

AlbertMohler.com

The Media Elite and the Evangelicals: Time to Look Dangerous

Why do evangelical Christians face such hostility in the news media? There are exceptions, of course, but the major national news media present a picture of evangelical faith that is distorted at best and often dishonest as well.

Wednesday, August 20, 2003

Why do evangelical Christians face such hostility in the news media? There are exceptions, of course, but the major national news media present a picture of evangelical faith that is distorted at best and often dishonest as well.

The two groups inhabit very different worlds. The media elite is often educated in the major centers of American higher education, where a naturalistic and secular worldview is just taken for granted. Historic Christianity is seen as a relic of the past — a repressive system of belief that produced beautiful cathedrals, but called upon its adherents to accept revealed truths and to live by a repressive morality. Been there, done that, moved on to the modern age.

Evangelical Christians [and traditionalist Roman Catholics] are seen as throwbacks. Our convictions are routinely dismissed as anti-intellectual and our moral concerns are assailed as hostile to human liberation. Many of the most influential journalists want us to disappear, or at least go back into the backwoods from which we must have emerged.

Their friends in the educational elite, Hollywood, and the political left are in full agreement. Their colleagues reinforce the worldview, and the major journalism schools are training grounds for hostility toward conservative Christians.

Nicholas Kristof rang the alarm in *The New York Times* last week [see Web Log entries for the past two days], but he is hardly alone. Conservative Christians are seen as the great threat to social progress, abortion rights, homosexual marriage, and full human liberation. We should get out of the political arena, the elite warn, because we have no right imposing our morality on the rest of the country. Leaving, of course, the media elite free to impose their morality [or amorality, as may be the case].

Kristof's column is just unusually frank. These candid admissions appear in unguarded moments. Reporter Michael Weisskopf of *The Washington Post* once dismissed conservative Christians as "largely poor, uneducated, and easy to command." When called on the carpet, Weisskopf said that he should have written that "most" evangelicals are poor, uneducated, and easy to command. Ah, now that's better.

Veteran CBS journalist Bernard Goldberg claims that the media elite see conservative Christians as "especially juicy targets." He explains: "In a lot of newsrooms, they're seen as odd and viewed with suspicion because their lives are shaped by faith and devotion to God and an adherence to rigid principles — opposition to abortion, for one — that seem archaic and closed-minded to a lot of journalists who, survey after survey suggests, are not especially religious themselves." [see book announcement]

CNN founder Ted Turner once called Christianity a religion "for losers." Turner's remark was criticized, but more because it was impolite than untrue. It's no accident that moguls like Ted Turner hire those who share their worldview. Why would CNN hire "losers?"

Journalism professor Marvin Olasky explains: "Lack of understanding, along with outright anti-Christian prejudice,

leads to journalistic amazement or horror at the supposed self-deception of those who do see a spiritual realm.”

The media elite and their colleagues in liberal culture are absolutely certain that secularism is the shape of the future. They pity those poor and backward Christians who are destined to be mowed down by secularism and washed out of history.

“Normal” people are not deeply committed Christians, explains Eric Alterman. Alterman is a liberal journalist whose book, *What Liberal Media?* [see book announcement] is a rejoinder to Goldberg’s *Bias*. Journalists are far more comfortable with the secular-minded, he explains. Their worldview is taken as normal: “Indeed it is so normal, it does not occur to anyone to point it out.” At least we know where we stand. And what about the journalists? Alterman reveals that most reporters are “clueless” about what conservative Christians really believe. They just know enough to know that we are not “normal.”

David Brooks, who describes himself as a “recovering secularist,” accuses his fellow journalists of being “secular fundamentalists” who “remain smugly ignorant of the enormous shifts occurring all around them.” [see his article, “Kicking the Secularist Habit”] September 11 should have been a wake-up call, he argues: “Secularism is not the future; it is yesterday’s incorrect vision of the future. This sends us recovering secularists to the bookstore or the library in a desperate attempt to find out what is going on in the world.”

They should go to church instead. Of course, for this to be helpful, the church must actually preach the Gospel and teach the Bible. Secular journalists could go into all too many churches and see very little that would offend or challenge.

Authentic Christianity must be presented without fear or compromise, and without “dumbing down” the faith so that its intellectual content and theological core disappear.

The secular establishment considers Christians odd, outdated, and embarrassingly vocal. Secularists just want us to go away. Authentic Christianity represents a threat — the only threat that matters — to the secular momentum of the postmodern age. We should be tired of the secular condescension that sees us as odd and eccentric. It’s about time we look dangerous.

