

'Christianity Today' And Trump

Virtue Signaling

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Just before the new year began, on December 19, 2019, *Christianity Today* editor-in-chief Mark Galli published an editorial titled pointedly, “Trump Should Be Removed From Office.” (It made me scratch my head and think, “What's this article about?” Just kidding.) Here are a few paragraphs from the article:

The typical *Christianity Today* approach is to stay above the fray and allow Christians with different political convictions to make their arguments in the public square, to encourage all to pursue justice according to their convictions and treat their political opposition as charitably as possible. . . . That said, we do feel it necessary from time to time to make our own opinions on political matters clear—always, as [Billy] Graham encouraged us, doing so with both conviction and love. . . .

But the facts in this instance are unambiguous: The president of the United States attempted to use his political power to coerce a foreign leader to harass and discredit one of the president’s political opponents. That is not only a violation of the Constitution; more importantly, it is profoundly immoral. . . .

We believe the impeachment hearings have made it absolutely clear, in a way the Mueller investigation did not, that President Trump has abused his authority for personal gain and betrayed his constitutional oath. The impeachment hearings have illuminated the president’s moral deficiencies for all to see. This damages the institution of the presidency, damages the reputation of our country, and damages both the spirit and the future of our people. None of the president’s positives can balance the moral and political danger we face under a leader of such grossly immoral character. . . .

That he should be removed, we believe, is not a matter of partisan loyalties but loyalty to the Creator of the Ten Commandments.

Though I agree with some of his policies, I am not a Trump supporter, so please do not think the following comments spring from some sort of political loyalty. I believe that he is America’s duly elected president, and that his policies are substantially superior to what we would have had under Hilary Clinton or any other candidate put forward by the Democrat Party. Despite his gross sins in personal matters—which former presidents have also had—his stance against the entrenched liberalism in Washington I feel is kind of refreshing. I also believe that, from before his inauguration, the political Left in this country has been trying to remove him from office—by hook or by crook—and it has nothing to do on their side with his personal morality. It has everything to do with political power.

All that aside, I think Mark Galli’s call for the president’s removal was hypocritical and panders to the *religious* Left in this country. While they may believe what Galli wrote, the editors at *Christianity*

Today appear to have used the impeachment vote to score points with progressive, mainstream Christians and distance themselves from more conservative evangelicals. Why? Why would they want to do this? Because—to my cynical mind; the way I look at this—they want to ensure that *Christianity Today* remains relevant in this culture. Galli even writes in his editorial, “We want *Christianity Today* to be a place that welcomes Christians from across the political spectrum, and reminds everyone that politics is not the end and purpose of our being.”

In other words, they do not want *Christianity Today* to be pigeonholed by the movers and shakers of this nation as out-of-touch rubes and narrow-minded reactionaries, as most liberals see Trump supporters. They wish to be seen, as modern lingo puts it, as “woke.”

Put another way, *Christianity Today* does not wish to appear to be on “the wrong side of history” about President Trump—and that is a liberal way of thinking, this “wrong side of history” thing. Many commentators have mentioned that, despite Galli’s invoking of Billy Graham as one of its founders, *Christianity Today* has been drifting leftward for many years, and not just in its religious views, but in its political views as well, even to the point of supporting evolution and praising Margaret Sanger, of all people—a eugenicist and the founder of Planned Parenthood.

Despite the editors at *Christianity Today* swallowing a lot of bilge water from the inconclusive Mueller Report and the political theater of the impeachment hearings, they have a point: Donald Trump is no paragon of virtue. We all know that. But the Constitution, which he invokes, does not stipulate that a president must be of impeccable character. In fact, it says very little about character, if anything. Its qualifications for the president deal with age and citizenship. Under the Constitution, personal immorality does not rise to a reason for removal from office. If that were the case, they would all have been pitched out on their ears. The standard in the Constitution is “high crimes and misdemeanors,” and those have to be proven to the Senate. And it was not shown that the House had real reason to send that impeachment on to the Senate. It just was not there. A lot of smoke and mirrors, a lot of dance moves, a lot of jazz hands, but really, nothing was proved.

Christianity Today has also forgotten Daniel 4:17. If you know Daniel 4:17, you'll know that it says that God rules in the kingdom of men, and He gives it to whomever He will, even the basest of men. Romans 13:1 says that God has the authority to set people up—meaning leaders—and has done so.

I think *Christianity Today* is doing what is called “virtue signaling.” Many of you many not know what virtue signalling is, so I will define it for you. Virtue signalling is the sharing of a point of view on a social or political issue to garner praise or acknowledgment of one’s own righteousness from others who share that point of view or to passively rebuke those who do not. It is a way of saying, “Look at me!” I’m on the right side of history! I’m moral; you’re not.”

In this case, it is hypocrisy for *Christianity Today* to call for Trump’s ouster for immorality when, if that were the standard, no one would ever fill the Oval Office or any leadership position. That is why the U.S. follows the rule of law and employs checks and balances to determine executive fitness rather than pious-sounding pronouncements of judgment from religious leaders.

Now, I fear, Mark Galli and *Christianity Today* have only succeeded in doing one thing, and it is not a good one. They have succeeded in sharpening the divide that weakens this nation already.