to - where ever. How anyone got that idea is beyond me. Is this what their pastors claim? Kids, taking the "lord's name in vain" is not praying. It is blasphemy.

10 Replies

[Jim commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Jim

PA[7h ago](#)

@Jan Major - Whenever I find myself unfortunate enough to be discussing Trump with an evangelical supporter, I take great joy in feigning seriousness while asking “Wait... what denomination is he again? What church did he attend in New York? It’s slipping my mind.” I pretend like it’s a harmless question that I am seriously trying to answer. Hilarity ensues.

[Westcoast Texan commented 6 hours ago](#)

W

Westcoast Texan

Bogota Colombia[6h ago](#)

@Jan Major They vote for Trump because he says he is against legal abortion. He has no beliefs but knows he will get their vote if he claims he is religiously against legal abortion. American presidential politics are largely abortion politics and have been since abortion was legalized by the supreme court. That is the only issue that tens of millions of Americans care about.

[Alan Chaprack commented 5 hours ago](#)

A

Alan Chaprack

NYC[5h ago](#)

@Jan Major Trump "rarely references religion"? He's certainly familiar with...what was that again?....oh, yeah...Two Corinthians.

[Deb commented 7 hours ago](#)

D

Deb

Nashville [7h ago](#)

Unfortunately the word "evangelical" has been taken over by American civil religion, making it pretty much useless for Christians. Much of the tension revealed in these vignettes represents the conflict between Christianity and civil religion. Because American civil religion co-opts Christian symbols, rituals, and Scripture, it often confuses those who are truly seeking Christ. Alexandria Beightol described this conflict between Christianity and American civil religion succinctly when she said, "It is not that you have conservative evangelicals suddenly becoming liberal. It is more a realizing that you could be practicing something that isn't even Christian at all."

[Barry Short commented 2 hours ago](#)

B

Barry Short

Upper Saddle River, NJ [2h ago](#)

"I know Trump has brought back prayer. Knowing that our leaders believe those same core beliefs as us is something that brings calm. We know they have our best interest in mind." Please, please show me where any action by the Republicans proves that they have "our best interest in mind"? Was it the repeated votes to repeal ACA and pre-existing conditions protection? Was it the tax "reform" act that overwhelmingly benefits the very wealthiest? Or, perhaps it was the tariffs that raise the price of cars for the middle class? Perhaps it is the attempt to force dirtier air on California? So many choices. Please tell me which ones you had in mind?

[Bill Mount commented 4 hours ago](#)

B

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Bill Mount

Boston [4h ago](#)

Thank you, John Ranta. The religious right is a greater threat to the true nature of our country than all the supposed socialists added together. They need to be stopped.

[Alan K. commented 3 hours ago](#)

A

Alan K.

Boston, MA [3h ago](#)

I am a humanist. I was brought up Jewish and I am proud that my birth religion dates back over five thousand years. The Jewish religion brought the world many things and concepts that are pivotal in the world today. Jews discarded idols as symbols of worship. Jews built the pyramids, albeit not voluntarily. They introduced sanitary food preparation not just to jews but to muslims, which is the religion that dominates in numbers of followers. However, through time and intense thought, I determined that all religions are a form of domination of people and a built-in excuse for not solving the world's problems ("It's just God's Will") or not acting in a "Christian Way." Cutting Welfare and not feeding the poor - is that "Christian?" Wake up American Evangelicals, you are following an Anti-Christ. Answer me this one question, please. What is "Christian" about the practices and/or policies of Donald Trump? He was for abortion on Demand for 40 years before his false political rhetoric made evangelicals believe he is against it? Is the Press really the enemy of the people? If so, aren't true Christians supposed to "love thy enemy?" Isn't lying against one of the ten commandments? I challenge all evangelicals to be true Christians - to love their enemies, to uphold the truth, to stop voting for an serial adulterer, etc.. Become through your "actions" not just "words" the Christians you are professing to be.

[David Gregory commented 6 hours ago](#)

David Gregory

Blue in the Deep Red South [6h ago](#)

@Talbot I did not see nuance. I see people wedded to their indoctrination who can see over the fence, but are unwilling to walk through the gate.

[SC commented 5 hours ago](#)

S

SC

Midwest [5h ago](#)

Evangelicals devote a large fraction of their life to trying to make sure they do good, by reading the Bible, going to church, praying. What I think they do not realize -- and it **is** easier to see these things from the outside -- is that their notions of what is right and wrong come much more strongly from their social cohesion than from the Bible. That is, they perpetuate among themselves a set of values and judgments which they sincerely believe are just consequences of what the Bible says, but are really hardly indisputable interpretations of it and come much more strongly from listening to each other. Evangelicalism has historically been on the wrong side -- the immoral side -- of major issues, like slavery, racism and homophobia. Many Evangelicals now recognize that. But -- even though they spend hours sincerely praying and reading the Bible -- they do not seem to ask whether there is some fundamental systemic reason why they have been so badly wrong on such important issues.

4 Replies

[Cornelius Plantinga commented 3 hours ago](#)

C

Cornelius Plantinga

Ada, MI [3h ago](#)

@SC Google the combination "evangelicals" and "abolitionism" and you'll discover that evangelicals were actually leaders in the abolition of slavery.

[Andrew commented 3 hours ago](#)

A

Andrew

Hong Kong [3h ago](#)

Christians were also at the forefront of the abolition of slavery, even as some Southern Baptists wickedly justified an evil system.

[SC commented 1 hour ago](#)

S

SC

Midwest [1h ago](#)

@Andrew Your quantifiers are misleading. Yes **some** (not all) Christians were at the forefront of abolition, even as **most** or **almost all** (not some) Southern Baptists wickedly justified an evil system.

[Kathleen commented 4 hours ago](#)

K

Kathleen

Iowa [4h ago](#)

Yes, your totally right - but the things they like about him are the conservative judges and recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. There is a generation of Christians that truly believe these are the. Most. Important. Things. Weird to me because as a person who grew up evangelical (I'm an older millennial) - the things I vote for are way different - I want common sense gun reform, good health care and education, to take care of the poor and to respect marginalized groups. I'm white but support what the black lives matter movement is saying about police brutality - it's weird to me cause when I was in High school I would have voted straight ticket republican because I believed voting for a pro choice candidate was immoral and now I believe the republican platform is immoral —— I

believe things are changing in the evangelical church as with anywhere and there is a generational gap that is being worked through. In my church no one really talks politics - I have never heard anyone say anything good about trump - they all know he's insane - but I bet most voted for him because they felt compelled due to their years of held beliefs about voting - that's changing in my generation

10 Replies

[Jim commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Jim

PA[7h ago](#)

@Jan Major - Whenever I find myself unfortunate enough to be discussing Trump with an evangelical supporter, I take great joy in feigning seriousness while asking "Wait... what denomination is he again? What church did he attend in New York? It's slipping my mind." I pretend like it's a harmless question that I am seriously trying to answer. Hilarity ensues.

[Westcoast Texan commented 6 hours ago](#)

W

Westcoast Texan

Bogota Colombia[6h ago](#)

@Jan Major They vote for Trump because he says he is against legal abortion. He has no beliefs but knows he will get their vote if he claims he is religiously against legal abortion. American presidential politics are largely abortion politics and have been since abortion was legalized by the supreme court. That is the only issue that tens of millions of Americans care about.

[Alan Chaprack commented 5 hours ago](#)

A

Alan Chaprack

NYC [5h ago](#)

@Jan Major Trump "rarely references religion"? He's certainly familiar with...what was that again?....oh, yeah...Two Corinthians.

[Concerned commented 5 hours ago](#)

C

Concerned

Planet Earth [5h ago](#)

@Farfel Really! Donald Trump, God and faith in the same same sentence is silly.

[Joan Parsons commented 2 hours ago](#)

J

Joan Parsons

Hawaii [2h ago](#)

As a non practicing Catholic and Democrat, raised in a strict religious household, I can identify with some of these young people feeling alienated from church and family because of differing views from their church and parents, What I cannot fathom is how evangelicals delude themselves into believing that anything related to trump can remotely be associated with Jesus. They are the worst kind of hypocrites to defend hatred, racism, white nationalism, abuse against woman, cruelty of separating families, constant lying, blatant corruption, and support of killer despot thugs while abandoning our allies. In my belief system they have all made the choice to partner with the devil, and that won't be opening the pearly gates.

1 Reply

[AdrianB commented 1 hour ago](#)

A

AdrianB

Mississippi [1h ago](#)

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@Joan Parsons I truly believe these young people suffer from a religious naivety, their religion has fogged their ability to judge character and to evaluate political leaders behavior and statements. If they possessed these abilities they would see through Trump, Pence and the right winged pastors whose dog whistles disseminate hate against other religions, races, LGBT+, handicap & women.

[Serg commented 2 hours ago](#)

S

Serg

New York [2h ago](#)

It is not difficult to respect and feel for the struggles these young women and men are going through, but I can't help finding some of the comments baffling, particularly Mr Sandoval Ruiz. "We agree with most of what Donald Trump says about God and faith", "I know Trump has brought back pray" (sic). Talk about a parallel universe, when Trump is seen as man of God.

2 Replies

[Eric commented 1 hour ago](#)

E

Eric

new york [1h ago](#)

@Serg There's a really saddening aspirational element to those immigrants who align themselves with Trump. Children of immigrants forget the sacrifices and struggles of their forebears.

[Jamyang commented 1 hour ago](#)

J

Jamyang

KansasCity [1h ago](#)

@Sergthey need their eyes opened. Trump is *not* praying. It is all fake like everything else. Example - he stole his family Crest from someone else. Does this sound like any christian?

[Joe B. commented 3 hours ago](#)

J

Joe B.

Center City[3h ago](#)

Not denouncing the bully who abuses his power and hatefully namecalls and belittles others at every opportunity and spreads racist and xenophobic lies is anti-Jesus.

[Joe B. commented 3 hours ago](#)

J

Joe B.

Center City[3h ago](#)

Not denouncing the bully who abuses his power and hatefully namecalls and belittles others at every opportunity and spreads racist and xenophobic lies is anti-Jesus.

[G Wiltsee commented 5 hours ago](#)

G

G Wiltsee

Media Pa[5h ago](#)

I know Trump has brought back prayer? I'd be fascinated to get some background on this contention. I didn't know prayer had gone anywhere.

[jay commented 4 hours ago](#)

j

jay

charleston, sc [4h ago](#)

@John Ranta I thought exactly the same thing. "Advancing religious liberties" was what our forefathers did when they escaped Old World persecution and founded this country. Using bigoted interpretation of doctrine to create 2nd class citizens is the exact opposite of advancement of religious liberty.

[Karen K commented 4 hours ago](#)

K

Karen K

Illinois [4h ago](#)

@Jan Major Yes, and I wonder if they had a choice to follow Trump or a Jesus who would be advocating to help that caravan obtain refugee status here, who would be washing the feet of the LGBTQ person, who would be visiting the sick and dying and marginalized and poor, who would they choose to follow?

10 Replies

[Jim commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Jim

PA [7h ago](#)

@Jan Major - Whenever I find myself unfortunate enough to be discussing Trump with an evangelical supporter, I take great joy in feigning seriousness while asking "Wait... what denomination is he again? What church did he attend in New York? It's slipping my mind." I pretend like it's a harmless question that I am seriously trying to answer. Hilarity ensues.

[Westcoast Texan commented 6 hours ago](#)

W

Westcoast Texan

Bogota Colombia [6h ago](#)

@Jan Major They vote for Trump because he says he is against legal abortion. He has no beliefs but knows he will get their vote if he claims he is religiously against legal abortion. American presidential politics are largely abortion politics and have been since abortion was legalized by the supreme court. That is the only issue that tens of millions of Americans care about.

[Alan Chaprack commented 5 hours ago](#)

A

Alan Chaprack

NYC [5h ago](#)

@Jan Major Trump "rarely references religion"? He's certainly familiar with...what was that again?....oh, yeah...Two Corinthians.

[KPH commented 7 hours ago](#)

K

KPH

Massachusetts [7h ago](#)

I appreciate hearing from all these young evangelicals. They seem to be thoughtful and earnest. One thing that strikes me in many of the statements is a distorted view of “liberals “. I would be very interested in reading similar reflections from young “liberals” and young independents, some who are people of faith and others who are people of reason. Let’s hear from all the young people. How is the current trump era impacting them now and what of their hopes and fears down the road?

[PsychedOut commented 2 hours ago](#)

P

PsychedOut

Madison, WI [2h ago](#)

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Who would Jesus have voted for? Certainly not Donald Trump.

1 Reply

[nedpgh commented 1 hour ago](#)

n

nedpgh

Pittsburgh [1h ago](#)

@PsychedOut Think it was Franklin Graham who said that we're searching for a leader and not a husband.

[Jay Dwight commented 5 hours ago](#)

J

Jay Dwight

Western MA [5h ago](#)

Anyone who has not spent time with evangelical Christians and wants to better understand them should read Michelle Goldberg's book, Kingdom Coming. I spent several years living and working with evangelical Christians, and what she records I saw, and can concur with her conclusions. First and foremost, they think they are right, and I mean Right. Not all, but a decided majority that I met believed they had a personal relationship with God, like they were privy to his twitter feed, and knew absolutely what He wanted. That those who did not meet the standard they set were wrong, espousing false doctrines, doing the work of Satan. That Satan made a false image of the world, where people were descended from apes, and a fossil record suggested the world was older than 6000 years, and those who did not worship the one and true God were delusional in their beliefs. Most were tolerant of the failings of their fellow man. Some were racist, but unaware, eg, traditional Indian music is blasphemous because it has a religious aspect that is not Christian. Some buried their sexual predilections in prayer, or conventional marriage; some of these had religious awakenings when events forced them to recognize their sexual natures. Sainthood can be a follow-the-dots proposition, and prosperity earned through prayer and good works. I went on to college and

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found a limitless world, where prejudice was a handicap to knowledge and understanding, and faith a willingness to ask questions.

1 Reply

[DebraM commented 4 hours ago](#)

D

DebraM

New Jersey [4h ago](#)

@Jay Dwight Thanks for the book recommendation. Your description of your experiences match mine.

[Krishna commented 4 hours ago](#)

K

Krishna

North Carolina [3h ago](#)

Mr. Ruiz says, "I know Trump has brought back prayer". "We agree with what Donald Trump says about God and Faith". How did Trump bring back prayer? What good things did he say about God and faith? Any Charlatan can say anything. If you are a follower of Jesus, you just need to look up to Jesus, and you will have prayer and peace of mind. I wish folks like Mr. Ruiz also see how Trump defrauded students at his university, how he used misogynistic language, how he vulgarly mimicked a handicapped journalist. There is nothing Christian about him.

[Jasmine Armstrong commented 7 hours ago](#)

J

Jasmine Armstrong

Merced, CA [7h ago](#)

Many of these young people are more sincere, open-minded and loving toward the oppressed in a way Jesus's Gospels demand than the so-called leaders of Evangelical Christianity. like Franklin Graham. This article is a

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reminder than Evangelical Christianity was part of what motivated Abolitionism, Women's Voting Rights, and the Civil Rights Movement. As in Corinthians, seeing these young adults evolving thoughts, I am reminded of this quotation: "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I set aside childish ways. 12Now we see but a dim reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known...." Ultimately an adult conception of God must be based in Mercy and Empathy for Others.

[anthro commented 3 hours ago](#)

a

anthro

penn[3h ago](#)

Thank you to all for sharing your insightful views. I am puzzled by one comment though: "We agree with most of what Donald Trump says about God and faith, but we do disagree with what he says about immigrants and any misconduct that he and others may try to justify in his personal life." While not the most astute political observer, what does the President say about God and faith?

[DebraM commented 5 hours ago](#)

D

DebraM

New Jersey[5h ago](#)

I was struck by Mr. Ruiz's comment that Trump has brought back prayer. I am wondering what he bases that on. It's like saying that he has made it possible to say Merry Christmas again when it was never impossible. However, I think in one respect he is correct because I know a lot of people who have been praying that Trump gets stopped. But overall, I think this was a good article.

[suzari commented 3 hours ago](#)

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s

sunzari

nyc[3h ago](#)

I'm still baffled how anyone who proclaims to be Christian sees Donald Trump as a man reflecting Christian values.

[Anthony White commented 3 hours ago](#)

A

Anthony White

Chicago[3h ago](#)

Eduardo Sandoval Ruiz, this poor kid is not seeing reality. Donald Trump did not bring back prayer, bring it back from where? Donald Trump is not a Christian, he is a charlatan, using religion to gain the presidency. Why do these people find it so easy to pick and choose what to believe in the Bible? The Bible states that Christians should welcome immigrants, so why don't they? The Bible only touches on homosexuality briefly, but Christians love to hate anyone who is not straight. Most of these people are only using religion to justify their prejudices.

[shirls commented 3 hours ago](#)

s

shirls

Manhattan[3h ago](#)

@Daniel Ross Thank you for your honesty. You've given me hope that we can overcome this dark time and return to the 'light'.

[Dee Dee commented 5 hours ago](#)

D

Dee Dee

Oregon [5h ago](#)

"I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. They are so unlike your Christ."-- Ghandi

[Lawrence commented 3 hours ago](#)

L

Lawrence

Washington D.C, [3h ago](#)

Would Jesus more likely be found ministering to the needs of the poor, tired, hungry and weary of the caravan, or at a Trump rally?

[Elisabeth commented 7 hours ago](#)

E

Elisabeth

Netherlands [6h ago](#)

"The Jesus those men depict is not the Jesus that healed the sick and broke down social barriers." I come from a kind of Christian tradition that is very different from the Evangelical churches. But there are elements to the teachings and life of Jesus that are so central, that people from all kinds of denominations and from all corners of the world pick up on them. That is what unites us. Greetings from a sister in Europe!

[Told you so commented 7 hours ago](#)

T

Told you so

CT [6h ago](#)

Some degree of maturity demonstrated. Which is encouraging. The country needs more mature adults. My only input is that I would like to see that they express that the practice of the golden rule trumps all other selfish impulses.

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[Tom commented 7 hours ago](#)

T

Tom

NY [7h ago](#)

Wow! It is heartening to hear these young evangelicals question and with some, reject what the message of evangelical conservatism. Evangelical youth become more liberal and the already liberal youth stay the same. Nice. Our daughter is a 26 year-old liberal who champions all the causes that we, her parents, taught her. Pro-LGBTQ, pro-choice, pro-environment, pro-universal health care, pro-racial equality, pro-science. Anti-white supremacy. Certainly, vehemently anti-Trump/GOP. She is a pretty common example of a young American. What is apparent is the children of conservatives are ones who are changing. They have become more aware of the world outside their conservative evangelical ideology. That's a great thing for the future of our country. Some day.

8 Replies

[Shamrock commented 6 hours ago](#)

S

Shamrock

Westfield [6h ago](#)

@Tom When can expect the article about young people questioning their faith when it's not Christianity? I fear it will be a long time.

[SDC commented 4 hours ago](#)

S

SDC

Princeton, NJ [4h ago](#)

@Shamrock, except that none of these people are questioning their faith. They are questioning the values of their faith community. They are questioning how their faith should be expressed in their lives.

[Bob Fisher commented 4 hours ago](#)

B

Bob Fisher

California [4h ago](#)

@Shamrock Well, since the United States has the largest Christian population in the world with about 75% of all U.S. citizens identifying as Christian, you can expect articles about "young people questioning their faith" in another religion when another religion catches up with Christianity. Incidentally, these young people were not so much "questioning their faith" as they were questioning the hypocritical political stances taken by evangelical INTERPRETERS of their faith. Their own personal commitment to Christianity seems quite strong indeed.

[Martina commented 4 hours ago](#)

M

Martina

California [4h ago](#)

@Shamrock Other religious groups don't try to dominate national policy the way that *evangelicals* (not Christians) do. It is a distinct subset, defined by an agenda to control other people's lives.

[S Tahura commented 4 hours ago](#)

S

S Tahura

DC [4h ago](#)

@Shamrock as somebody who was raised Muslim and left it completely while remaining in a Muslim American community, I would be happy to talk

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about or at least the others talk about their questioning of faith. However most of the kids featured here are still pretty faithful. I have a feeling that you just really want to seem oppressed.

[Laura commented 4 hours ago](#)

Laura

Arizona [4h ago](#)

@Shamrock Well, very few institutions of faith have diverged as publicly from their message as Evangelical Christianity in support of Trump. He and his prosperity gospel buddies are who is exactly the folk that Jesus would have kicked out of the temple.

[Chip commented 4 hours ago](#)

Chip

Wheelwell, Indiana [4h ago](#)

@Shamrock When Jews or Hindus constitute enough of a majority to think that they have the right to make laws contrary to the Constitution just because their faith approves, then we can look at this issue.

[Dominic commented 2 hours ago](#)

D

Dominic

Minneapolis [2h ago](#)

@Shamrock ??? Christianity is the dominant religion of American Politics. It's a powerful force in this country. That's why it's constantly interrogated in the press. But you all keep thinking of yourselves as the victim, even as your Christian president sends 5,000 troops to the border to fight a ragged group of poor people who've been on their feet walking for that two months. So, so very Christian, all of you. Jesus would be so proud.

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[observer commented 2 hours ago](#)

o

observer

Ca[2h ago](#)

Sorry evangelicals, trump deserves a special place in hell and the vast majority of evangelicals support him. Trump has blood on his hands, for charlottesville and the pittsburgh massacre by his messenger from hell

[Diane B commented 2 hours ago](#)

D

Diane B

Scottsdale[2h ago](#)

Evangelicals are driven by their need to legislate bigotry and intolerance into our government. If they are personally against gay marriage then according to them, gays shouldn't marry. Why can't they make choices for their lives and leave it at that? Why should their personal beliefs trump individual freedom? In the end, they wind up supporting racists and bigots fueled by hate. It's a sad, bizarre dysfunctional marriage.

[VisaVixen commented 5 hours ago](#)

V

VisaVixen

Florida[5h ago](#)

I am a Christian and I find Christian evangelicals anti-Christian and even more importantly in this country anti-secular. This is a secular nation. You are free to have your religious beliefs but you do not have a right to impose them on others. People talk about the cult of Trump but it is really these smaller anti-secular cults, from evangelicals to organized racists, that supported the Russian and billionaires manipulation of the 2016 Presidential election and electoral college results. I find Christian

evangelicals to have more in common with tribal Muslims than the modern state. Like I say, our form of secular government protects their right to free speech but not to imposing their minority anti-secular beliefs on others.

[Helene S commented 3 hours ago](#)

H

Helene S

Rochester NY [2h ago](#)

@John Ranta Thank you, Mr. Ranta. I am disheartened by these young peoples' repetition of the "persecuted Christians in America" mantra their leaders have drummed into them. Being jailed for your religious beliefs, having your church destroyed by the government, having your church turned into a museum -- as was done in the Soviet Union -- that's religious persecution. Having the Walmart clerk greet you with "Happy Holidays" is not religious persecution.

14 Replies

[muddyw commented 5 hours ago](#)

m

muddyw

upstate ny [5h ago](#)

Thank you. You expressed my thoughts far more eloquently than I could.

[sam ogilvie commented 5 hours ago](#)

s

sam ogilvie

wilkesboro, north carolina [5h ago](#)

@John Ranta Excellent point. As a Christian, this is abundantly clear to me, and thousands of others who share my worldview. We see the wisdom in the separation of church and state in matters of governance, and wish to maintain that arrangement. Taking a look at the many denominations within

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my faith, the acrimonious arguments over doctrine and theology, and the pharisaical and self-righteous immaturity of Christian leaders with the loudest voices and largest bully pulpits, I can't imagine what a fractured country we would have if theocrats prevailed. Today's divisions would definitely be mild in comparison.

[Glenn Thomas commented 5 hours ago](#)

G

Glenn Thomas

Edison, NJ [5h ago](#)

You have hit the nail on the head. It began with the fight that led to the Hobby Lobby decision. They are trying to rewrite the 2nd amendment and the meaning of Freedom of Religion. They do not understand or refuse to understand that this freedom applies only to the personal sphere, not the public sphere under which falls the marketplace and the workplace. They are free to practice their religion in their own lives, but they are not free to impose it on the rest of us. Until they understand this, they will rightfully be characterized as self-righteous bigots.

[Timothy Phillips commented 3 hours ago](#)

T

Timothy Phillips

Hollywood, Florida [3h ago](#)

By aligning themselves with Trump, evangelicals lost whatever moral high ground they had. I don't know what New Testament Bible they're reading, but Trump and his policies are anti-Christian according to the one I have read. Can you imagine Jesus scapegoating poor and desperate people? I don't consider these people Christians, they're just using Christianity as a shield to promote anti-Christian policies.

[Humble Beast commented 56 minutes ago](#)

H

Humble Beast

The Uncanny Valley of America [48m ago](#)

"Plenty of young evangelicals believe Mr. Trump has helped to achieve their biggest goals, like curbing abortion rights and advancing religious liberties. " Abortion rights and religious liberties are PERSONAL private matters -- they should not be political goals. This is the fundamental problem with allowing religion to influence and infiltrate politics and government. These people confuse one profoundly important Constitutional right: Freedom OF religion is, in fact, freedom FROM religion. The First Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Thomas Jefferson simplified this to "Separation of church and state." Read that a few times.... You are free to practice a religion of your choosing in your private life. "Freedom of religion." But I am Constitutionally guaranteed the right to live free of the establishment of a government religion; I'm guaranteed the right to live free of the oppression of religion (of your private religion). "Freedom from religion." You evangelicals already have religion liberties. No one is oppressing your religious freedoms. As for abortion, this is a personal matter that every woman has a right to make without interference from the government. A woman's body is not public property.

[TS commented 3 hours ago](#)

TS

Mississippi [3h ago](#)

As a born-and-raised and born again Christian, I find it offensive to read statements such as "Donald Trump brought prayer back", "He says the right things about God and faith" and "the war on Christmas is over." He hasn't done or said much of anything to show that he is an actual Christian or that he has our best interests at heart. You will know a tree by the fruit that it bears, and Donald Trump is a dead tree. I understand that everyone sees the world through the lens of their community and how they were raised, but I have never been attacked for being a Christian. Social issues, such as opposing gay marriage and abortion, are not valid displays of

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Christian behavior or values. These are political issues and methods of controlling people that have been conflated with religion. However, helping the poor and being a sanctuary for refugees are things that Christ was all about. Let me just say that Satan works through confusion and divisiveness. Donald Trump has not spent one minute trying to unify this country. He pours salt in wounds and stands back to watch citizens relive painful moments of bigotry and intolerance over and over again. Fear is a governing tool used by the most despicable and horrifying tyrants in history. 2 Timothy 1:7 - For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

[Tullymd commented 4 hours ago](#)

Tullymd

Bloomington Vt [3h ago](#)

Trump got me to pray.... that he and the Republican Party and the evangelicals all disappear. They go against the teachings of Jesus and all he stood for. When Trump. et al separated 2000 children from their parents that was proof positive that the silence of evangelicals was anti Christian and a stain on for what Jesus preached.

[DB commented 5 hours ago](#)

D

DB

Chapel Hill, NC [5h ago](#)

Did evangelicals actually believe that making a deal with Donald Trump wasn't going to cost them anything? Maybe they should have one to the trouble of vetting him before accepting the rhetoric instead of the reality. One look at his behavior during the Central Park jogger attack would have clued them in. Just another case of people failing their eyes instead of using them.

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