

## **BEYOND MERE RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY TO POWER AND TREACHERY**

**By Norm R. Allen Jr.**

That religious conservatives are the biggest hypocrites on the planet should come as no surprise to anyone that pays attention to what they say and do. However, they are not merely hypocritical. They are increasingly powerful and downright dangerous!

Religious conservatives have the ear of President Trump and seem to be able to make him do their bidding. He seems to feel indebted to them for helping make his highly improbable ascent to the White House a reality.

Earlier this month, Trump attended a private service at St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. In attendance were James Dobson, founder and head of Focus on the Family, Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council and other highly influential leaders of the Christian right.

Speaking at the service, influential Christian minister James Robison said that the President had assembled "the greatest Cabinet I have ever seen. You are, in fact, an answer to prayer," the minister enthused. He added, "I think you have been designed and gifted by God for this moment." ("Religious conservatives have access at White House," *The Buffalo News*, February 14, 2017, p. A5, from *The New York Times*.)

Not bad for a coarse, dishonest, tasteless, foul-mouthed, thrice-divorced, verbally abusive, vagina-grabbing bully! Many influential conservative Christian leaders have Trump's personal cell phone number according to the news story. (Talk about wholesome, traditional family values!)

Ironically, conservative Christians have sold their imaginary souls to the imaginary Devil. They have truly sold out. They have done so believing they can get this man with the well-known highly immoral character to put forth their Christian agenda. And they just might be right.

Trump has opposed government money that could be used in a round-about way to aid abortion. He has called for giving priority to persecuted Christians trying to

enter the U.S. To the perverse delight of conservative Christians, he has attempted to ban refugees from seven Muslim nations. He has asked for advice from conservative Christian leaders and selected highly religious Christians to his Cabinet.

Trump has an evangelical advisory board of which influential Southern Baptist minister Richard Land is a member. Some pundits say even Ronald Reagan did not have this kind of support from the Religious Right.

Given conservative Christians' stunning and disturbing hypocrisy, is it any wonder that the laughable presidential advisor Kellyanne Conway could talk of "alternative facts" with a straight face and no blowback from religious right-wingers for the idiotic and embarrassing comments?

All of this raises two questions. 1. Why do progressive and conservative Christians so strongly disagree if they worship the same God and revere the same infallible Bible? 2. Why do most Black Christian voters strongly disagree with so many White Christian voters if they worship the same God and revere the same inerrant Bible?

It could be that few Christians read or examine the Bible. However, as true as that might be, it is much more likely that most people are simply not going to rely upon a supposed Higher Power to tell them how to vote. They are going to find their own human-based reasons or rationalizations for voting and hope to find some kind of religious justification for their political choices down the road.

In any case, another question arises. Has Trump been ordained by God? The fact that he depends upon the political support of conservative Christians leads them to believe so. The fact that he is so hostile toward Muslims, however, would mean that, if he is God's president, God cannot approve of Islam. Needless to say, there cannot be many Muslims that believe Trump is God's president.

Was Obama God's president? Some Blacks actually believed that Obama's presidency was the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. In any case, because they are so vastly different, there is no way that both presidents could have been favored by God.

Finally, if Trump is God's president, it brings to mind the late philosopher William Jones' question that will not go away: Is God a White Racist? This question leads into another important topic.

Some progressives believe that all Trump supporters are bigots. However, this honestly does not appear to be the case. As odd as it sounds, one can *vote* for a bigot without *being* a bigot. When this happens, however, they might as well *be* bigots if they are going to bring bigots to power. Indeed, it would be better if a bigot voted for a progressive than if a progressive voted for a bigot. Declaring oneself free from bigotry does not absolve one from responsibility for helping bring bigots to power.

With their power, religiously backed bigots are poised to do great harm to the nation and to the world. The Trump administration reportedly wants to prevent the use of emergency contraception. Scientists all over the nation are planning a march on Washington out of concern for the future of science in the U.S. Immigrants are living in fear of being harassed and deported. Hate crimes are on the rise, and so forth. The world does not just have to worry about Christian hypocrisy. The real threats are Christian-sanctioned attacks upon the environment and human rights.