In addition to the short article about the merger of conservative Christianity and the Republican Party, I also wrote the longer piece included below.  It is part of an essay a few dozen pages long about the current worldview that is dominating our political life.  Abusing religion is part of that worldview, along with greedy economics, a violent foreign policy, and other aspects.

Here is what I wrote about the corruption of religion as a powerful force in our society.  It expands upon the short article about the merger of conservative Christianity and the Republican Party.

**Religion is being abused and used to hurt people and democracy.
Honest religion suffers as a result.**

The Republicans also have hijacked religion to serve their purposes.  In the 1970s the Republican Party and the Religious Right effectively merged, with each entity exploiting the other for its own ideological and power-grabbing purposes.  The result has hurt honest religion in addition to hurting women, public health, democracy, and truth

In the 1970s some opportunists organized the Religious Right to become a right-wing political force.  **They effectively merged with the Republican Party for mutual gains.**  The Religious Right needed a political vehicle to advance their agenda against modern social justice movements (women, gays, and so forth).  The Republican Party needed a political base.

Together they attacked the separation of Church and State, which the Constitution’s First Amendment had established.  Their attacks on the separation of Church and State have continued in many ways.  Since 1947 the excellent non-profit organization Americans United for the Separation of Church and State ([**www.au.org**](http://www.au.org)) has fought valiantly to protect politics and religion from hurting each other.

The right-wing politics practiced by the white evangelical political base causes horrible evils and violates authentic Christian values.  Many of the “true believers” are absolutely devoted to Trump as their savior.

Trump and Republicans nationwide campaigned vigorously to get votes from the Religious Right and promised all sorts of payoffs in terms of national laws, regulations and policies that will serve the Religious Right’s political agenda for imposing their beliefs and biases upon the entire nation.

Trump created an Evangelical Advisory Board to tell him what they want, and he uses them as a tool to curry favor with this huge voting bloc.  Trump’s Evangelical Advisory Board is operating in utter secrecy instead of with full transparency as required by federal law (the Federal Advisory Committee Act – FACA – which was passed by Congress in 1972).  Trump’s board is overwhelmingly dominated by right-wing fundamentalists who hold extreme positions on “culture war” issues.  See much more information and documentation at the website of an excellent non-profit organization, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State ([**www.au.org**](http://www.au.org)), specifically at [**http://bit.ly/AUtimeline**](http://bit.ly/AUtimeline) and [**www.tinyurl.com/yx8q8ckv**](http://www.tinyurl.com/yx8q8ckv)

Trump has appointed many, many right-wingers to powerful federal positions that are responsible for civil rights and human rights both within the U.S. and in global matters.  Trump says he is promoting “religious liberty,” but really his appointees actually do the opposite.  They use their powerful roles in the federal government to impose extreme right-wing “Christian” perversions upon our nation and the world, against women’s rights, LGBTQ rights, and so forth.  In the guise of “religious liberty,” they actually suppress religious values that differ from their own.

In May 2018 Trump issued a new “Religious Freedom” order that actually undermines that principle.  The great non-profit organization “Americans United for the Separation of Church and State” ([**www.au.org**](http://www.au.org)) pointed out the hypocrisy of Trump and the Religious Right in a post on AU’s blog.  Read the short, informative article at [**www.tinyurl.com/y3g7mm8r**](http://www.tinyurl.com/y3g7mm8r)

One paragraph says:  “Under the guise of religious freedom, this executive order further entrenches the Administration’s policies to allow religion to discriminate. At the same time, it strips the limited religious liberty protections that exist for individuals who use the government-funded social services.”

**Actually, the Religious Right (especially after merging with the Republican Party) has abandoned honest spirituality and has removed itself from God.  It has merged also with the dominant worldview of corrupt capitalism**, worship of wealth (look at the multi-millionaire TV evangelists who flaunt their jewelry and lavish lifestyles!), sucking up to rich and powerful people instead of practicing the humility that Jesus taught, and lack of empathy for LGBTQ people and other people whom Republicans despise.

What would Jesus say about politicians who claim his endorsement but violate his ethics?  What would Jesus say about people who claim that we are “a Christian nation” but violate Jesus’ ethics?  What would Jesus say about presidents who make speeches declaring war and end them by saying, “God bless America”?

Jesus never said anything against abortion of LGBTQ people, but the Religious Right have made it seem that those were the core principles of Christianity.  The Religious Right has merely wrapped bad theology around their own biases.  Actually, Matthew 6:24 quotes Jesus saying, “You cannot serve both God and money.”  I never hear the Religious Right quote any of Jesus’ many, many strong condemnations of greedy rich people.  Why don’t they denounce greedy wealth?

The Old Testament prophets and Jesus lambasted religious hypocrites who paid lip service to orthodoxy but failed to practice the deeper, more valid aspects of faith.  In modern America the Religious Right is the opposite of what Jesus taught.  They worship nationalism and capitalism and patriarchy and xenophobia and privilege instead of standing with Jesus in solidarity with the poor and the outcasts.  The Religious Right has sold its soul to the dominant worldview and has no spiritual value.  **Jesus would lambaste those hypocrites.**

The Religious Right has indeed sold its soul to Trump:  [**www.tinyurl.com/y2qqkhvf**](http://www.tinyurl.com/y2qqkhvf)

Some Christians are blowing the whistle on Trump’s abuse of conservative Christians.  One evangelical pastor blasted religious leaders who are violating Jesus and morality in order to support Trump and Republicans.  See [**www.tinyurl.com/yceltvqm**](http://www.tinyurl.com/yceltvqm)

**The Religious Right abuses prayer too.**

Many conservative persons and government officials (including some in charge of public schools, as well as local, state and federal governments) want prayers at local government or legislative meetings – or in public schools.  **These government-sponsored prayers actually undermine authentic religion.**

Prayer should be a personal communication with God, but making it mandatory or obligatory – or a mindless public ritual – destroys the personal faith aspect and makes it a meaningless governmental routine.  Prayer should have **spiritual** value. But **imposing** prayer upon people in schools or at governmental meetings destroys prayer’s spiritual value and makes it just an oppressive governmental regulation.  How ironic that some of the same conservatives who oppose “big government” want “big government” to force us to pray in a certain way.  Although they claim to support “religious liberty,” they are taking away our liberty to choose any religion or none at all.

If someone wanted to destroy authentic religion, a good way for them to do that would be to make the government impose it upon us.

Jesus also told people NOT to conspicuously pray in public.  He said that is self-seeking rather than honest connection with God.  (Matthew 6:5-8)