

Are Christian Politicians Trying to Set Up a Theocracy? - Part 2

(November 14, 2023)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, we were supposed to be in Israel right now. But as you know, there's a war going on. Please continue to pray for the peace of Israel. And pray for all sides in the battle, pray for enemies, pray for allies pray, people would get saved, pray evil would be dealt with. And we hope to go back to Israel at some point. We're looking into a Footsteps of Paul cruise in the spring. Those of you who were going to go on the Israel trip, we'll let you know about that. And we'll let anybody listening know about that if we do get a good Footsteps of Paul cruise scheduled, you can go with this.

But today, I want to continue a discussion that we started last week on the main podcast, the one that's broadcast on the American Family Radio network. We were talking about an article written by Marci A. Hamilton, who is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. And she wrote this bomb-throwing piece called 'Mike Johnson, Theocrat: The House Speaker and a Plot Against America.' And I can't recount everything we've already covered. You're going to have to go back and listen to that 48 minute podcast. But she makes so many errors in this article that she writes that I just had to deal with it. And there's so many lessons that you can learn by reading what people who don't agree with you write. Sometimes they'll correct you because you got something wrong. But sometimes you're able to correct them. And I hope I'm able to do that here.

And I hold no animus toward this woman. She does appear to do some good work, trying to prevent kids from being abused sexually. I applaud her for that. But unfortunately, this particular hit-piece on Mike Johnson, the new Speaker of the House completely misses the mark. So, let me pick up where we left off. I'm jumping right in on the article here. She says this "Setting aside all of these wildly extreme..." I just have to say this. By what standard is it wildly extreme to say you ought not kill children in the womb? By what standard is it wildly extreme to say that marriage is between a man and a woman? I mean, it's been the case for 5000 years, until the last 10 minutes, for obvious reasons, even regardless of religion. It's just grounded in the nature of reality, that men were made for women, and women were made for men. That's the only way you can procreate and bring forth the next generation. So, why would you say wildly extreme? Ms. Hamilton, you're an attorney. This is beneath you. Maybe the editor of The Guardian just had to do this. I don't know.

Anyway, she says, "Setting aside all these wildly extreme, religiously motivated policy preferences, there is a more insidious threat to America in Johnson's embrace of scriptural originalism, his belief that subjective interpretation of the Bible provides the master plan for governance. Religious truth is neither rational nor susceptible to reasoned debate." First of all, you give no examples why religious truth isn't rational. You're saying, oh, because somebody thinks the earth is young it isn't rational? Now, it might be rational. You just have to look at the



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evidence. Maybe the evidence doesn't support that position. But the people who believe it are trying to give evidence for it. And the people that believe the Bible is true (I certainly am one of those people) try and give evidence for it. Have you ever looked into any of that? Have you ever read a book that tries to give evidence that Christianity is true? Have you ever looked at the literally thousands of pages of metaphysical argumentation for a creator? From even people like Aristotle, or Aquinas, or Anselm, or Augustine? Probably not. And to say that religious truth is neither rational...

In fact, the people that discovered modern science were all Christians. You can see Stephen Meyer's book, 'Return of the God Hypothesis', or J. Warner Wallace's book, 'Person of Interest.' Virtually every area of modern science was founded by a Christian. You say, well, that's because everyone was a Christian back then. Oh really? No. First of all, that wasn't the case. But secondly, why didn't science arise in non-Christian areas? How about in the Muslim world or in China? It could have arisen in the Muslim world. The reason it didn't is because they thought anything outside of the Quran was superfluous.

The reason it arose in the Christian world, and I don't want to get too far off the track here, it was because Christians believed that there was order in nature because there was an orderer. As Kepler put it, when I find cause and effect in nature, I'm thinking God's thoughts after Him. In any event, it's just disingenuous to say that religious truth, whatever that means, is not rational. And I might ask her, what do you mean by religious truth? If something is true, it's true whether or not it has to do with religion. Is it true that we shouldn't murder, steal, rape, or have sex with children, or abuse the poor? Those are all truths, religious truths, taught by Christianity. Is it rational not to do those things?

She goes on to say, "For Johnson, who sees a Manichaean world dividing between the saved who are going to heaven and the unsaved going to Hell, there is no middle ground. Constitutional politics withers and is replaced with a battle of the faithful against the infidels. Sound familiar? Maybe in Tehran, or Kabul, or Riyadh. But in America?" She is completely discrediting herself. So now evangelical Christians are just like the jihadists? Really? That's really ironic from a lady who teaches at the University of Pennsylvania, a place that can't seem to denounce the jihad we've seen from Hamas, a jihad that raped and murdered women, and beheaded and then baked babies in ovens. Your president, Ms. Hamilton, has refused to come out strongly against that. And you're claiming that Mike Johnson is like the jihadists that your president can't even denounce. This is just false on its face.

If you want a true theocracy, go to Tehran, go to Kabul, go to Riyadh. But don't go to Washington, because you're not going to find it in Washington, Ms. Hamilton, despite the fact that the Speaker of the House is an evangelical Christian. In fact, because he's an evangelical Christian, you're not going to find a theocracy in Washington, because he understands that the only legitimate theocracy in the history of the world was the theocracy where God was literally in charge of Israel, between Moses and Saul, even before Saul came to power. So, see she's ignoring. And by the way, she's also ignoring what Mike Johnson said in the half hour interview

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that he gave in 2016. That's an interview that she referred to. Now, as I play this clip from Mike Johnson, I want you to think, does this guy sound like a jihadist? Does this guy sound like somebody who wants to force everybody to obey Old Testament laws, and wants to force everybody away from religious freedom, and wants to put something like Sharia law in place? Here's the clip. Diego, play clip two.

MIKE:

But I also have this passage of Scripture and it's 2 Timothy 2, beginning in verse 24-25. It says, the Lord's servant must not quarrel. Instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach and not resentful. Those who oppose him, he must gently instruct in the hope that God will grant them repentance, leading them to acknowledge the truth. So, in other words, we have no reason to hate anybody, be angry at anybody, because we're just out there sharing the truth. We're doing it in a winsome way and we're trying to win some over. There's a time to every purpose under heaven.

There's a time to get angry and even Jesus himself overturned the tables on the temple steps. Sometimes that's appropriate. But what we're supposed to be doing is doing this as winsome warriors. And politics is just one arena that gives you a great opportunity to do exactly that. And people don't know what to do with it, because they want to fight, and they expect you to fight. But when you even love your enemies, as Scripture says you're supposed to, then it makes it a whole lot more palatable. And it makes it kind of fun.

FRANK:

Did you hear that? He's using Scripture to say, I need to love my enemies. Does that sound like Hamas? Does that sound like the Ayatollahs? Does that sound like the Taliban? And yet, that's what Marci Hamilton said that Mike Johnson was. She just compared him to jihadists. This is ridiculous. That's the furthest from a Muslim jihadist that you can imagine, a man who says love your enemies, and we have to be winsome when we're trying to put policies in place. And we can't really blame people because they may have been blinded. He says that in another clip, that we have to show mercy to people. We have to be winsome. We have to be kind.

But look, the left is going to lie about this man and the rest of us because to them, we must be stopped and shut up. Speaking of the ends justify the means, they will lie about him. They will lie about you. They will lie about any evangelical, even those that are winsome, even those that say we have to love one another. We have to love our enemies. They're going to lie, because for to them, the end does justify the means. She's actually saying he's an ends justify the means guy, when in fact she is. Again, Ms. Hamilton goes on to say. And again, we're reading from an article called 'Mike Johnson, Theocrat: The House Speaker and a Plot Against America', by Marci Hamilton. And Ms. Hamilton, if you want to push back on any of what I'm saying, if you think I've misunderstood you, I'm happy to have you on the show and talk about this. Just email me [Hello@crossexamined.org](mailto>Hello@crossexamined.org) if you ever do listen to this podcast.

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In any event, she goes on to say this. "When rulers insist the law should be driven by a particular religious viewpoint, they are systematizing their beliefs and imposing a theocracy." Alright, let me just say again, that's nonsense. Okay, as Oxford gets it right. When priests and imams just impose either their own laws, or the laws they think of God on people without any consent from the governed, that would be a theocracy. Nobody in America can do that. Because nobody in America has the authority just to willfully themselves, impose any law on anybody else without going through the proper measures, without going through Congress and getting the President to sign. That's the way our system works, for good reason. Okay? So, again, you don't understand what a theocracy is.

And then she goes on to say, "We have thousands of religious sects in the US, and there is no religious majority. But we now have a politically fervent conservative religious movement of Christian nationalists..." That's a curse word there for people. "...intent on shaping policy to match their understanding of God and theirs alone." Let me just say this. We could say the same thing about you. We naturally have a politically fervent, leftist religious movement of leftists intent on shaping policy to match their understanding of reality and theirs alone. Everybody thinks they're right in the public square. Everybody's trying to say I think my position is right. You're trying to do that as well, Ms. Hamilton. The only question is, do you have an external referent where you can discover whether your particular position is right or wrong? If there is no external referent, it can't be right. It can't be wrong. It's just a preference.

At least the people that believe in natural law, which is what our founders believed in, they had an external reference. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men were created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The Creator gives us rights. Governments don't. It's not just my opinion. It's not just your opinion that we have rights, or what the rights are. They come from God. Ms. Hamilton goes on to say, "The Republicans who elected Johnson speaker by unanimous vote have aligned themselves with total political rule by an intolerant religious sect." Just let me say it again. We have a republic; this is not a theocracy. Religion is not being imposed and moral issues must be voted on.

There's one exception to that. Well, two exceptions, actually. One is when the administrative state, the fourth branch of government, the unelected branch, just makes up rules. Like when Biden writes in an executive order that says everyone has to use certain pronouns. That's one way you can avoid having your laws voted on. And that's an illegitimate use of power, by the way. The second illegitimate use of power is when a rogue Supreme Court imposes its own morality on the land. Ironically, they did that on the very issues Ms. Hamilton thinks ought to be imposed, abortion and same-sex marriage. She thinks Roe v. Wade was good and Obergefell was good. She thinks the Supreme Court should have done that, even though abortion and marriage are not federal issues. They've always been state issues. And you should know that as a First Amendment attorney. But the question is, what is your source for more legislation and rights?

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For the founders, the source is God, not a particular denomination, but God. What is Ms. Hamilton's source? The whims of the New York Times editorial board? Social media slogans? Her own opinions? Here's what she tweeted out just a few days ago, November 6. She says this. "Children have a right to health and life." Well, good. "Failing to mandate vaccines increases their risk for disease and for future diseases like shingles after they have chickenpox. Failure to vaccinate also endangers the elderly, the disabled, and the pregnant." This is a tweet. Well, she got the first sentence right. But failing to mandate vaccines increase their risk for disease? We've got to mandate vaccines now?" And for future diseases like shingles after they have chickenpox"? So, she wants vaccine mandates? By what moral standard are you saying that everyone has to take the vaccine? Where are you coming up with that? By what moral standard?

And I assume...And it doesn't say this. Maybe not. But I assume she's thinking even the COVID vaccine, which we know has serious problems. We also know COVID doesn't affect children who don't have comorbidities. So, why would you put this experimental vaccine, which has had so many different problems with it, into the bloodstreams of babies and children? Where are you coming up with this? But she did say children have a right to health and life. However, this is from a woman who is obviously pro-abortion, and she's writing for The Guardian, who says this at the bottom of every article. "While fairness grades everything we do, we know there is a right and a wrong position in the fight against racism, and for reproductive justice."

Oh, you know there's a right and wrong position? By what standard? And you think reproductive justice, which is just a euphemism for killing children in the womb, why do you think that's just? And why would you say that children have a right to health and life but before abortion? Oh, well, because a child in the womb isn't a human being. It's not a child. Well, you're just denying science then. We know it's a human being. And who is the science denier? It's not Mike Johnson. It's not evangelical Christians. It's not atheists who are pro-life. It's you.

Now, we could say a lot more. But I went to my friend Bill Federer. For those of you that don't know Bill Federer, Bill Federer is the most amazing historian I've ever met. The guy is an absolute machine, particularly with not only US history, but even world history. And he has a website called AmericanMinute.com. I've had him on the program several times. So, I sent him this article, the one we've been discussing, this article, 'Mike Johnson, Theocrat: The House Speaker and a Plot Against America' by Marci Hamilton, found in The Guardian. It's in the show notes. And I just said, hey. I want to get your perspective on this. What are the three or four points you would make in responding to this article? And here's what Bill said, just brief points.

Number one, it is projection. She is accusing Mike Johnson of what she is trying to do, which is impose a religious viewpoint. She's doing the same thing. The question is, is her viewpoint correct? Because look, even as an atheist, and I don't know if she's an atheist. Actually, she said she's a believer of some kind. I don't know what kind of believer she is. She has a religious position too. Is she saying that she can't use anything she learns from her religion and public policy? If she can. Why can't Mike Johnson?

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Number two said Bill Federer, Christian pastors founded colonies where government is from consent of the governed. This was the complete opposite of theocratic kings rolling through mandates. Exactly. Bill Federer knows what a theocracy is. Apparently, Marci Hamilton doesn't, but without the proper definition is accusing Mike Johnson of being one. Number three, the number three problem. The founders jealously defended freedom of conscience. William Penn said, "Force makes hypocrites." Now, ladies and gentlemen, you know who William Penn was? Yeah, he's the guy who is the namesake of the state of Pennsylvania, and also the University of Pennsylvania where Marci Hamilton teaches. Isn't that ironic?

Number four, Jefferson defended the Baptist view of preventing government from forcing people's conscience in Virginia. And he says there was a statue of religious freedom in the letter to the Danbury Baptists. Now, he points this out about Virginia. Here's what he said about Virginia. Colonial Virginia had a government imposed belief system, an establishment of the Church of England, or the Anglican Church from 1606 to 1786. So, before they actually became a state in 1787, that's when the Constitution was ratified, the state of Virginia had a state church, and they kept it in place. And the establishment meant mandatory membership, mandatory taxes to support it, and no one could hold public office unless they were a member. And this was modeled after the European nations who had establishments of different Christian denominations.

And here's what Federer says about this. History records how oppressive governments are tempted to establish government mandated belief systems, from King Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 3, to Islamicists (that's all over the place, right?), fundamental Hindus, atheistic socialists, enforcement of LGBTQ trans beliefs, and untested healthcare practices. Translation, the COVID vaccine. And what Federer goes on to say, he says in Virginia, lax enforcement allowed emigration of dissenting religious groups. The first being Presbyterians, and Quakers, followed by German Lutherans, Mennonites and Moravian Brethren, then finally, Baptists. He said, Patrick Henry, almost succeeded in having Virginia not ratify the Constitution, as it did not have a Bill of Rights guaranteeing among other things, the freedom of religion. So, they were trying to avoid on a national scale, what some of the states had, and certainly what the Church of England had. But as you all know...well, maybe you don't because too many people don't know history.

James Madison enshrined the freedom of religion in the First Amendment, and it was passed in 1791. So, the entire Bill of Rights was designed to protect citizens and states against federal government overreach. One federal government overreach would be to establish a national church, which would be like a theocracy. So, the bottom line is this, if we follow the Constitution rightly, and so many leftists don't. But if we follow it rightly, any federal law that establishes a national church, or prevents the freedom of religion, is unconstitutional. So, legislating a theocracy is unconstitutional. But legislating morality is unavoidable. In fact, the First Amendment itself legislates morality.

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It says it would be wrong for the federal government to establish a national church, because the people have the right to either be a member of any church they want, or no member. So, that's a moral position. And everybody, again, is trying to legislate morality. When people say, well, don't impose your morality on me. I say, first of all, would that be immoral? Why can't I do that? And you're imposing your morality on me. You're saying I ought not impose ought not. Well, why do you get to impose that ought not on me? Actually, the better answer is this. When somebody says, don't impose your morality on me, I think what you ought to say is, this isn't my morality.

I didn't make this stuff up. I didn't make up the fact that murder is wrong, that abortion is wrong, that rape is wrong, that death is wrong, that you ought not mutilate children. I didn't make up the fact that men were made for women, and women were made for men, and the best way to perpetuate and stabilize society. This is the reason the government's involved in marriage to begin with, to legally recognize that man/woman relationship over every other relationship. I didn't make any of this stuff up. This isn't my morality. This isn't your morality. This just happens to be the morality, the one Thomas Jefferson said was self-evident. The one the Apostle Paul said the Gentiles who do not have the law, have the law written on their hearts.

Look, if you have a problem with the morality, you don't have a problem with me. I didn't make it up. You have a problem with the Creator upon whose nature this morality is derived. That's really the issue here. And you want to take many of the moral precepts of the Bible, and many of the moral precepts of Christianity and even natural law. You want those imposed. You want thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit rape, thou shalt not commit pedophilia. You think that we ought to take care of the poor and love your neighbor. You think all those things are right and true. But you just don't like what it says about don't murder your children. Because that's what abortion is, you're murdering a human being. Thou shalt not murder.

And you don't like what it says about sexual purity. And so, you want to throw everything out. Well, when you throw everything out, you don't have any more criminal law, and you have anarchy. So, Ms. Hamilton, seems to me, you're misstating. You don't even understand what a theocracy is. And you are drawing false analogies; you're using definitions that don't work. And you're doing exactly what you're claiming Mike Johnson's doing. The only question is, what's your source for your policy positions? Do you have a source outside yourself? Or is it just you? Mike Johnson has something outside of himself. Something that we all in our hearts know is true, that there's a standard of rightness outside of ourselves that we all ought to obey.

If you're going to deny that, then you don't have any grounds for any public policy. Because all you'll be doing is imposing your own personal preferences through power. So, it's not Mike Johnson that's the problem. Tragically, it's people like you who do not have a moral standard outside of yourself that you can refer to. And you're imposing not morality on people, but immorality. Now, again, I'm happy to talk about this. I'm sure you're a fine person. I just think what you've written here just completely misses the mark in so many ways.

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Now, friends, we're going to have a big announcement coming up here in a week or two. I'll make it on the podcast. You're not going to want to miss it. It's going to be the biggest thing we've ever done at CrossExamined.org I think you're going to want to be a part of it. So, keep an ear out for that. In the meantime, just some events coming up that I want to mention to you. I was supposed to be in Israel right now, but I'm not. So, that's why we have a little break, which is good, because I'm tired. I've been traveling quite a bit. The next event that you can tune into will be November 27. We're going to do Lesson 12 of our 'Digging Up the Bible' series, all the top archaeological discoveries of the Bible.

It'll be livestreamed and only posted on YouTube for a few days. It'll be 7:30 Eastern Time on November 27. And then we'll do another one on December 4. I will also be at Calvary Chapel, Tucson on December 2-3, Lord willing. And then looking further out, I'll be at America Fest, out with my friend Charlie Kirk. That's out in Phoenix. Go to TPUSA.com for more on that spectacular event. That goes from the 16th to the 19th of December, out there in Phoenix, Arizona. So, thanks for listening and viewing. And Lord willing, I will see you here next week. God bless.

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