

Response to Mygen Kelly's Recent Rant

Author: Pastor Chris Surber

June 28, 2026

I just watched Mygen Kelly's recent rant about the people of Haiti. She did a fabulous job at embodying the worst aspects of our national spirit and highlighted the terrible complexity of our relationship with our Caribbean brothers and sisters.

A friend asked my thoughts. Here is what she said and a few thoughts from someone who has lived in Haiti and within whom Haiti lives ... "Go home. Get out."

No one was telling them to leave in October 1779, when more than 500 volunteer soldiers from Haiti, which was then the French colony of Sain Domingue, risked their lives fighting alongside American colonists at the Siege of Savannah. The Chasseurs Volontaires de Sain Domingue was an all volunteer regiment of free men of color who formed the largest unit of soldiers of African descent to fight in the entire American Revolution.

During a disastrous allied assault on British lines on October 9, 1779, the Haitian regiment courageously stood their ground to form the rear guard, successfully holding off British counter attacks so that the retreating American and French troops could safely escape a complete slaughter. Read that again. It was volunteer free men of color, Haitian soldiers, protecting American revolutionaries.

Haiti's story and ours is so intrinsically connected, in this and other ways, that I find it very difficult to honestly celebrate American freedom while ignoring the Haitian blood spilled to help establish it. History remembers. Even if modern highly propagandized minds choose to forget.

Perhaps this fact can be easily ignored and I, said merely to be a historian, preferring the past over modern day realities. According to data compiled by the National Immigration Forum and the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that there are currently approximately 17,000 U.S. military veterans who were born in Haiti. Perhaps they should get out? I suspect many of them came here under some kind of temporary protected status while working to gain citizenship and subsequently serving honorably in the United States military.

"Go home. Get out" is, in the plainest language, about the least thoughtful attitude one could have. TPS was a legal program. I'm not here even commenting as to the sanity or lack thereof of the current or past administration's policies regarding immigration. "Go home. Get out" is an absurdly dismissive and stupid approach one could take to a human issue.

A few years ago our country welcomed them. Now we're sending them packing and much of our collective reasons and reasoning is based on limited narratives pushed by people with agendas. I want these bad ideas to "get out" of the conversation so we can appeal to the higher virtues of our collective identity as "We the People." "We know our country's better than yours."

Haiti is a nation that was never allowed to succeed. She was punished from the moment she won her independence with a debt to France, not to compensate France for the land it had lost in Haiti. No. That would be bad enough. It was specifically to buy the bodies of Africans they had lost as property when Haiti's generals led people from diverse parts of Africa, with many languages and cultures coalesced into Haitian Creole under one flag, and with great generals leading the souls of men who would rather fight for freedom than continue to suffer the indignity of the most brutal of all Colonial era slave colonies, defeated Napoleon's Army.

Having been abandoned by every other super power in the world, and under threat of France's entire armada and another invasion to re-enslave her people, Haiti's leaders had no choice but to sign the humiliating treaty that incurred a debt in the billions of dollars in today's money. It took 124 years to pay off. 124 years...

That direct cost alone devastated the development of the Haitian economy but it only begins to describe the impact that came from her relative isolation and inability to trade freely. She all but completely missed out on the industrial revolution. She has never been properly welcomed at the seat of nations. She has suffered indignity after indignity.

That's not even to mention the destruction of the Banana Wars, the destruction of the Creole pig, constant intervention and meddling in Haiti by foreign governments, one natural disaster after the other for centuries, the ruined ecology of Haiti with less than 1% of primary forest remaining. Haiti is a centuries year old pressure cooker of outside interests that has led to the current crisis. The Haitian people suffer the indifference of the world and live under the tyranny of corruption in government while dust merchants and politicians fight over what little power and resources exist. Children starve and the elderly perish while the world watches the World Cup.

What do I think about what Megan Kelly said? I think she embodied the worst parts of us in her comments on Haiti and TPS. I think she punched as far down as possible. When the wealthiest and most powerful mock the poorest and most downtrodden, there is nothing virtuous or praiseworthy in it.

"They brought nothing to the culture we built." This may be the most historically inaccurate and delusional thing she said. Who exactly is the "we" she's referring to in this statement? It isn't possible, with any shred of intellectual integrity, to separate the building of American culture, American wealth, and American infrastructure from the brutal reality of chattel slavery. The foundational economic engine of this superpower was constructed on the backs of enslaved Africans.

The very transatlantic slave trade that kidnapped human beings, stripped them of their names, and forced them to generate the foundational wealth of the American South is the exact same history that populated the island of Haiti. Only in Haiti the treatment of enslaved people was particularly brutal. In those days it was cheaper to replace a dismembered or dead slave than care for a fellow human with anything like humanity.

We share an ancestral root. The culture of the Western world was built by the exact same stolen labor. The only difference is that in 1804, the enslaved people of Haiti rose up, broke their chains, and achieved what the world thought was impossible. They defeated Napoleon's battle hardened conquest experienced army and established the world's first free Black republic.

They chose freedom over chains, and global empires have been punishing them for that audacity ever since. First with direct action from France and her allies in crippling debt. They didn't just owe France, they were forced to take out heavy interest loans to pay the debt. Then left to strip the land of resources, further crippling them with likely the worst example of land management of any nation on earth. They didn't strip the land of trees, exposing the soil to massive degradation by way of erosion, dismantling the fertility of the land and choking the coral reefs with every heavy rain. When a modern commentator looks at a Haitian immigrant and claims they didn't contribute to "our" culture, she is ignoring something so obvious as to be impossible to overlook with honest eyes. The ancestors of those very immigrants helped lay the literal foundations of the Americas.

They are not arriving empty handed. These people are participating in a story their ancestors helped pay for in blood. Where do you think abolitionists like Frederick Douglass gained their unshakeable conviction? Douglass didn't just admire Haiti. When he was the U.S. Minister to the Black Republic, stood before the world at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, and boldly declared that the freedom American Black men enjoyed was a direct debt owed to the brave sons of Haiti who struck the first global blow against the chains of slavery.

But we don't even have to appeal to history to make a claim that Haitian people contribute to "our" culture. I live and work in Southwest Florida. I interact with the Haitian community every single day. I know people who have lived for years with the crushing uncertainty of shifting TPS policies. They carry the constant anxiety of wondering whether the country they work in, pay taxes in, worship in, and raise their children in will suddenly decide they no longer belong.

And still, they get up every morning and go to work. To lump an entire people together in some lazy, dismissive stereotype is foolishness. I see Haitian Americans working and thriving across every level of our local society.

I see them in the medical field as doctors, nurses, and specialists. I see them in churches, schools, construction, hospitality, caregiving, small businesses, and community life. I see them doing excellent work in places people notice, and faithful work in places people overlook.

I think of my Haitian-American friend who works as the greeter at our local Walmart. He welcomes people with kindness and is very helpful to customers. I look forward to speaking with him in his mother tongue every time I go to Walmart. Does he not contribute to our local culture? Is he not a part of “our” community? He is a human being helping hold the fabric of a place together. The facts do not support the stereotype anyway. Immigrant communities are statistically less likely to be incarcerated for crimes than native born American citizens.

The idea that they come here to destroy is not only cruel. It is false. Haiti and her people carry enough heavy burdens. Perhaps we can refrain from adding false narratives to that load.

For her, or anyone else, to say “We know our country's better than yours,” is to completely misunderstand the very nature of American greatness. Our nation is not great because we possess the geopolitical leverage to discard human beings when they are no longer politically convenient.

True exceptionalism is measured by how we wield our immense power. When the wealthiest, most secure nation on earth looks at a neighbor shattered by centuries of external exploitation and internal agony, the uniquely American response should be one of strength, justice, and deep-seated human dignity. It must not be petty, performative malice.

The truth is, the story of the Haitian people does not diminish the American story, it mirrors it. Both nations were forged in the crucible of revolution by people who looked at tyranny and chose liberty or death. Their blood was there at our beginning in Savannah, and their labor is here in our present.

What Megyn Kelly and those who cheer her fail to see is that our culture is not a fragile, exclusive club threatened by the presence of hard-working, faithful, resilient people. Our culture is an ongoing experiment in human freedom. If anything threatens the culture “we” built, it is not the Haitian immigrant working a forklift in Ohio, treating a patient in a Florida clinic, or praying in a local church. It is the cold, cynical bankruptcy of our public discourse that treats the vulnerable as political props.

I refuse to accept that “Go home, get out” is the best we can do. We are better than this. It’s time we started acting like it.

Historical Sources & Data Citations

City of Savannah Municipal Archives (Official record of the Chasseurs-Volontaires & the Savannah Monument)
<https://www.savannahga.gov/Blog.aspx?IID=107>

The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation (Record of the Haitian regiment's scale and military role in the Revolutionary War) <https://www.georgiatrust.org/georgia-250/haitian-monument/>

National Immigration Forum (U.S. Census Bureau demographic data confirming ~17,000 Haitian-born U.S. military veterans) <https://forumtogether.org/.../2018/02/VNA-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Stanford University Research & Academic Papers (Historical text detailing the battle tactics and rear-guard defense during the October 9, 1779 assault) <https://knowledge.lancashire.ac.uk/.../36546%204.1...>

The Text of Frederick Douglass's 1893 World's Fair Lecture (Historical address outlining America's structural and moral debt to the Haitian Revolution) <http://static1.squarespace.com/.../Frederick-Douglass.pdf...>

Pew Research Center (Key demographic metrics, labor participation, and origins tracking of U.S. immigrant populations) <https://www.pewresearch.org/.../key-findings-about-us.../>

National Bureau of Economic Research / NBER (150-year data analysis of U.S. Census records tracking the incarceration gap between immigrant and native-born populations) <https://www.nber.org/papers/w31440>

The Cato Institute (Immigration and Public Safety Study utilizing ACS microdata to analyze comparative incarceration and imprisonment rates) <https://www.cato.org/.../illegal-immigrant-incarceration...>

The Cato Institute (Policy Analysis evaluating community safety metrics, victimization rates, and local law enforcement cooperation) <https://www.cato.org/.../immigrants-cut-victimization...>

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences / PNAS (Peer-reviewed study examining native-born vs. immigrant felony arrest data and legal statuses) <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2014704117>

[This photo was taken in Montrouis, Haiti where the ministry we founded, Supply and Multiply, (www.supplyandmultiply.com) has forged lasting relationships build on trust, service to and in the name of Jesus, respect, and love.]