



Rand Paul, Christianity & Ad Hominem Attacks

The attacks on Rand Paul's Christianity because of an alleged college school prank are similar to those on Christine O'Donnell's presumed "witchcraft" of decades ago. Rand Paul's wife, Kelley, a deacon at the family's church, has described the onslaughts as a "desperate, shameful attack on our family." The couple and their three children have attended the local Presbyterian church in Bowling Green, Kentucky, for 18 years.



These *ad hominem* attacks on Paul and O'Donnell reveal, as much as anything else, a profound ignorance of Christianity, leading to a serious question about whether these attackers and the candidates who presumably benefit from the attacks are, themselves, indifferent to the Christian faith.

The heart of Christian theology is repentance, amendment, and forgiveness. No serious Christian can doubt that we are all sinners or that, before trusting in Christ for salvation, our sinfulness has no sure check. Christine O'Donnell and Rand Paul, in their youth, could have embraced errors about faith and committed sins. St. Augustine admitted in his *Confessions*, one of the most important writings in the history of the Christian faith, that he engaged in a dissolute life prior to conversion, and that indeed he did not want (for some time, at least) to stop sinning and begin living a righteous life. C.S. Lewis, perhaps the most famous Christian apologist of the last century, likewise has described viewing Christianity with disdain before he became a Christian. John Newton, the former slave-trader who embraced the Christian faith during a terrible storm at sea, not only spent the rest of his life crusading against the slave trade but also penned the timeless hymn "Amazing Grace," whose salient lines for purposes of understanding the Christian doctrine of repentance are: I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.

Kelley Paul, better than anyone else, could doubtless list the occasional failings of her husband, as he could her failings Christians believe that we all fail. But only those who actually grasp the tenets of Christianity, which Rand Paul's attackers seemingly do not understand at all, could believe that a man's life before he wholeheartedly embraced Christianity would be the same life as after his conversion. Moreover, any sins are washed away, whatever they might be, if a person truly repents and becomes a Christian. It is no surprise that the enemies of devout Christians such as Rand Paul and Christine O'Donnell are so profoundly unclear about Christianity. The real surprise should be if any serious Christians give these attacks the slightest notice.

Photo of Kelley and Rand Paul leaving church: AP Images



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