



### SPOTLIGHT

## **Mike Johnson and the Apostle Paul Syndrome**

The average pastor in America changes churches once every four years. Youth pastors last roughly three years before they move on to supposedly greener pastures.

Whereas it might be argued that youth pastors leave because they are hoping to have a church of their own someday, the career path of a senior pastor usually takes a different route. The first year of his pastorate is an unabashed honeymoon period where the proverbial “bloom is still on the rose.” Simply put, the pastor loves his new church, and his congregation loves him back.

That mutual admiration society often lasts well into his second and third years and together, much is accomplished for God’s glory. Attendance is up, perhaps necessitating a second service, and there is even talk about launching a building program.

And then it happens...

It could be the result of a hard-hitting sermon that

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## **Baby, It’s Cold Outside!**

“Baby, It’s Cold Outside” was a song written by Frank Loesser in 1944 and popularized five years later in the movie, Neptune’s Daughter. Since its release, there have been more than 400 different recordings including those by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Jordan (1949), Sammy Davis, Jr. and Carmen McRae (1957), and Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme (1960).

Even high-profile county music couples have made it their own from Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood to Amy Grant and Vince Gill. So have pop stars such as Michael Buble, Ray Charles, Kelly Clarkson, Natalie Cole, Lady Gaga, Tom Jones, John Legend, Barry Manilow, Bette Midler, Olivia Newton-John, Lou Rawls, Darius Rucker, and James Taylor... just to name a few.

Dolly Parton? Yep, in 2004 with Rod Stewart. Even Mr. Margaritaville himself, Jimmy Buffet, gave it a twirl in 2016.

Willie Nelson has recorded the song twice with two different partners, Norah Jones (2009) and Lee Ann Womack (2016), the latter of whom also recorded a 2002 version with Harry Connick, Jr.. However, for my money’s worth, Dean Martin’s recording is the quintessential version.

Although vocalists as wholesome as Doris Day and Dinah Shore recorded

the song, its lyrics became controversial during the height of the MeToo Movement, with a number of radio stations refusing to play it on air until alternate wording was written. Meanwhile, rap songs with overt sexual references and vulgar lyrics that degrade women continue to fill the airwaves.

Oh well, that’s a commentary for another day.

For today, let’s concentrate on Baby, It’s Cold Outside because... well, it is! After all, I am writing this article on January 9th to be published on January 11th and guess what? There is a cold front passing through Florida tonight into tomorrow and then again next week, when nighttime lows are projected to fall into the high 30s and low 40s. For this transplanted New Jerseyan who relocated to the Sunshine State to get warm... that’s frigid!

I guess I shouldn’t complain however, because I just saw that the daytime high in Chicago next Monday will be 1 degree F and the same on Tuesday. Nighttime temps will range from -8 F to a balmy -1 F. Brrr... and no, thank you!

The point I want to make today is that it gets hot in the summer and cold in the winter. Duh! And yes, some summers are hotter than others and some winters are colder than others, too. The bottom line is that the weather is cyclical, and it’s always been that way.

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## ***Baby, It's Cold Outside!***

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I am too young to remember the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, when hot and dry conditions scorched the Plains States. Here is how the National Weather Service, an agency of the U.S. government, described it...

“The ‘Dust Bowl’ years of 1930-36 brought some of the hottest summers on record to the United States, especially across the Plains, Upper Midwest and Great Lakes States. For the Upper Mississippi River Valley, the first few weeks of July 1936 provided the hottest temperatures of that period, including many all-time highs.”

Oops, did the National Weather Service just admit that global warming peaked in the mid-30s, at least in some parts of the country? Wait, there's more!

“In La Crosse, WI, there were 14 consecutive days (July 5th-18th) where the high temperature was 90 degrees or greater, and 9 days that were at or above 100 degrees F. Six record July temperatures set during this time still stand, including the hottest day on record with 108 degrees F on the 14th. The average high temperature for La Crosse during this stretch of extreme heat was 101 degrees F, and the mean temperature for the month finished at 79.5 degrees F - [the] 2nd highest on record.”

Not to be outdone by La Crosse, 17 cities in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin set all-time highs that summer that still stand today, with Decorah, IA topping the list at an egg-frying-on-the-sidewalk 111 degrees F. Gulp! You talk about your “inconve-

nient truth!” Where's Al Gore when you need him?

I am also too young to recall the Medieval Warm Period, which lasted approximately 300 years from 950 A.D. to 1250 A.D. During the MWP, temperatures soared around the world, especially in Western Europe, Greenland, and Iceland. That means that for three centuries, the polar icecaps were shrinking, and icebergs were both dislodging and diminishing in size.

Hmmm... didn't the Industrial Revolution start around 1760 A.D.? It's hard to blame cars and coal-fired factories for temperatures that occurred 500-700 years before they were invented.

Thankfully, the MWP was succeeded by the Little Ice Age (LIA) which lasted about 550 years from 1300 A.D. to 1850 A.D., rather inconveniently overlapping the first 100 years of the Industrial Revolution. Sorry to burst your bubble, John Kerry.

Guess what happened after that? The earth started warming up again! What a surprise!

I'm guessing that God knew that yours truly couldn't possibly survive in even a Little Ice Age, so he turned up the thermostat a few degrees to keep me warm and toasty. I can't prove it, but I'm crunching the numbers as we speak to try to prove my theory.

Folks, please stop listening to the jetsetters who fly around the world from climate conference to climate conference, crying wolf as they go. (My apologies to Leonardo DiCaprio, who prefers to charter billionaire entrepreneur Ernesto Bertarelli's \$190 million yacht to travel to such environmentally-sen-

sitive venues, using a gas-powered helicopter for his shore excursions.)

Which begs the question: who has a smaller carbon footprint? Moi (Leo loves it when I speak French), who lives in a 34-foot long trailer heated and cooled by electricity and propane or Mr. DiCaprio and his 318-foot long yacht? I'm also willing to bet that Leo the Lying owns more than one gas-guzzling car as opposed to my single 2020 Chevy Equinox that averages 30 mph.

The same goes for the other climate fraudsters and flim-flam artists like Bill Gates and Greta Tintin Eleonora Ernman Thunberg, arguable the most nauseating post-pubescent woman in the

world. Thunberg has made a name - and very possibly a fortune - for herself by being angry 24/7, while Blowhard Bill continues to buy up American ranches and farmland at a record pace. The Microsoft founder and Jeffrey Epstein confidant currently owns an estimated 270,000 acres spread across 18 different states, making him the largest private landowner in the U.S.

Makes you wonder what ol' Billy Boy has in mind, doesn't it?

Meanwhile, other climate alarmists such as Barack Obama continue to purchase oceanfront properties like they are going out of style. And here I thought the sea levels were rising at an alarming rate? Truth be told, the water in the Vineyard Sound rises a whopping 2-3 millimeters per year, so Barack and Michelle should be high and dry for the foreseeable future.

That sure takes a load off my mind... how about you?

## **Mike Johnson and the Apostle Paul Syndrome**

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steps on too many people's toes, especially if one or more of them are elders or serve on the deacon board. Or it could be as simple as congregants realizing that their new pastor really isn't the second coming of Billy Graham or Billy Sunday.

And so, the murmuring begins all the while the pastor is updating (and circulating) his resume, hoping against hope that a position will open up in a new church before his current one asks him to leave.

Wash... rinse... repeat.

This sad analogy came to my mind recently when I heard a well-meaning conservative friend say, "I'll give him the benefit of the doubt for now, but time will tell. He may prove to be just another RINO who caves into the Washington establishment when the pressure is on and the going gets tough."

Who was my conservative friend talking about, you ask? Try Rep. Mike Johnson (R-LA), the new Speaker of the House.

In a chaotic and often clownish effort to replace former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, the GOP caucus took a page right out of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Just like a bowl of porridge, Jim Jordan (R-OH) was considered to be too hot, and Steve Scalise (R-LA) was considered to be too cold. So was Tom Emmer (R-MN) and a few other speaker wannabees whose candidacies lasted about as long as Britney Spears' first marriage.

Finally, the caucus members set-

led on Mike Johnson, a relatively obscure 4-term congressman from Shreveport. Confidentially, one member said that Johnson was elected to his new post because he had the fewest enemies. Not exactly a ringing endorsement.

That being said, I have been extremely impressed by Speaker Johnson, who seems like the real deal to me. His acceptance speech was humble, even self-deprecating, and contained multiple references to the U.S. Constitution. It was also chockful of Scripture verses, which shouldn't have surprised anyone because Speaker Johnson wears his faith on his sleeve.

And how could a true conservative find fault with Johnson's 7 Core Principles of Conservatism - Individual Freedom, Limited Government, the Rule of Law, Peace through Strength, Fiscal Responsibility, Free Markets, and Human Dignity - all of which sound like they came straight out of Ronald Reagan's playbook?

Nevertheless, there are still some "Doubting Thomases" inside the House chambers as well as in the Republican hinterlands. Just ask my conservative friend, who seems to be waiting for the other shoe to drop so he can say "I told you so."

In evangelical circles, it is often said that some churches wouldn't be happy if the Apostle Paul himself was their pastor. Sad, but very true, because Christians and conservatives alike often set impossibly high standards based on their own value system. One misstep and you are put out to pasture... and don't let the door hit you on the way out!

Let's just hope that people give

Mike Johnson a chance to settle into his new position and prove himself before they start judging his tenure and lining up candidates to succeed him. He deserves that much... and more.

After all, there is no such thing as a perfect person or a perfect politician..

## **Is Too Much Compassion Killing America?**

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name Mother of Exiles.  
From her beacon-hand  
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

- Emma Lazarus, The New Colossus, November 2, 1883

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## ***Is Too Much Compassion Killing America?***

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The sonnet above was written by Emma Lazarus, an American poet, to raise money to build a pedestal to support the Statue of Liberty. In 1903, the poem was cast onto a bronze plaque and mounted inside the pedestal's lower level.

Until recently, those words served America well, perfectly describing our national policy of accepting legal immigrants with open arms. In return, these newly minted Americans did everything in their power to assimilate into our society by learning to speak English and becoming self-sufficient from Day One.

Between 1892 and 1954, in the shadow of Lady Liberty, more than 12 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island. Approximately 10% were detained for further questioning or health examinations and only about 2% were denied entrance altogether. The average processing time was 3-5 hours and free meals were only provided to immigrants who were detained overnight. Everyone else could purchase a small boxed lunch in the cafeteria for 50 cents or a large one for \$1.00.

My, how times have changed... and not for the better.

As of 2020, more than 40 million foreign-born immigrants were living in the United States, roughly 20% of the world's migrants. Since 1965, when U.S. immigration laws replaced a national quota system, the

number of foreign-born immigrants living in the U.S. has more than quadrupled, accounting for almost 14% of our population (up from just 5% in 1970).

Today, under the Biden administration and its lax immigration policies, those numbers have skyrocketed. In just three short years, an estimated 4 million illegals have crossed over our southern border alone. Just a reminder... that is 1/3 of the total number of legal immigrants who passed through Ellis Island over a 62-year period.

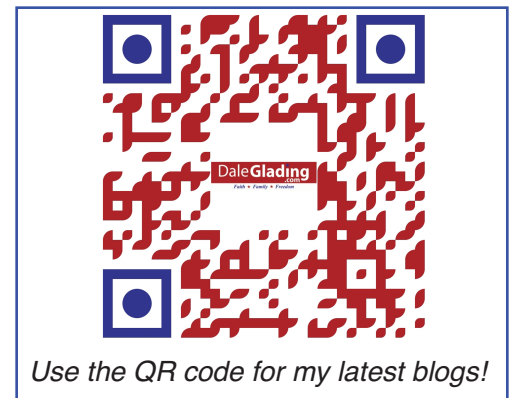
More importantly - and more dangerously - most of these illegals are not being detained, let alone deported. Instead, they are being provided free food, housing, and medical treatment at taxpayers' expense while awaiting their processing, after which the vast majority are released into our country with a court date for their immigration hearing 5-10 years down the road (if they actually appear).

America has always been a compassionate nation. It's in our DNA. What other country in human history has paid to rebuild the country that attacked it? And yet, that's exactly what the U.S. did with Japan after World War II. Meanwhile, the 4-year Marshall Plan rebuilt Germany and other western European nations to the tune of \$13.3 billion (\$173 billion in today's dollars).

Maybe, just maybe, it is time for us to rethink not only our entire immigration policy, but also our attitude towards less fortunate people around the world. Simply put, we can no longer afford to accept - let alone feed, clothe, and house - everyone who wants to come to the United States.

I don't know if returning to a quota system is the way to go, but I do know that we need to stop the uncontrolled influx of immigrants NOW. Not tomorrow, not next week, and not next month.

N-O-W... before Lady Liberty's lamp is forever extinguished, and America's golden door is slammed shut for good.



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