

What I Saw At The Jericho March



Onward, Christian soldiers! Alex Jones at the Jericho March in DC

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For my sins, I guess, I watched all six hours of the Jericho March proceedings from Washington today, on the march webcast. I say for my sins, but in truth, I decided to watch it because I am interested in what the activist Christian Right is saying, and how they are thinking, in the wake of Donald Trump losing the election.

Except he didn't lose the election, according to them. It was taken from him. This is an article of faith, not to be doubted. If you doubt, you are a traitor, a coward, in league with the Devil. I'm not exaggerating at all. I saw an interview that the influential Evangelical broadcaster Eric Metaxas gave to the populist activist Charlie Kirk this week, in which he boldly claimed that patriots must fight "to the last drop of blood" to preserve Trump's presidency, and that those who disagree are the same as Germans who stood by and did nothing to stop Hitler (Metaxas is best known as a biographer of Dietrich Bonhoeffer). In the same interview — I wrote about it here, in "[Eric Metaxas's American Apocalypse](#)" — Metaxas said it doesn't matter what can or can't be proven in court, he knows, and we know, that the election was stolen. When Kirk, who is very sympathetic to Metaxas, asked him what he thought of where the cases stood, Metaxas blithely claimed that he is "thrilled" to know nothing about them.

This knocked me flat. I have known Metaxas since 1998. He is one of the sweetest men you could hope to meet, gentle and kind, a pleasure to be around. Not a hater in the least. Though I have not supported his Trumpist politics, I would not have figured him for someone who would go as far as he did on the Kirk interview. What kind of person calls for spilling blood in defense of a political cause for which he does not care if any factual

justification exists? What kind of person compares doubters to Nazi collaborators? A religious zealot, that's the kind. The only way one can justify that hysterical stance is if one conflates religion with politics, and politics with religion.

This is why I decided to watch the Jericho March today. It was a Trump rally by Christians (and sympathetic Jews) designed to mimic the Biblical story of the Israelite army ritually marching around the walled city of Jericho, blowing the shofar, and watching as God demolished the city's defenses, so the Israelites could conquer. The idea of the Jericho March is that the true believers would circle the corrupt institutions of the US Government, the ones promulgating the hoax that Trump lost the election.

I watched because I wanted to see how far the Christian Right — for the record, I am an Orthodox Christian, and a conservative — would go to conflate Trump politics and religion. Pretty far, as it turns out. Right over the cliff. You had to see it to believe it.

The rally was held at a stage erected somewhere on the National Mall, it seemed. Eric Metaxas was the emcee. Festivities began with a large American-born Israeli man whose website is Shofar So Great, who says he received a blessing from his Orthodox rabbi to break Shabbat so he could fly to Washington and blow the shofar at the Jericho March, because it's that important to support Donald Trump. Though he was puffing a bit as he talked — as I said, he is not small — he came through in the clutch, blowing two shofars at once, impressively. Then he blew a special red, white, and blue shofar made especially for You Know Who. He referred to it as the "Trump Shofar."

He was followed onto the stage by a woman in a Women For Trump t-shirt, who praised "Yeshua ha Mashiach" — Jesus the Messiah — and sang the Star Spangled Banner. The crowd chanted "USA! USA! USA!" Metaxas took the stage adding his praise for "Yeshua ha Mashiach."

"'Hallelujah' is American for 'praise the Lord!'" said Eric. It was going to be that kind of day.

Eric told the crowd that a particular man had a vision of the Jericho March a few days ago, and that we would be meeting that man onstage soon. "When God gives you a vision, you don't need to know anything else," said Eric, who then asked people to use the price code ERIC when they buy a MyPillow.com product. The company's founder, Mike Lindell, would soon be speaking too.

That line — "When God gives you a vision, you don't need to know anything else" — turns out to be the main key to understanding all of this. Over two decades ago, when I was getting to know Eric, we had a friendly argument over something theological, as we walked around Manhattan. When I challenged something Eric said, he replied that God had told him it was the thing to do. "How do you know that?" I asked. Because he did. The argument went nowhere. I remember it so clearly because that was the first time I had ever had a conversation with someone who asserted that something was true not because God said it — all Christians must believe that, or throw out Scripture — but because God had said it *to them personally*.

I had been a practicing Christian for only five or six years at that point, and I was a Catholic. I had been intrigued by Catholics claiming to have had visions, but knew very well that the Catholic Church warns its people not to accept anything like that without testing them against authoritative teachings of the Church, at least. I had never spoken to

a Christian who believed without questioning it that God spoke to them. When I got home, I mentioned that to my wife, who had been Southern Baptist for most of her life.

“You didn’t grow up in the Evangelical subculture,” she said. “That is totally normal.”

It’s one thing to claim that God told you to change churches, or something like that. It’s another thing to claim, especially if you have a national microphone, that God told you that the election was stolen, and that people need to prepare themselves to fight to the last drop of blood — an actual quote — to keep the libs from taking the presidency away from Trump. Watching the Jericho March, I saw that what I encountered for the first time in conversation with my friend over two decades ago is actually pretty common. Most of the Jericho March speakers, in one way or another, asserted their certainty about the election’s theft. The fact that courts keep throwing these Trump lawsuits out only proves how deep the corruption goes.

See how that works? They are willing to tear down the country for a belief that they cannot prove, but that they will not believe is disprovable.

Next came the MyPillow king, Mike Lindell. He spoke about all the prophetic visions and dreams he had about Donald Trump. Never “I believe I had a vision” — there’s never the slightest doubt with these people. I say that as a Christian who believes God *really does* speak to people directly at times, that he *really does* send visions sometimes. But we have to be extremely careful about these claimed private revelations. Back in the 1990s, a Catholic priest I knew told me that his parish was deeply divided over claims of a member that she was having private visions. I remember him telling me how frustrated it was that so many people in his congregation had little interest in ordinary Catholic discipleship. They were suckers for spiritual fireworks, and often looked down on fellow Catholics who were skeptical, thinking them to be lacking in faith.

Anyway, Lindell told the crowd that one day, God arranged for him to meet Donald Trump at Trump Tower. *Isn’t God amazing?* said Lindell. Here was another theme that was constant throughout the day: that God was directing every little thing. Trump is God’s instrument. It doesn’t seem to have occurred to any of them that God’s purposes are not man’s purposes. The Old Testament tells us that God allowed his people, Israel, to fall into captivity as punishment for their sins. How do we know that God isn’t allowing something like that to happen now? How can we be certain that Trump is God’s favored? We can’t. But don’t try telling these folks that.

I began to think that all of this is the right-wing Christian version of Critical Race Theory, and various doctrines held by the woke Left. For example, if you look at the evidence, and you find the claim of endemic white supremacy to be lacking, well, that just goes to show how deep the corruption within you goes. If a woman claims to be a man, then you must believe her, and to fail to do so only shows your bigotry. And so forth. I don’t need to go into detail on that here. I have spent the past few years documenting this destructive insanity, and make it one of the foci of my new book. This ideology has conquered so many institutions in this society, and few on the Left dare to stand against it. All the passion on the Left belongs to the irrational zealots of critical theory, and their minions.

I wish I could add a new chapter about how we conservatives are allowing ourselves to be conquered by the same kind of unreality. We can’t look away from it, or fall back on whataboutism.

Metaxas came onstage after Lindell spoke, and told the crowd that the president's helicopter, Marine One, would soon be hovering above the crowd. It was a Felliniesque moment: Trump descending from on high to bless the mighty throng. "Praise God!" says Metaxas. "Thank you Jesus! God bless America! ... That's not the Messiah, that's just the President." Remember the opening sequence of *La Dolce Vita*?:

A man who is one of the founders of the Jericho March — I didn't get his name — took the stage to explain how it came about. God poked him in the side one night as he slept, waking him up. "God said it's not over," the man told the crowd.

Then God showed him a literal vision of the Jericho Marches. Then God introduced him to a woman — standing there at his side — who had had *the very same vision*! Isn't God amazing?! By this epistemic standard, the faithful can baptize anything that occurs to them. For all I know, God really did give these people exactly these visions. The point is, everyone is expected to agree that surely, the Lord has spoken to them. O ye of little faith, how dare you doubt?

Then onto the stage came one Fr. Greg Bramlage, a Colorado priest who says he is an exorcist. He shamanically prayed down heaven to deliver America from demons. These were real deliverance prayers. He is saying, in effect, that to oppose Trump and his re-election is to be an agent of Satan. This was the first time I got really angry. As regular readers know, I believe in the power of exorcism. I believe the demonic is real. But there was this Trumpy priest deploying holy prayers of deliverance from the demonic on behalf of a politician, and did it in a way that logically locates doubters within the shadow of Mordor. It felt sacrilegious.

I wondered what Protestants in this crowd thought about the Catholic priest addressing prayers to Mary, the saints, and the angels. Following him was an opera singer belting out "Ave Maria." Trumpy ecumenism is a fascinating religious development. This isn't simply a revival of the old Chuck Colson/Richard John Neuhaus "Catholics & Evangelicals Together." This is something much more intense. Later in the day, a Catholic priest blessed a framed image of Our Lady of Guadalupe that they plan to give to Melania Trump. Again, what did the Evangelicals think of that? I believe that it is good for Christians to work together on political and social causes of mutual concern. But if I believed what Evangelicals believe, I would have a lot of trouble affirming, by my presence, those kind of Catholic prayers. But maybe common love for Trump overcomes these theological divisions.

Retired Gen. Michael Flynn came onstage, saying that his MyPillow gave him the best sleep of his life. Then he recited the Our Father. Jesus, America, hucksterism: that was another theme of this rally. At times during the webcast, the screen would split, with the speaker on the left, and a My Pillow commercial on the right.

This Flynn speech was important, though. He said, "The Courts don't decide the election, we the people decide." But later: "The rule of law is at stake."

Well, which is it? The rule of law in our Constitutional republic means that the courts operate in the name of We the People. Flynn declares mob rule over our constitutional institutions in the same speech in which he decried the loss of the rule of law. He obviously didn't get the irony, nor, I'd wager, did a soul in that crowd.

He also told the people to ignore their minds and listen to their hearts, because in your heart is where you determine truth. *It's. All. About. Feeling.* Don't think, feel. This is 100 percent what Metaxas was saying this week on Charlie Kirk's show: logic & evidence don't matter if your heart tells you that Trump won. You watch: this movement is going to end up demanding that Gen. Flynn become the military dictator of America.

Get this: at the height of Flynn speech, Trump appeared overhead in Marine One. Like an apparition! After Trump choppered off to the Army-Navy game, Flynn resumed his address. *Every time they attack Trump, he said, they're attacking you!* Total identification of the collective with the individual man, Trump. I despise facile comparisons, but this is a core fascist trope. At the 1934 Nuremberg Party rally, Nazi functionary Rudolf Hess told the faithful, "The Party is Hitler! But Hitler is Germany, as Germany is Hitler!"

No, I don't think Donald Trump = Adolf Hitler. My point is simply that political rhetoric that turns a political movement into a personality cult, and unites the masses in this psychological way with the leader, are never headed to a good place. You see what Flynn also did here: trained people in the crowd to reject any criticism of Trump as a personal attack on them.



Don't doubt that God is speaking to you about his favored leader, Donald Trump. Reject all criticism of the leader Trump as the same as attack upon yourself. Let no distance come between you and the divinely appointed leader. By his tweets we are healed. Then the second-most surprising speaker of the day appeared on a giant screen, in a video address: Catholic Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, the former Vatican ambassador to the US, and the world's fiercest critic of Pope Francis. Vigano came to global prominence in 2018 when he accused Francis and leading members of the Curia of covering up Cardinal Ted McCarrick's romps through the beds of seminarians. Vigano, who is believed to be living somewhere in Italy in seclusion, has become a leader of the anti-Francis conservatives within the Catholic Church, though some have distanced themselves from him as Vigano's rhetoric has become more extreme.

This was a hugely significant development, one no doubt brokered by Steve Bannon. It is hard to overstate how much credibility Vigano has with a large number of conservative Catholics. "We are the silent army of the Children of Light," Archbishop Vigano told the crowd. Fighting for Trump is a holy crusade. He denounced the Deep State. It is fascinating that Vigano, an Italian citizen, kept talking about "our homeland," as if America was his. Is he internationalizing MAGA, doing a right-wing Christian version of what the BLM left did over the summer with American racial conflict, which brought people out to the streets of European capitals?

Next onstage was a woman wearing a blue scarf in honor (she says) of the second day of Hanukkah. She pounded a gavel and said, repeatedly, "No King But Jesus! No King But

Jesus!” What on earth must Jews think of all this? Christian Zionist syncretism was all over this event.

After she departed, Metaxas advised the crowd to use their “prayer language” if they have one. Then came a Messianic Jewish “rabbi” exhorting the crowd “in Yeshua’s name.” This man, Curt Landry, says he recently had a Cecil B. DeMillian vision of Moses leading a flock of sheep.

“Like a banana, the sheep’s face peeled back, and inside was the Lion of the Tribe of Judah,” he said, using a messianic title for Christ.

As was Landry roaring about apocalyptic visions, the broadcast went to split screen to show a My Pillow ad. A reader of my tweetstorm about all this messaged me to say, “Credit where it’s due: flogging a MyPillow discount between prayers for God to smite your enemies is the most American thing ever.”

Then a woman who heads a pro-Trump organization in Virginia came onstage to instruct the crowd: “We have to align our spirituality to our politics.” Just as Trump won a landslide election victory, she said, we will have a “landslide against evil.”

We have heard this over and over this year from the woke Left: those who oppose them are not just wrong, but evil. And now we have it from the Right. This country cannot withstand this. Here, from a 1980s-era British documentary series about the Spanish Civil War, is a conservative Spaniard recalling how bitter the factions were in his country just before the war’s outbreak:

And then, you’ll never believe what happened at this Christian prayer rally.

Alex Jones, the Infowars king and ragemonkey conspiracy theorist, took the stage.

“Humanity is awakening! Jesus Christ is King!” he screamed. And: “This is the beginning of the Great Revival before the Antichrist comes! ... Revelation is fulfilled!”

Jones — see his entire address here — denounced Mark Zuckerberg and a litany of elites as “miserable slaves of Satan.”

“World government is here! The system is publicly stealing this election from the biggest landslide and the biggest political re-alignment since 1776!” he ranted.

“GOD IS ON OUR SIDE!” he bellowed. Then: “We will never bow down to the Satanic pedophile New World Order!”

The Christians in the crowd cheered him. Alex Jones, you may recall, is being sued for defamation by families of children killed in the Sandy Hook massacre, which Jones for years denied on his radio show. Alex Jones is a profoundly evil man. But today, he was a hero to these Christians.

“Joe Biden is a globalist, and Joe Biden will be removed, one way or another!” One way or another. My God. Do these Christians have any idea what they’re tying themselves to? Do they care?

Ali Alexander of Stop The Steal took the stage and threatened to have his followers “shut this country down” if they don’t get what they want. He said he is a single-issue voter, and is dedicated to fighting forces that are trying to make his vote not count. This is why he demands that the House not certify the election results in January. The Democrats have a majority in the House, so this won’t happen. But Alexander warned GOP members of Congress who fail to rally to the cause that they will be primaried. He said his minions will be attempting to take over state and local Republican parties next year. Alexander said, “We will burn the Republican Party down, and we will make something new.”

Then came a black Evangelical pastor — I didn’t get his name — onto the stage holding a shofar in his hand. People on the Left who like to say that the MAGA people are racist are projecting. There were blacks and Latinos involved in today’s march. And though it was dominated by Evangelicals, it was by no means just an Evangelical event. Catholics were prominent, and there was even a couple of Orthodox speakers. Anyway, the black pastor proclaimed, “Jesus ... will rule in America!”

Think of it! A black Protestant clergyman holding a shofar at a rally to support Donald Trump. That was NOT on my 2020 scorecard. He screamed about fighting witches and Marxism. “The Jericho walls must come down!” he repeated. Then he blew a shofar as a MyPillow ad aired on the right half of the screen.



Let me repeat this: a black Evangelical pastor denounced witches and Marxists and blew a shofar to defend Donald Trump’s presidency. If you had gone back in history a decade and told the world that this would happen one day on the National Mall, they would have put you in an asylum. Now you would be forgiven for thinking that our country has become an asylum.

Next came a white pastor, who announced “the final mission to ending this high treason.” He likened the crowd to soldiers preparing for war to restore Eden. “We are here to save Earth and its inhabitants,” he said.

Listen to me. Listen. If the twentieth century tells us anything, it’s that whenever you hear anyone standing before a crowd, winding them up about the cause of creating utopia on earth, *you had better run*.

Before he left the stage, the pastor gave a phone number for people to text in donations. Of course.

Then came a pastor with an outfit called the Black Robe Regiment. He compared pastor Trump supporters to the Israelites about to cross the Red Sea. Pharaoh’s army is

coming, he said, but just you wait. “God is about to do something in this country that is going to take the threats we’re dealing with and put it [sic] down.”

Real pastors, he said, lead their flock into battle. He wasn’t speaking metaphorically. The pastor denounced separation of church and state (“What is this separation of church and state?” he sneered). This was truly extraordinary: the conflation of shedding blood, seizing the government, and serving God. This was a great gift to the Left, this speech. The entire day was. A very conservative Christian friend e-mailed me during all this to say, “My God, this is the kind of stuff that drove me away from Christianity for 25 years!”

Another speaker, a man wearing a black cowboy hat, called on Trump to “invoke the Insurrection Act” to “drop the hammer” on “traitors.” He said that Trump should know that the “militia” is with him.

“Let’s get it on now, while [Trump] is still the commander in chief,” said the speaker.

This man demanded that the US president invoke extraordinary powers to punish his political enemies, and that Christians form militias to support him. After he left the stage, Metaxas’s only comment was, “This guy is keeping it real.” Again, these people are the mirror image of the insane intersectional Left. I would no more willingly submit to their rule than I would to woke soft totalitarianism. What a rotten time.

There was more. “This is the beginning of a Christian populist uprising,” says Lance Wallnau, popular pro-Trump Christian writer. He denounced pastors who aren’t on board as cowards. No kidding, this stuff is going to shatter local churches. A Baptist pastor friend texted me earlier this week to say that a dozen people had already left his church, their minds set afire by this kind of propaganda. They went off to fight for America.

My little parish church has people in it who voted for Donald Trump, and people who voted for Joe Biden. These creeps like Lance Wallnau, and the whole lot of them on the stage today, are coming after the unity of churches like mine with this crazy talk. There’s no danger of this in my parish church, but if my pastor ever made people feel unwelcome if they weren’t on the Trump train, I would leave. Don’t you Christians see what they’re doing? A lot of us have been complaining about how Critical Race Theory is tearing up some of our churches (not mine, but those of some of my readers and friends); now woke MAGA is trying the same thing from the Right.

The Catholic bishop of Tyler, Texas, Strickland, addressed the crowd by video, by offering a prayer. Nothing in this prayer was inflammatory or partisan, but the fact that he chose to join this particular march in this way makes it clear which side he’s on. A sitting Catholic bishop, sharing the event with Alex Jones. How will he explain himself to his people? I’m sure he didn’t know Alex Jones was going to be there — Jones wasn’t announced in advance — but Jones was there ranting about pedophiles and the Deep State. What a mess.

By mid-afternoon, the crowds had thinned considerably. Eric Metaxas told the crowd that the show would wind down with a flourish. “We’re going to end by blowing some shofars and blowing your minds,” he promised. But first, he and the Jericho March organizers sang “God Bless America”:



The final speech was a 15-minute video address by Jonathan Cahn, a messianic Jewish pastor from New Jersey ([the Times once profiled him](#)). He's best known for a bestselling book claiming that the Bible prophesied the Trump presidency. Cahn is a powerful speaker — the best one of the day, except

for the black pastor — and, well, he wasn't wrong about the things he said about threats to religious liberty, and what the progressive left in charge of institutions was intending to do. You could have taken the same exact litany, framed the acts in positive terms, and it would have sounded like a progressive Democratic campaign speech. I have been writing about these same things on this site for a long time. Cahn is not wrong to say that the churches should be concerned about these things, and resist them. But like this? By putting all your faith in Donald Trump? By believing and proclaiming things that are false, or at least contestable? By demonizing all those who doubt or disagree?

This is how you fight for righteousness?

No. No, no, no. *No!*

"You are the light of the world," Cahn told the crowd. That message was constant throughout the day. These pastors and lay leaders conferred divine innocence on the crowd. "Children of Light," Archbishop Vigano called them. Whatever they believe, and whatever they do, must be right, because they are agents of God. They are brave. They are pure. They are light-bearers. They are saints, charged by God to fight the pedophile Deep Staters, the Marxists, the Democrats, those who doubt Trump and who stab him in the back. They will create heaven on earth. I heard it myself from the stage at the Jericho March.

The livestream ended by the hosts bringing a MAGA character called Brick Suit (because he wears a suit in a brick pattern) on to wish viewers farewell, while a My Pillow ad played:



Yes, it is bonkers. All of it. But you would be wrong to make fun of it and blow it off. This phenomenon is going to matter. Divinizing MAGA and Stop The Steal is going to tear churches to bits, and drive people away from the Christian faith (or keep them from coming in the first place). Based on what I saw today, the Christians in this movement do not doubt that Trump is God's chosen, that they, by following him, are walking in light, and whatever they do to serve Trump is also serving God. They have tightly wound apocalyptic religion to conservative politics and American nationalism.

"We have to align our spirituality to our politics," said the speaker today. Notice that she didn't say "align our politics to our spirituality." *Politics determines spirituality.* In my recent book *Live Not By Lies*, I talk about how Marxism, and Marxism-Leninism, was an apocalyptic secular millenarian cult that had a lot in common with Christian cults of the past. The revolutionary Marxist left saw the world in black-and-white terms, as a clash between Good and Evil that would eventually lead to a bloody showdown. The forces of Good (workers) would crush the forces of evil (the bourgeoisie), and create heaven on earth. We know how that turned out. The millenarian temptation is always with us. The woke Left has surrendered to it. Instead of good and evil falling along class lines, it falls between races and genders. I spend most of the first half of the book discussing in detail how the Left has marched through the institutions, and are imposing what I call "soft totalitarianism" on the rest of us — something they justify with the same kind of anti-rational, passionate, apocalyptic moralizing. I'm more worried about them, because they have far more power. It's clear how totalitarian the woke Left is.

But if I had to write the book again, I would have to say more about how unstable and given over to irrational radicalism the Right has become. It's not totalitarian, because

they are not trying to politicize every aspect of life, but it is destabilizing all the same. After today, I don't doubt that a significant portion of the Right would accept an *authoritarian* regime, though not a totalitarian one.

America is in a very dangerous place. In [this October TAC essay adapted from *Live Not By Lies*](#), I talk about Hannah Arendt's criteria for discerning a pre-totalitarian society. In the essay, and in the book, I talk about how these criteria explain the woke Left, and why educated elites throughout politics, media, academia, and corporations, have absorbed their dogmas. But read the piece in light of what I've written above, especially about how alienated people are willing to believe ideology over truth, and how they are willing to smash any institutions for the sake of seeing their idea of justice triumph.

This is where the woke Left is. But this is also where a lot of the Trumpist Right — in particular, the Trumpist Christian Right — is. Remember, General Flynn, the central figure of today's rally, recently endorsed a call for Donald Trump to declare martial law and arrest his political enemies. He was nevertheless at the center of today's Christian event, along with the insanely malicious blowhard Alex Jones. What does this say about Christianity today? What does it say about what Christians like this think of truth? Of common decency?

A Catholic priest who read my tweetstorm about all this today e-mailed:

Reading your tweets about these Jericho marches, I couldn't help but think about the famous Regensburg Lecture, given by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006 (the one with the "controversial" quote about Muhammad).

Benedict's crux of the lecture was that the proper understanding of God was to emphasize God's Intellect over his Will. God, as we know, is the Logos, reason itself. A God who is Logos would NEVER ask us to do anything unreasonable, because to do so would go against His very Nature. The lecture went on to essentially say that too many people (from modernist philosophers to Islamic Fundamentalists) perceive God as more of a "will" than an "intellect"; that kind of understanding leads people to think "God told me to fly a plane into an office building; it kinda sounds loony, but God told me to do it, so I'm gonna do it. No matter how unreasonable the demand, if God asks me to do something, I should do it, because he's God."

Benedict then went on to say that the world needs to rediscover the God who is Logos, who is reason itself.

I unfortunately think that too many American Christian fundamentalists now emphasize God's Will over His Intellect, and these Jericho Marches are just the beginning of a bad current of philosophy beginning to enter American Christian life. Obviously the threats from the Left are real and pressing, but we can't descend into illogical madness as our means to fight against it. Truth is the best weapon we have, and the God of Truth, Goodness and Beauty will always guide us towards those things.

Great points. Sadly, the "American Christian fundamentalists" he mentions also include Catholic Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano and other Catholic clergy who joined today's rally. Between the woke Left and the MAGA Right, church is getting to be a war zone. God help us.

I figure Trump doesn't care. He's sitting back watching it all burn. It's entertainment. Similarly, a day or two after doing the interview with Charlie Kirk in which he called on

believers to fight to the last drop of blood for Trump, Eric Metaxas released this parody music video, with lyrics by the Queens Catholic crackpot John Zmirak. It's just a game for these characters. Just a game. With price codes for pillows.

UPDATE: Eric Metaxas has sent out this in his newsletter:

by the way, there has been a lot of misunderstanding around some things I've said on Twitter and on this podcast with Charlie Kirk. To be clear, I have said that if we believe it's possible an election was fraudulent, we have come to a fork in the road. Either we as Americans INSIST that everything be properly investigated and votes counted IMMEDIATELY or we CANNOT move forward as a country and can NEVER inaugurate anyone under such a cloud. And to those who say there's no evidence I say nonsense. I have seen enough to warrant a SERIOUS investigation.

And here is the point, right now and in this battle, America is at stake, and nothing less. This is not about Donald Trump, but about America and the sanctity of our free elections and our voices as American citizens. And yes, I am willing to die in this fight and to fight till my last drop of blood. But I am CERTAINLY not calling us to arms. I am saying I will fight and I exhort others to fight because if we let this happen now we will immediately cease to be America. There is no going back from a fraudulent election, from nefarious figures stealing the voice of the American people. People may misunderstand how I have said this, but you may rest assured I'd rather be misunderstood in my call to action and prayer than sit by and do nothing when the greatest country in the world is destroyed by those who have no respect for its institutions or for we the people who are its only government.

Bull. Watch the Charlie Kirk interview yourself. He does not say "if we believe it's possible an election was fraudulent." He says unequivocally that the election was stolen. He tells Kirk that he doesn't care what can or can't be proven in court. When Kirk asks him what he thinks of the cases, he says that he's "thrilled" not to know anything about the details. *"And to those who say there's no evidence I say nonsense. I have seen enough to warrant a SERIOUS investigation."*

Oh? Fifty judges or panels of judges, many of them appointed by Republican presidents (even Trump!), disagree. Why are they wrong? Maybe some people say there is "no evidence." I don't, because I don't know. I have said that I believe it is possible that there might have been fraud in some places. But I have to trust judges to examine the evidence, and determine if the allegations are serious enough to alter the election results. The answer has been no. At least fifty times no. Are they all in on the conspiracy too? Judges have to make decisions on facts and logic, not on what God tells them in their hearts. I would rather live in a society governed by the rule of law — even at the risk of judicial error — than by the pious whims of religious broadcasters and retired generals.

"And yes, I am willing to die in this fight and to fight till my last drop of blood. But I am CERTAINLY not calling us to arms. I am saying I will fight and I exhort others to fight because if we let this happen now we will immediately cease to be America."

How does that work, exactly? He's willing to give his life, and to fight till the last drop of blood, and to "exhort others to fight" — but he's "CERTAINLY not calling us to arms"? You don't bleed from harsh words. You bleed from armed conflict. The cognitive dissonance here is really quite something.

A friend points out that perhaps Metaxas was speaking metaphorically about "to the last drop of my blood." If so, then that is reckless rhetoric to use in an environment in which people are calling for martial law, arresting political opponents of Trump, and establishing pro-Trump militias. And he should not have repeated the line. It's all a game. Big scary talk.

UPDATE.2: Bwaaaaaah!



UPDATE.3: A serious letter from a reader:

I read your blog post on American Conservative about Eric Metaxas the other day with sadness, but I read your Twitter thread yesterday about the Jericho March with horror. I pray Eric will heed your warnings, come to his senses, and escape the snares that have been laid for him.

The Bible is clear in its warnings about false prophets and that their claims of visions, dreams, and so forth are false. Jesus clearly taught us that his kingdom is not of this world and to not confuse his kingdom with the world's kingdoms in his teaching about Caesar's face on the coin. Christ's warning brought to mind an article I read this last week titled, "Remembering Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn" and Solzhenitsyn's wisdom in understanding the place of politics in the Christian life.

The short article I read about Solzhenitsyn (link below) helpfully brings together a number of Solzhenitsyn's thoughts about politics. Most pertinent, in my thinking, is his point that the form of government is not what is important for the Christian, but whether they demand we believe and speak lies. Excerpt:

The diplomat and historian George Kennan once observed that Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany were aberrations that stood outside of traditional systems of politics. On Sept. 5, 1973, Solzhenitsyn forwarded a private letter to Soviet leaders in which he made it clear that he did not consider authoritarianism in itself to be intolerable, but rather "the ideological lies that are daily foisted upon us." This was a way of saying that the Bolshevik Revolution did something far worse than establish a tyrannical regime. Like the Nazi regime which followed more than a decade later, it sought to destroy the souls of those whom it subjugated.

Solzhenitsyn agreed with the exiled legal and religious philosopher Ivan Ilyin's characterization of the revolutionary upheaval: "The political and economic reasons leading to this catastrophe are unquestionable, but its essence is deeper than politics and economics; it is spiritual." In a postscript to a 1975 samizdat essay entitled "As Breathing and Consciousness Return," Solzhenitsyn again made it clear that his concerns were fundamentally religious and moral—the state structure was of secondary significance:

It is the lies being promoted by the upcoming Biden administration that we are to stand firmly against not his election. We are not insurrectionists. The Bible clearly states that our enemies are not flesh and blood, but the powers of darkness. I think we can too easily miss this distinction. Solzhenitsyn recognized that our problems are at root, moral and spiritual. Our battles lie there no matter the type of government we live under.

Politics cannot make men moral. Our hope is not in the government we live under, but in Christ, the Lord. Excerpt:

Solzhenitsyn recognized that the problems confronting Russians, indeed all men, were fundamentally spiritual, not political, in nature. No political system, therefore, could provide a solution to them, and that included democracy, which Solzhenitsyn, citing Joseph Schumpeter, referred to as "a surrogate faith for intellectuals deprived of religion."

History knew of few democracies, he wrote. People had lived for centuries without them and were not always worse off for it. Russia herself had long existed under authoritarian rule and her people died without feeling that their lives had been wasted. If such systems had functioned for centuries, Solzhenitsyn thought it was fair to conclude that they could offer people a tolerable life.

In his Harvard address, Solzhenitsyn informed his audience with regret that, having lived in the West for four years, he could not recommend it as a model for a post-Communist Russia. He did not cite theoretical opposition to democratic political systems as his reason, however. He reflected that, "Through deep suffering, people in our country have now achieved a spiritual development of such intensity that the Western system in its present state of spiritual exhaustion does not look attractive."

I would agree with Schumpeter's point that politics has become a surrogate faith for many, as can any ideology (eg: critical theory). As Christians we dare not confuse temporal governance or an ideology with Christ's kingdom. There, I think, is but one of the grave errors by the people involved with the Jericho March. There is much more in the linked article that I believe you may find pertinent and I would recommend reading it for your own benefit. May God grant all of us wisdom in these perilous times. And may God deliver Eric from the snares of the enemy and restore him.

Remembering Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn | Chronicles

<https://www.chroniclesmagazine.org/remembering-aleksandr-solzhenitsyn/>

UPDATE.4: A reader who says she was raised in Evangelicalism writes:

I think you are missing a lot of what's going on here because you weren't raised in Evangelical culture. I'm in my forties. What I remember of my church and Christian school was being told constantly that we were supposed to be "world changers." They didn't really tell us how we were to change the world, but we sure as heck knew that we had better change it, or we will have failed. You get primed to go out into the world to do battle, but they don't give you what you need to discern the meaning of the struggle, and to figure out what to fight, and how to fight it wisely. You end up being somebody like I was in college, showing up in my philosophy class ready to fight for Christ, but not having the slightest idea what that meant. Action is what mattered. Thinking about what to do and how to do it was beside the point. Nobody ever told any of us that there was value in a hidden life of faith. It was all about changing the world, whatever that meant. It doesn't surprise me one bit that all these people have gotten sucked into the Jericho March. You also need to think about how Evangelical and charismatic worship has formed people to be susceptible to events like this. We were taught that the way you feel after hearing a great sermon, or going to a football game when your team wins, or being at a CCM concert, was what it meant to be walking in tune with the Lord. That feeling of ecstasy was a confirmation of everything you believed. We were formed to seek those experiences out, and to think of them as self-validating. Nobody ever taught us to apply discernment, and certainly not how to be skeptical of strong feelings, because they could mislead us. This sets Christians up to believe anything that gives them that rush that comes from being part of something collective and ecstatic. It's dangerous because if you have never been taught to distrust your feelings, in the sense of testing them against

Scripture, and just being dispositionally aware that emotions can mislead you, you fall for anything that feels good.

Add to that a culture in which everybody does whatever they want to do, but prefaces it with “God told me.” You learn early on that you do whatever you want to do, and say, “God told me to do it.” One time I broke up with my boyfriend, and said God told me to do it. I argued with his mom, who said, ‘But God told ME y’all were going to get married!’ It’s funny to think about today, but it wasn’t funny back then. All of us seriously believed God was talking to us all the time. Truth was, we were all doing whatever we wanted to do, and licensing it by saying we were following God’s lead. None of what you wrote about from the Jericho March surprises me one bit.

UPDATE.5: A reader writes:

Your article had me alternately shivering and laughing out loud. This is very personal to me. My wife is a MAGA Catholic Trumpist. My kids are woke liberal secularists. I am a Lutheran ex-Republican trying to find a little sanity. While my Missouri Synod Lutheran Church has many Trump supporters and we believe abortion is sinful, the message in church this morning was not about Trump. It was about Mary and Joseph leaving Nazareth not knowing that it would be years before they could return. It was about Jesus the marked man teaching in the temple as the religious establishment sought his arrest. It was part of a sermon series called Home for Christmas, which ironically focused on the scriptural passage that Jesus said the Son of Man had no place to lay his head.

My points are this. First, there is room for people of good will to seek consensus in this country. At the moment, people of good will excludes a lot of MAGAs. However, I know a lot of people like myself who have left the Republican Party who are willing to advocate for sanity in the Democratic Party. Second, God humbles us and calls us to love our neighbor. He does not call us to sell pillows.

UPDATE.6: A reader, on the earlier “Eric Metaxas’s American Apocalypse” post:

I posted before I saw Update #2 (the silly Metaxas carol-spoof). I’m struck by the un-seriousness of it all. This is not the tone of a man who is readying himself to put his own life on the line for a deadly serious cause. This is not tone you take if you are trying to persuade people of the gravity of the greatest crisis in our nation’s history. This is the tone of a man who is trying to get attention on the Internet, who is trying to sell you something; it’s pure click-bait.

That’s what bothers me about some of these loud voices on the Right — I don’t buy that many of them actually believe their own bombastic rhetoric, they’re just engaging in the hyperbole because they’re trying to sell us something (t-shirts, subscriptions, Trump merch, survival kits, gold coins — you name it, it’s always for sale on the sidelines of these kind of events) It’s pure hucksterism, and it’s disheartening when Christians use their influence to peddle it.

That’s a very good point. It’s why the My Pillow pitches during yesterday’s Jericho March were so jarring. The rhetoric was over and over about how we are heading into an Armageddon, and the armies of the righteous should gird their loins for battle — and oh, by the way, buy some pillows.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rod Dreher is a senior editor at *The American Conservative*. A veteran of three decades of magazine and newspaper journalism, he has also written three *New York Times* bestsellers—*Live Not By Lies*, *The Benedict Option*, and *The Little Way of Ruthie Leming*—as well as *Crunchy Cons* and *How Dante Can Save Your Life*. Dreher lives in Baton Rouge, La.