

Letter: UPDATED: President Trump, protesters and a church photo-op

June 3, 2020

EDITOR'S NOTE: We don't always get it right. When we err, we strive to correct our error. In this case, Sid Roberts' letter to the editor has been edited to remove ad hominems—attacks against persons or name-calling—and to adhere more closely to our policy of 250 words.

Our core commitments are historic Baptist principles, responsible journalism—by which we mean free of factual errors, fair and balanced—and the redeeming and reconciling work of Jesus Christ. Roberts' letter and its publication violated our commitment to fairness by including personal attacks, and for that we apologize.

The events of June 1, 2020, where the president of the United States tear gassed peaceful protesters so he could have a [photo-op](#)—Bible in hand—in front of the historic St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., proved once and for all Christianity is nothing more than a prop to Trump. Frankly, if that is all Christianity is, I want none of it.

But if the tenets of Christianity are true—which I do believe—then Christians must condemn the hypocrisy of a president who continues to attack anyone he doesn't agree with on one hand—viciously, hatefully—while holding a Bible in the other.

Granted, Trump is not alone when it comes to caustic rhetoric. Hateful speech can be heard on all sides. But the president of the United States bears the highest responsibility to set the tone, to lead by example, to rise above the fray, especially in times of crisis.

I fervently pray that my grown daughters and their generation will understand the faith they were raised with—the faith I cling to—is strong enough to handle these dark and difficult times, the complex issues, the hypocrisy, the hatred, the racism, the injustice in this world, and that they will keep that faith as their own. Of course, faith without works is dead; we have much work to do, many mouths to feed, many wounds to heal.

Christianity—much less democracy—is not validated by tear gassing people protesting injustice so you can get your picture taken holding a Bible in front of a church. True faith would have been displayed by opening the doors of the church and walking inside, arm in arm with protesters in peace and love.

Sid Roberts, M.D.

Lufkin, Texas