

WHY A JEW SUPPORTS CHRISTIAN AMERICA

By Don Feder

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In America today, Christians have many enemies and few friends. I would like to be counted among the latter.

It might appear odd that, as a Jew, I would support Christians and the concept of Christian America. Once upon a time, it would have seemed equally strange for a Christian to call himself a Zionist.

But the world is forever and relentlessly changing. As a member of one of the most persecuted minorities in history, I can relate to what Christians are experiencing in the first decade of the 21st. century.

In America today, devout Christians are rapidly assuming the roles traditionally assigned to Jews during the long centuries of exile – scapegoats, objects of ridicule, the focal point of conspiracy theories and the despised “other.”

Do I exaggerate? Consider the following examples (culled from the daily news) of what can only be called an anti-Christian onslaught.

- According to a just-released survey by the Parents Television Council, portrayals of religion (mostly Christianity) on prime time television are overwhelmingly negative. On NBC, there are 9.5 negative representations of faith for every positive depiction. Christians as buffoons or villains has become a staple of comedies and dramas.
- Mel Gibson’s “The Passion” was the most vilified film of 2004 – as well as one of the most popular. But while the cultural elite found this reverent treatment of Jesus ominous, movies that mock Christianity (such as “Saved”) or those that treat Christian clerics as sinister figures (like “King Arthur”) hardly raise an eyebrow.
- Ron Howard will direct and Tom Hanks star in the screen adaptation of “The Da Vinci Code,” in which Jesus and Mary Magdalene have a child and a Catholic order commits murder to cover up the truth. This is a far cry from “The Greatest Story Ever Told” and “The Song of Bernadette” – but typical of Hollywood’s treatment of Christianity today.
- Whenever Christians raise their heads, someone starts taking pot shots. For instance, the Air Force Academy is cracking down on what it considers aggressive proselytizing. Among other allegedly offensive behavior, some Christian cadets had the audacity to suggest that their squadron see “The Passion of Christ” as a group. If that weren’t enough, cadets are including Bible quotes at the bottom of their e-mails. Mandatory sensitivity training is underway. What about a little sensitivity for future officers of a religious bent and an

acknowledgement of the fact that, under fire, our men and women in uniform don't find inspiration from the latest misinterpretation of the First Amendment?

- A double standard is evolving where public acknowledgement of other faiths is allowed, but not Christianity. Bar Harbor Islands, Fla. decorates its lampposts with Stars of David to commemorate Hanukkah, and permits a local synagogue to set up a 14-foot menorah in a prominent public place, but won't allow public display of a Nativity scene. For several years, New York's public schools have put up Menorahs and Moslem crescents during the holiday season, but not mangers – even though 85% of the American people are self-identified Christians.
- For the third straight year, Planned Parenthood (the nation's largest abortion provider) is mocking a sacred season for Christians by selling greeting cards with the message, "Choice on Earth" – suggesting perhaps that, for Mary and Joseph, Jesus was an option?
- More and more colleges and universities are refusing to recognize Christian groups for supposedly violating the school's non-discrimination policy, by declining to admit non-Christians and homosexuals as full members and officers. The choice thus presented to Christian students is: Renounce the principals of your faith, or forego university support.
- In Philadelphia, four Christians, members of a group called Repent America, are being prosecuted for quietly praying and reading Bible verses at a homosexual celebration, funded by the city. (This notwithstanding that the Christians obeyed police orders and remained at all time peaceful, even while being accosted by militant gays.) The four – ages 17 to 72 – are charged with a variety of misdemeanors and felonies (including criminal conspiracy, ethnic intimidation and riot). If convicted, they could face 47 years in prison – essentially for practicing their religion. The American Civil Liberties Union – so concerned with the free-speech rights of pornographers and the procedural rights of terrorists – has yet to be heard from here.
- The attitude of the news media (which regularly refer to evangelicals as "fundamentalists" – with the implication of fanaticism and a tendency toward violence) can best be summed up by a 1994 Washington Post story which described conservative Christians as "poor, uneducated and easy to command." Since the election, some liberal commentators have taken to referring to the red states as "Jesus-land."
- The ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State are on a search-and-destroy mission to purge Christian symbols from public places. Targets include Ten Commandments monuments in courthouses, crosses in public parks, the cross in the Los Angeles County seal and a quote by Theodore Roosevelt ("The true Christian is the true citizen") on a wall in the Riverside, Calif. Courthouse – not to mention the 9th. Circuit Appeals Court's attempt to take "one nation under God" out of the Pledge of Allegiance.

How can anyone with a basic sense of fairness not be outraged by the foregoing?

In the face of a political pogrom, concerned Jews must rally to the defense of our Christian neighbors.

My support for Christian America is in part based on gratitude. I am exceedingly grateful for Christian support for Israel – especially from the evangelical community.

A generation ago, the term Christian Zionist was considered an oxymoron. Today, American Christians are a mainstay of public support for Israel. Without their help, US Middle East policy would be far less sympathetic to the Jewish state – a fact recognized by every Israeli prime minister for the past 20 years, all of whom have assiduously courted the Christian right.

I'm also grateful to Christians for America. I love this country and can't even begin to imagine what my life would be like if I wasn't an American.

It's a truth seldom acknowledged: Christians created America.

Those settlers who most influenced the course of our nation (including the Pilgrims and Puritans) were committed Christians, who – significantly – drew their inspiration from the Hebrew bible.

Overwhelmingly, the Founding Fathers were men of faith. Alexis de Tocqueville, that prescient observer of our infant Republic, said the genius of America is found not in her commerce, her schools or her democratic institutions, but in her churches, with “pulpits aflame with righteousness.”

Throughout the course of our national existence, America has been led by individuals guided by a Christian worldview – from George Washington to George W. Bush.

From Bunker Hill to Gettysburg, and Iwo Jima to Iraq, the men who've taken up arms to defend America overwhelmingly have been Christians. Count the number of crosses at the U.S. cemetery at Normandy or contemplate the pictures of young Marines praying in the field in Mosul.

America took in my immigrant grandparents, allowed them to practice their ancient faith in peace, permitted their children and grandchildren to achieve a degree of material comfort found nowhere else on earth, and to enjoy citizenship rights that Jews have rarely known during the 2,000 years of Diaspora -- for all of which I am indebted to Christians.

Moreover, I believe America's survival rests with Christians. This nation was founded on Biblical morality and grew to greatness with that code. Without it, America cannot long endure.

Christians are manning the barricades in the battle to preserve our nation's spiritual heritage – represented by the expression Judeo-Christian ethic.

If America isn't one nation under God, what will it be? One nation under a culture that's produces 1.4 million violent crimes (murders, rapes and assaults), 1.3 million abortions, and one million new cases of venereal disease each year?

Will we have liberty and equality for all (again, distinctly Biblical concepts), or will we be one nation under a welfare state whose principal products are a crushing tax burden, fatherless families and multi-generational dependency?

Will America be a nation of strong families – where children are nurtured and parents respected – or the me-as-the-sum-of-all-things society into which we are rapidly devolving? The sacrifices required to keep a nation together are based on faith, not on calculations of personal gain.

This is what Christianity gave – and continues to give – America.

Finally, I believe the safety of American Jews lies with Christian America.

In secular Europe, Jews are beaten in the streets. Our college campuses -- dogmatically liberal -- have turned into snake pits of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. The news media, which are so hostile to Christianity, are equally antagonistic toward Israel. (Christians aren't the only ones in desperate need of allies.)

There is a dark force spreading across the globe, rivaling the march of fascism in the 30s and 40s, and communism in the post-war era. Call it Islamic fundamentalism, militant Islam, Jihadism, or what you will, it is animated by a burning hatred of Christians and Jews. The same toxic creed that murders Jews in Israel and attacks Jews in Europe, kills Christians in Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans and Asia.

As never before in our two millennia of joint history, Jews and Christians need each other. The antithesis of the Judeo-Christian ethic isn't a world-weary disbelief, but modern paganism -- where victims are sacrificed to new gods, deities spawned by ideology but every bit as bloody as the gods old – or a world colored Islamic green.

For all of the above – and because I am bound by honor and conscience to do so – as a Jew, I stand with Christian America.

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