

THE CHRISTIAN POST

Steve Bannon: 'Economic Nationalism Is the Centerpiece of Value Voters'

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October 14, 2017

Washington—Former White House chief strategist and Breitbart News Executive Editor Steve Bannon told an annual gathering of Christian conservatives Saturday that "economic nationalism" is the "centerpiece of value voters."

The 63-year-old Bannon, who resigned from his role in the White House in August, is seen as one of the leading promoters of the alt-right movement and was invited to speak at the Family Research Council's 12th annual Values Voters Summit in the nation's capital.

Bannon, who led the final stages of the Trump 2016 presidential campaign that kept Democrat nominee Hillary Clinton out of office, received a warm reception by the social conservative audience after he was introduced, with many coming to their feet to give him an ovation.

Known for his nationalist and populist views, Bannon told those in attendance that now that he is out of the White House, he has focused his attention towards a "war" against the GOP establishment in the United States Senate, which is "our war." However, he assured the audience, "you all are going to finish it."

As Breitbart and Bannon have been accused in the past of providing a platform for, or representing, xenophobic and white supremacist views, Bannon assured that his nationalist views have nothing to do with race or religion.

"Why are we nationalist? It is not ethnonationalism. [The media] can run that drill all they want. It's economic nationalism. It doesn't matter what your race is or ethnicity, your gender, your religion, your sexual preference, it doesn't matter," Bannon assured. "It does not matter. As long as you are a citizen of this republic, that's what matters."

Bannon slammed decades worth of globalist decisions made by "political elites" that have pushed American manufacturing jobs out of the country.

"Economic nationalism is what combines us together. Economic nationalism is understanding that we are going to bring those jobs back. It's not the second law of thermodynamics why [the jobs] left," Bannon stated. "There is no law that took those jobs to Asia and those factories to Asia and left us with gutted communities and opioid addicts. That was human agency. That was decisions, our men and women, that did that." Bannon stressed that only decisions of men and women are "are going to bring those factories back and bring those jobs back."

When Bannon was brought onto the Trump campaign last August, he recalled for the audience that the Clinton campaign reacted by stating that Breitbart promotes "racist, anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, conspiracy theories."

"I sat there and I thought, 'If that is it, if that is what she is going to bring, we are going to run the tables on her,'" Bannon recalled.

Bannon said that he understands that not everyone in the conservative movement is onboard with the principles of economic nationalism. He called out the Cato Institute, the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation and told the audience that they need to be converted.

"They don't totally agree that free trade is a radical idea, that no vibrant nation has ever really agreed with that," he stated. "The Chinese certainly don't, the Japanese certainly don't, the Koreans certainly don't. That's why they got the manufacturing jobs, by the way."

"Economic nationalism, one of the parts of it is that it's the centerpiece of value voters," he continued.

A number of Christian conservatives scratched their heads after hearing last week that Bannon was invited to speak at FRC's event.

"Why is a Christian organization hosting this vile man?" National Review pundit David French wrote on Twitter.

John Murdock, who worked for over a decade in Washington, D.C. and now teaches at a Christian law school in South Korea, criticized FRC president Tony Perkins and Faith and Freedom Coalition Chairman Ralph Reed for praising Bannon in an op-ed published by The Christian Post

"Bannon, two-shirted and thrice-divorced, has been belting out his discordant song for a while. He is now inviting frustrated Christians to hum along," Murdock wrote. "Ralph Reed recently lavished praise on Bannon in a joint podcast. For his part, Tony Perkins told Breitbart that he was 'excited' to see Bannon and values voters teaming up to show that 'true conservatives are on the march. Using such a metaphor in the wake of the deadly Charlottesville 'Unite the Right' rally probably never struck Perkins as problematic. That, of course, is part of the problem."

Murdock pointed out Bannon's ties with former Breitbart editor Milo Yiannopoulos, who was "chummy" with white nationalist leader Richard Spencer.

"The fame that Yiannopoulos enjoyed was prodded along directly by Bannon," Murdoch wrote. "He repeatedly urged the provocateur into the fray. 'We want you to stir up more.'"

"Unless the goal is to look as silly as Milo, we politically active believers should open our eyes," he continued. "The owner of [a Texas] bar says he tossed the alt-righters out when he saw the salutes go up. Will conservative Christians do the same?"