

Why I do not support Donald Trump

Why am I writing this article about an American politician? The first reason is that, if he became the US President again, he would have huge influence over the whole world, including the UK. The second is that he has enormous influence in the area we might label “What is truth?”

It seems obvious to me, as I look at him and listen to him, that there is something very seriously wrong with Donald Trump. The expressions on his face, the way he speaks to crowds are enough to indicate this, quite apart from many other factors. Yet there are many Christians, in the US and elsewhere who are strongly supportive of him. I think they need to be much more prayerfully critical in their approach.

It is interesting that Donald Trump’s niece, Mary Trump, wrote in her book “Donald is an instinctive fascist who is limited by his inability to see beyond himself. Or as the historian Timothy Snyder puts it, ‘His vision never went further than a mirror.’” Even worse, I saw him open his arms, looking up to the sky and say, with a sort of reverent tone, “I am the chosen one.” He also said “I Am Your Justice...I Am Your Retribution ... I Am your warrior ... I'm wonderful for the US.” He thanked a commentator for calling him “the second coming of God.” This is blasphemous.

The Rev Franklin Graham, Billy Graham’s son made the following statement about him in May 2018. “I think somehow God put him in this position. Because he's not a politician, he seemed to do everything wrong as a politician: he offended many people, did the wrong things – but somehow he became president. And I just have to think that God, in some reason, put him there for a purpose. I don't know what that is, but we need to get behind him and support him.” I have to say, with respect, that I believe Franklin is profoundly mistaken.

We need to understand the context in which Trump and his supporters operate. A survey published in Jun 2022 by the University of Chicago’s Institute of Politics, reported that 28% of US voters feel so estranged from their government that they feel it might “soon be necessary to take up arms against the government.” 37% of these people owned guns, many of them high-powered. Some Christians have become so extreme that they regard Trump as a warrior against the “deep state” (a secret elite). They believe Trump will take the lead in an apocalyptic final battle to reveal evil, which will justify violence. Trump has referred to the 2024 presidential election as the final battle. Referring to his enemies he said “2024 is the final battle, it’s going to be the big one. You put me back in the White House, their reign will be over and America will be a free nation again.”

Scott Baker, a theologian and Bible teacher in Nashville, Tennessee has written that “the reality is that most of America’s gun culture is driven by Christians.” Grace Baptist Church, in New York, organised a fundraising raffle and the prizes were an assault rifle or a flamethrower (flamethrowers are illegal in New York). The church gave away guns in 2014, 2017 and 2020. When questioned, the Pastor said the United States was “built with the King James Bible and a gun.” I saw a photograph of a man with the slogan “God, Guns, Trump” on his shirt, alongside an image of a rifle

The Capitol Hill uprising is to be seen in this context. Some Christians regard people charged for their actions in the January 6 Capitol Hill riots as martyrs of the ‘Make America Great Again’ movement. Trump defended them, saying “You will be vindicated and proud,” Trump said. “The thugs and criminals who are corrupting our justice system will be defeated, discredited and totally disgraced.” The committee investigating the attack on the Capitol has concluded: Donald Trump was “singularly responsible” for the attack. People urged him to act to stop the attack but he refused until three hours after it had started. Even then he said they were “very special.” Trump has said of the January 6th riots “It was a beautiful day” and that his supporters “were there with love in their hearts.” Yet dozens of police officers were injured, senators were threatened and the rioters chanted death threats as they marched through the Capitol.

One of the main motives for the riots was, of course, the allegation that Trump had actually won the 2020 election but that the opposition had stolen it out of his hands by dishonest vote-counting. A poll found that nearly 60% of white evangelicals believe the election was stolen. This allegation led Trump to bring some 60 lawsuits alleging election fraud and other irregularities, all of which have been dismissed as without evidence by state and federal judges (some of which were appointed by Trump). Also, many of his colleagues have dismissed the idea that the election was stolen from him. Very significantly, Trump’s daughter Ivanka has stated the election was not stolen from him. All of this surely proves beyond reasonable doubt the election was not stolen from Trump.

Yet there are many people, including many Evangelical Christians in the US, who still firmly believe that the election was stolen from him. This is very disturbing, given what we know about deceit bringing the Antichrist to power. (Just to be clear, I am not saying Trump is the Antichrist!).

The flip side of this is that many of these Trump supporters strongly condemn President Biden. Let me say immediately that I strongly condemn, for example, Biden's apparent support for abortion on demand. Abortion kills babies and such an evil is only justified to prevent a greater evil – such as the death of the mother. But, again, in choosing between political leaders, all of whom are imperfect, we have to carefully consider which is the lesser of two evils.

We need to take seriously that Trump is accused of a great deal of bad behaviour (in addition to his claims about a stolen election):

- I don't want to be cynical but my question is whether Trump's pro-Christian words and actions have only been because he relied on the support of Christians, especially Evangelical Christians. The Pope, without identifying the US or Trump by name said: "Today, listening to some of the populist leaders we now have, I am reminded of the 1930s, when some democracies collapsed into dictatorships seemingly overnight. We see it happening again now in rallies where populist leaders excite and harangue crowds, channelling their resentments and hatreds against imagined enemies to distract from the real problems. People fall prey to such rhetoric out of fear, not true religious conviction." I think this is true of Trump.
- The Washington Post's Fact Checker claims he made he made 16,241 false or misleading claims during his first three years in office. It added that the president averaged more than 22 false or misleading claims a day in 2019.
- He is accused of hate speech about Muslims and in 2016 the UK Parliament debated whether to ban him from visiting the UK because of this.
- The U.S. Justice Department filed a lawsuit against the Trump organization for discriminating against African Americans. The case was settled out of court.
- 24 women have accused Donald Trump of inappropriate sexual behaviour in several incidents over the last 30 years. A 2005 video showed Trump bragging about how he could just start kissing attractive women and grabbing them in a sexual way just because he was famous. His first marriage ended because he had a long affair with actress Marla Maples.
- He was a Reality Show host and such shows pander to the low instincts of their audiences. He also often can be seen acting in a bullying way.
- Trump has been sued many times by his business partners, contractors, clients, employees, and banks. He once ran the Donald J. Trump Foundation established in 1988, but it was shut down by the NY State Attorney General's office in 2013 for multiple violations of the law.
- He has undermined action about global warming, about Medicare for all and about gun control.
- The Capitol attack, instigated by Trump, shows he will undermine democratic institutions if it suits his cause.
- From the start of his Presidency he kept speaking about "Fake News," even if there was much evidence for whatever causes he was attacking. Basically, he was trying to redefine truth as being what he stated to be true (never mind provable facts).

Yes, he has indirectly brought about a reversal of the US position on abortion, and he did show a very positive attitude towards Israel (which many Christians would support). But should Christians really give support to a man with the above faults becoming President of the US?

It seems that many Christians are unaware of growing deceit in the world, which is a sign of the End Jesus predicted, and so they can easily be deceived. However, other Christians are very aware of the threat of deceit,

becoming somewhat paranoid and vulnerably naïve about it, and so they become deceived, believing what is clearly untrue. Such is the power of the deceit. Either way, people are deceived.