Twitter Thread by When the bees die, we die too.



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@brucewilson

I'm going to have to draw the line here. And, that's in reaction to a piece from, of all people, Greg Sargent - whom I regard as perhaps the @washingtonpost's top regular political columnist.

A text search shows the words "Christian","evangelical","fundamentalist" are absent...

> Marjorie Taylor Greene approved of executing Dems, yet she'll get little to no punishment. But the story here is much bigger: GOP failure to police extremists goes back half a century.
>
> \u201cThe dictum now is \u2018No enemies to the right,'" @RuleandRuin tells me:https://t.co/DTlzGomy5h
>
> — Greg Sargent (@ThePlumLineGS) January 28, 2021

Consider the context - back on January 6th, protestors gathered in small groups on the Mall, and called upon their deity to consecrate what they were about to do. Then, in a howling mob, attacked the Capitol Building. Once inside the House chamber, they consecrated it to Jesus.

Now, let's walk it back a couple of years. In early 2017, I thought to myself, "OK, this is gonna be kind of predictable, but I'm going to look into the radical evangelicals flooding into the new Trump Administration."

See, I knew that would happen. It was transactional...

4) Trump cut a deal w/the evangelicals, along the lines of "vote me in, and I'll let your people do whatever the hell they want to do in my administration."

And it was so. In early 2017 I wrote this: https://t.co/mabl2EQnem

5) I was, to my knowledge, the 1st to write about this phenomenon, Ralph Drollinger's in-house theocratic bible study for Trump's cabinet.

Over the next few years, covering Drollinger's thingy become quite a media cottage industry. Predictably, none of the pieces mentioned mine

6) Early on, the @washingtonpost exposed a memo from the Council for National Policy to the new Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. @C_Stroop did, by far, the best job unpacking this (https://t.co/OAMP8VV5Fs) but there was more, and worse...

7) I cross referenced all the names on the memo to DeVos, and a significant number of them had served, or were serving, on the board of something called the "Coalition on Revival", which still exists and is both extremely obscure but also quite influential...

8) Back in the early Reagan years, various appendages of the Christian right effort to remake America were emerging. One key effort was the Coalition on Revival, which brought together a wide front of fundamentalists, evangelicals and charismatics to map out, in great detail...

9) ...a vision for the "Christian" transformation of America, across all sectors of society. Intellectually shepherding this process was Rousas J. Rushdoony and his merry band of Christian Reconstructionist ideologues. Rushdoony had written a huge tome for the complete "biblical"

10) ...transformation of societies & nations, his "The Institutes of Biblical Law".

Many in the horde who stormed the US Capitol would have been (probably quite unaware) under Rushdoony's ideological sway. And there was another major influence in play as well...

11) One of the odd things to covering the Christian right is the way pieces one might have written years, even decades ago, can suddenly become pressingly relevant again.

This is because coverage of the Christian right has been so thin, and patchy, so a very old piece might be..

12) ..just about the only thing ever written on a particular aspect of the movement.

Covering the planned January 6th rally (which became a coup attempt) journalist Bob Smietana, writing for Christianity Today, noted the planned "Jericho March": https://t.co/ZpQ2QqItpG

13) Smietana did not attempt to contextualize this - where, Christian tradition, did this "Jericho March" come from? What about the shofars?

Without getting bogged down in endless details., what you to know is that these rituals are quite new, and associated with...

14) ..a radical, hyper-charismatic new strain of Christianity that has swept not just America but *the entire globe* since the late 1970s. It looks a bit like traditional Pentecostalism but it's not.

Top scholars who study this movement, technically known as the "3rd Wave"...

15) (short for "3rd Wave of the Holy Spirit") have said, and I quote, that this movement has "no connection" to traditional Christianity.

The 3rd Wave is as radically different from traditional Christianity as was (and is) the Church of the Latter Days Saints (the

Mormon Church.

16) Indeed, there are many similarities & parallels. One big difference, though - the Mormon faith sprang almost full blown from the imaginative visions of one man, Joseph Smith. By contrast, the 3rd Wave was created by entrepreneurs, technocrats, sociologists, anthropologists...

17) ..and other trained professionals, cobbled together from various bits and pieces chosen for their ability to be maximally catchy. The 3rd Wave (this is my hypothesis, BTW) was constructed to be maximally infectious. It's heavily imbued with music, ritual, faith healing...

18) ...and coercive technologies for social control developed in cults. As a movement, it resembles an inchoate super-cult formed of many intersecting local cults organized around churches & mega-churches. It's adherents infiltrate traditional churches to spread it's ideas...

19) Like #COVID19, it's *very* catchy.

A definitive academic reference work for global Christianity, laid down 2 decades ago, is "World Christian Trends AD30 - AD2200"

According to this work, by the year 2000 there were 295 million Third Wave Christians globally...

20) 2 decades later, the 3rd Wave is *much* bigger. Many of the #GOP politicians you might associate w/the Christian right are either in it or pander to it.

In the late 90s, leaders in the 3rd Wave began to organize their movement, starting to give it the very rough framework...

21) ..of a global church. They called it the "New Apostolic Reformation". The idea was that it was to be as radical, or even more radical, than the Protestant Reformation, and would trace its authority through NAR "apostles" who each would possess as much or even more authority..

22) ..as was wielded by Jesus' original 12 apostles.

And there were prophets, too, who talked directly to god & got specific teachings and instructions.

One key figure who helped pull this whole NAR thing together was an evangelist named C. Peter Wagner, who started out his..

23) ..career on a quite traditional road, as a Congregationalist (if you don't know what this is, think of the classic New England white church with a single spire.) Wagner went to S. America to evangelize, and thoroughly sucked at it. But he was *very* smart & got interested...

24) ...in the very question, what was the most effective way to spread the faith? Christians who study this know that the big breakaway success stories of the last few hundred years have been 1) the Mormon Church and 2) (even bigger) Pentecostalism.

25) So Wagner set about identifying the various elements which could supercharge Christian evangelism. And he allied himself with other Christian intellectuals with a similar tinkering, inventor's mentality.

The end product is the 3rd Wave, whose prophets can literally receive

26) ..teachings, straight from god, that *can be added to the bible, as new scripture*.

Now, imagine wielding that power as *a political weapon*.

Because that's exactly how the NAR uses it.

27) OK, catching my breath for a moment. I seem to be emitting something like a chapter of the book I've long needed to write. I guess this Twitter machine is for me a good motivational form...

28) Back in 2012, I found audio from an appearance C. Peter Wagner made in 2006 at a West Coast NAR church. He stated this doctrine directly - NAR prophets can receive new teachings that can add to scripture, though these cannot *contradict* scripture. https://t.co/k4QZsPqp6I

29) Notably, Wagner also states, flatly, that there is *nothing* in the Bible about abortion. Look in your Strong's Concordance, he told his audience, you won't find it.

BUT, he told them, *our prophets tell us it's wrong*.

And, I know just who one of those prophets is.

30) His name is Lou Engle. He came to public notice back in 2006, for his appearance in the video documentary "Jesus Camp", where he was seen indoctrinating kids at the summer camp, exhorting them to fight for "righteous [anti-abortion] judges".

31) As it happens, Lou Engle is one of the very prophets who got the message, straight from god, that abortion is wrong. He even lid that all out in a written doctrine, the "Doctrine of the Shedding of Innocent Blood". The shedding of innocent blood *requires* more blood...

32) ...to be spilled as punishment, or payback - so teaches Lou Engle, prophet of god. He draws a direct analogy to the Civil War - slavery was a sin, and it required the wholesale spilling of blood as a consequence.

So, how do you think people in Wagner's & Engle's movement...

33) ..might regard politicians who support legal abortion?

I have no indication whatsoever that the producers of "Jesus Camp" had the faintest inkling of who Lou Engle *really* was, nor did anybody with any size megaphone anywhere (except people in the NAR, of course.)

34) So, looping back around to the January 6th rally that preceded the coup attempt...

As I said, there were two main tendencies at work - one, very diffuse but *very* pervasive were the ideas of Rushdoony & his Christian Reconstructionists.

Now, remember that memo, from...

35) ..the Council for National Policy to Betsy DeVos (exposed by the Washington Post)?

Well, I cross referenced the names from the CNP committee that sent DeVos the memo, and quite a few of them were associated with the "Coalition on Revival" the true significance of which was..

36) ..that it *spread the theocratic & theonomic (biblical law) ideas of Rushdoony & his gang among the many factions of conservative Christianity*.

We know this, in part, because one of the top leaders in COR, a highly entertaining raconteur of a man named Colonel V. Doner...

37) ..would later write a book deeply critical of the NAR, which he seemed to think was going off the rails, in which Doner described his participation in, and experience of, COR. He didn't mince words - Rushdoony & his Reconstructionists had run the show. The ideas were theirs.

38) That book was "Christian Jihad: Neo-Fundamentalists and the Polarization of America". https://t.co/Kupw1IzkXX

39) Now, the book is a great read, and Doner is a hoot (I had about an hour phone chat with him back in '012) but I suspect he may also still be in the Christian Reconstructionist tendency.

COR very efficiently spread CR ideas widely among fundamentalists and evangelicals...

40) ...so that, now, even though almost nobody will admit to being a Christian Reconstructionist, CR's ideas are now ubiquitous on the Christian right.

One key group that COR spread CR ideas to were the charismatics. C. Peter Wagner (a new convert to charismania) & other...

41) ..charismatic leaders were at COR, and Wagner would later write that his NAR movement traced many ideas from Rushdoony.

Back in the 90s, a researcher & journalist named Frederick Clarkson noticed that Christian Reconstructionist ideas were spreading to charismatics...

42) Remember what I said about quite old articles, on the Christian right, suddenly becoming *very* relevant again?

Well, here's one of those - see the subsection of this long 1994 article, towards the end, titled "No longer without Sheep": https://t.co/DbEwgHfxzl

43) The Christian Recontructionists saw (and see) themselves as shepherds. They are the intellectuals providing the ideas to spark a mass movement.

They were always numerically tiny, but no matter - they now have "sheep", millions in fact, weaned on CR-derived visions of...

44) ...Christian Nationalism.

Now, for the wonkishly-inclined reader, here's a 2011 continuation of Frederick Clarkson's line of thought, from the website Fred & I co-founded in 2005:

"The Rise of Charismatic Dominionism (Updated)": https://t.co/RW0LH4xnYP

45) But to add some real-world spice to this, consider:

One of the most colorful entrances of the NAR, and its brand of Charismatic Dominionism into US national politics was when John McCain picked Sarah Palin as his VP running mate in the 2008 election.

You see, Palin was....

46) ...borned-agained, as a young teen, at an Alaska church that served as the beachhead for the NAR's invasion of Alaska: the Wasilla Assembly of God.

Now, "Assemblies of God" are churches in one of the major Pentecostal denominations. But, as I suggested, one of the...

47) ..major vectors for the spread of the NAR & its ideas & practices is through the infiltration of existing churches.

Wagner & his crowd, for all their magical woo ideas, are surprisingly organizationally & technologically cutting edge.

You wouldn't think that, of a movement

48) ...that seeks to cast out geographic "territorial spirits" to literally cause the magic manifestation of earthly utopias, or tries to literally raise the dead.

But, I've got footage of C. Peter Wagner giving a lecture, at a big South Korean church in 1993.

Most people...

49) ..rightly or wrongly, consider the idea Wagner was promoting - that the early 1990s downturn in the Japanese stock market happened because the new Japanese emperor had intercourse with a demon spirit who might have been a succubus - clearly be insane. But watch the footage..

50) ..from my 2009 Talk To Action story on this: https://t.co/X9zV1mZKHl

At the very start of the footage, you'll see somebody in the audience transcribing Wagner's talk, on an *extremely early* laptop that doesn't even seem to have a rollerball or a trackpad.

51) That's not an anomaly, it's characteristic - Charismatic Dominionism often can be found using cutting edge technology to push its agenda, regardless of the wildly a-rational nature of its ideas & practices.

To give you an example - during the 2016, one evangelical...

52) ..voter mobilization nonprofit dubiously obtained a database with information on about 200 million potential US voters, and used cutting edge algorithmic, psychographic software to microtarget potential Christian Trump voters in its GOTV drive.

Guess who was funding this?..

53) ..funding "United in Prayer" was one of Wagner's NAR "apostles" in the business world, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur named Ken Eldred who had made $ billions manufacturing computer widgets, cables, and so on.

54) An earlier Eldred philanthropic project was the funding of a series of pseudo-documentaries that purported to show how believers could, through doing "Spiritual Mapping" & then driving out identified "geographic" demon spirits...

55)..and killing or neutralizing people associated with those demon spirits, could cause the magical manifestation of mini-utopias on Earth - people would lose their drug & alcohol addictions, crime would end, polluted lakes & rivers would magically become pristine...

56) ...and (needless to say) everybody would become a born-again charismatic Christian.

A guy named George Otis, Jr. produced these pseudo-documentaries that were marketed under the "Transformation" name, and there are at least 1/2 dozen now that, legend has it, have been...