

The darkness targets Donald Trump instead of the church for a reason. The biggest problem America faces is that most of its pastors are unworthy of being shot at.

A couple of months ago, I [wrote a column](#) about how spineless Christian leaders had failed America. This failure left a vacuum filled by Kansas City Chiefs star kicker Harrison Butker, who has done more this year to advance biblical ethics in the culture than much of the church combined. He continues to take shots for it, which brings me to Donald Trump and this week's Republican National Convention in Milwaukee.

There is some justifiable criticism from my fellow believers about some of the speaker choices, such as former stripper Amber Rose, who started something called "SlutWalk." That criticism has also morphed into some broader statements claiming this was once a party of Christian conviction that is now suddenly being pushed into the gutter by Trump and his "New York values."

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That is not true.

The truth is this party had betrayed its evangelical base more times than any of us could count long before Trump showed up. It was Trump and his "New York values" that finally recognized Jerusalem as the rightful capital of Israel. It was Trump who got Roe v. Wade overturned, not nice guy born-again George W. Bush. It was Trump who brought unprecedented stability to the Middle East, while keeping us out of internecine fights between warring sects of Muslims that the more dignified forever-war GOP kept dragging us into.

That doesn't mean I don't have criticisms of Trump. I've not been shy about sharing them on these pages and on the air. Nevertheless, the evangelicals who make it look like the Republican Party was an extension of the Council of Nicaea before Trump arrived sound just as out of touch as the GOP corporatists who failed to recognize they were the impetus for Trump's original ascension nearly a decade ago.

Just as the globalist corporatists merging with Democrats to form the uniparty created the market for the disruptor many believe Trump is, the spinelessness of too many Christian leaders necessitates someone to step into the Charlemagne-sized void and become the defender of the realm.

Because when it comes to the culture war raging in America, the salt has lost its savor, making it useless and trampled underfoot. The church systematically ran from the battle in the last generation to build megachurches in the suburbs. When it did engage, its priority was ensuring that the battle was waged as proper gentlemen (nicer than God) would wage it rather than winning it.

We were purpose-driven by forsaking one of our primary purposes.

When I was on the Ted Cruz campaign opposing Trump in 2016, I made an analogy about his popularity with evangelicals. Because we were also striving to be the evangelical candidate and couldn't figure out why this New York celebrity with a tabloid greatest hits album was more popular with Southern Baptists than our Southern Baptist candidate.

I pointed to Clint Eastwood's "Man with No Name" antihero in the spaghetti Westerns. The people preferred the Gary Cooper nice guy sheriff who would cleanse the town of the bandits. The one they could look up to. Desire to marry their daughters off to. The one they would name

their sons after. But that nice guy sheriff never showed up for the fight, and so the town kept getting overrun by the banditos. Sooner or later, you just need to survive.

So you turn to the Pale Rider, the High Plains Drifter, the antihero, when you're cornered and out of options. You know the collateral damage of aligning with the antihero will be high. A few townsfolk might get caught in the crossfire. You know he's got unrepentant and irredeemable flaws you don't aspire to. But you also know it is either him or the end of your town.

For all his flaws, and for all the things about him and his way of doing things that have both flummoxed and frustrated me, the truth is that Trump has done more to fight the darkness seeping into this culture and threatening to overrun it since he came down that escalator in 2015 than the church has done collectively thus far this century.

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