

OVER THE BACK FENCE

By Jack Fichter



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

America's Christian church members should be hanging their heads in shame for their support of President Donald Trump, one of the most morally bankrupt people ever to reside in the White House.

Evangelical Christians
complicit in Trump's rise

There it was in the middle of the rioters and insurrectionists attacking the Capitol last week, a banner reading "Jesus 2020." Someone else was carrying a "Jesus Saves" sign. The Associated Press reported someone was playing "Amazing Grace" on bagpipes at the early point of the attack on the Capitol. Another rioter held a large Bible in his hands.

A protester at the rally President Donald Trump used to incite his crowd to violence told The Associated Press, "Today, it's biblical." America's Christian church members should be hanging their heads in shame for their support of Trump for the past four years and their attempts to re-elect a man who has the characteristics of the Antichrist of the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation.

Pastors all over America endorsed Trump from the pulpit, many openly, many others with suggestions church members grab a "Christian Voting Guide" in the lobby on their way out of the building.

Christians were told to vote for Trump because he was pro-life and Joe Biden supported abortion on demand. Voting for an immoral, dishonest, hate-filled man on a single issue was insane. One wonders how many abortions stemmed from Trump's immoral lifestyle.

Tax code dating from the 1950s forbids churches from endorsing political candidates, but little attention has been paid to that law. Inside the Faith and Freedom Coalition's Voter's Guide was a letter signed by Jerry Falwell Jr., who resigned from Liberty University this year following a sex scandal. He implied if Trump lost the

2020 election it would result in World War III. Other Christian broadcasters signed the letter.

From a Christian Voter's Guide from Reformation 21: "If the candidate who wins is immoral, remember that God is able to use even wicked leaders to accomplish his eternal plan (Rom. 13:1-7)."

A Christian Voter's Guide from Northwestern Media Christian Radio stated "God has 'established' government leaders. They are literally 'servants (ministers) of God, our leaders are to administer justice, and we have no reason to fear them if we are living correctly."

"Only saved people can love Trump," TV evangelist Jim Bakker told his TV audience in January. Yes, the Jim Bakker of the Jim and Tammy Bakker scandals returned to television a few years ago.

In March, the state of Missouri filed a lawsuit against Bakker to try to stop him from selling a silver solution he claimed as a treatment for COVID-19. In May, Bakker left television temporarily after he had a stroke.

Hundreds of Christian radio stations have broadcast slanted pro-Trump talk shows for the past four years from the Salem Radio Network, which owns religious radio stations nationwide. Salem Radio News was decidedly pro-Trump. Salem is known for entering cities, buying an expensive secular radio station, turning it into a Christian station and bankrupting the existing religious radio station by taking away all of its paid programming. I worked in

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THE OTHER SIDE

An island that appeared,
disappeared amid storm

By MARK ALLEN

Today I thought I'd share with you the time that I witnessed an entire island appear and then disappear, seemingly as if by magic, out of the morning haze.

We were staying in the village of Serreta on the island of Terceira in the Azores during our vacation in late September 2019. Hurricane Lorenzo had just passed by Terceira on its way to Ireland. Before I tell you about this magical experience, let me explain a little bit about Hurricane Lorenzo and the Azores.

Hurricane Lorenzo was a major wind event and, as it turned out, a very rare one at that. The storm had begun

its march toward the Azores after it left the African coast in late September. Once in the Atlantic basin, it had turned north and started picking up strength.

Hurricanes rarely make it this far into the North Atlantic basin. Wind-shears and dropping ocean temperatures usually tear fledgling hurricanes apart before they can strengthen and begin their rampage. Lorenzo, however, was destined to defy all expectations as it not only continued but strengthened, finally topping out as a Category 5 storm early on the morning of Sept. 29. Thus it was the eastern-

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YOUR VIEWS

New police chief good choice poorly handled

To the Editor:
Just a few observations regarding articles that appeared in the Cape May Star and Wave these past few weeks.

The appointment of the new police chief was an excellent choice. The way it was handled by the city manager was in very bad taste at best, or at worst, a vindictive way of letting the citizens of Cape May know that dysfunctional city government may still be alive and well in Cape May.

Mayor Chuck Lear's statement that the appointment was justified due to an ordinance change totally missed the mark. The legality of the appointment is not the question. The question is, was the appoint-

ment a disrespectful way to welcome the newly elected mayor and council? By most accounts it was.

The other article that appeared in the Star and Wave a week or two ago was entitled "HPC proposes measure to allow home elevations." The article did discuss home elevations, but it also touched on the importance of surveys to protect and preserve historic and contributing structures in the city. The description of what took place at 901 Benton Ave. was only half the story.

Deputy Mayor Patricia Hendricks' remarks may all be true. It also must be reported that a group of Benton Avenue residents made a number of attempts to call

the city's attention to the fact that the 901 Benton Ave. was a contributing structure and was being destroyed. It seems clear that the HPC made a mistake allowing the owner and builder to do what they did. It also seems clear the city took little interest in correcting the mistake.

The sad part of the story is the structure has little resemblance to the original building but is still regarded as a contributing building. It was not only a survey that was "languishing" that allowed a contributing home in the city to be destroyed. It was also botched by

Jim Brady
Cape May

OUR VIEW

Where do we go from here?

How does America heal after deadly attack on Capitol?

President Donald Trump's loyalists who assaulted our nation's Capitol on Jan. 6 are guilty of sedition.

The terrorists in the mob do not represent all Trump supporters, but the actions last week should force all of his supporters into deep introspection. However, this goes beyond them.

Americans, regardless of political stripe, must consider this: where are we headed?

This isn't about joining hands and singing Kumbaya, but we can collectively turn the temperature down.

The administration in Washington, D.C., changes a week from today, but the rest of us Americans, 330 million strong, will go about our daily lives.

There is a lot to think about.

The president failed this nation at a critical moment. Trump is directly responsible for inciting the mob because of the speech he gave at a rally among his ardent supporters hours before they stormed the Capitol, for two months of unending false claims about election fraud and refusing to concede, and four years of labeling those who disagree with him as enemies of the state.

Political disagreement is part and parcel of the American experience. Labeling others as enemies of the state is language fit only for tyrants and their enablers.

Republican members of Congress who voted to overturn the results of the Nov. 3 election — including our own Rep. Jeff Van Drew — are guilty of aiding and abetting the mob by giving credence to their fears. They are guilty of damaging Americans' faith in this democracy.

Other Republicans fought the attempted coup. They had the courage to put the Constitution and our democracy ahead of their politics. To be sure, most of them waited far too long, going along with

Trump's lies and refusing to acknowledge Joe Biden's presidential victory until the last minute out of their own fear of the president. At least they had enough guts to refuse to participate in that final, fateful charade Jan. 6, and stood up for the Constitution.

Van Drew, however, was a profile in cowardice, more interested in maintaining his loyalty to Trump in hopes of continuing his political career. Van Drew will be remembered for his disservice to America. So will the other Republican members of Congress who voted against certifying the victory of President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

But he, and they, will continue to serve, will continue to be the face of the Republican Party. How will they respond in the months to come?

Will one of them try to be the next demagogue?

That is what we, as Americans, need to reflect upon.

Will we be taken in by the next purveyor of hate and division or will we demand better from our leaders?

Do we really want to continue to demonize our friends, our neighbors, our family members because of our political beliefs? Or do we step back from the edge and acknowledge that we don't have to live our most extreme politics? Can we disagree peacefully and respectfully?

We should all be sick of hearing the phrase, "We want to take our country back." There is no taking our country back because this country has always belonged to all of us, not just those in political power at any given moment. This democracy, messy as it is, remains ours to shape.

The fundamental underpinning of democracy is ending the most spirited and divisive of campaigns in the peaceful transfer of power, to acknowl-

edge winning, to acknowledge losing. That is what has made our democracy an inspiration to the world.

It has been tarnished these past four years because of the heightened rhetoric from — and encouraged and incited by — the person in the Oval Office. It was damaged more Jan. 6 by the physical actions of an unpatriotic and un-American mob.

But we can restore its luster.

We must demand more from our leaders, that they find ways to work together, to shape legislation in bipartisan fashion, rather than continue gridlock based on one political party "winning" at the expense of ordinary Americans.

We must demand they find ways to get more Americans voting, not fewer, to ensure the democracy is as representative as it can be. We must demand they do not label their political opponents as enemies of the state.

We also can demand more from ourselves.

There were 74 million Americans who voted for Trump; 81 million voted for Biden. Obviously, we do not agree on who should lead.

However, we can dial down our own rhetoric.

We can shut off the TV and radio personalities when they try to egg us on, to make it us versus them, or try to shift the blame. We don't have to change our political beliefs, but we don't have to demonize those with whom we disagree. We should try to listen to viewpoints with which we don't agree in a bid to understand why our friends or neighbors or family members believe something else. A huge part of democracy is debate.

We need to put aside the hate.

We just saw where Trump supporters' unabated anger can take this country.

We don't want to go there.

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