

DONALD TRUMP: HUMANISM'S (AND HUMANITARIANISM'S) WORST NIGHTMARE

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

Conservative Christians have warmly embraced Donald Trump. Progressive humanists, not so much. That is because President Trump represents practically everything that progressive humanists oppose and practically nothing that they endorse.

Trump has an Islamophobic worldview. Consistently progressive humanists, on the other hand, while being harshly critical of Islam, are very careful not to demonize Muslims or use irresponsible language that could easily be used by Islamophobes to demonize, attack, oppress or kill innocent Muslims.

Trump has been warmly accepted by anti-Jewish bigots. Indeed, since he became president, hate crimes against Jews and Muslims have skyrocketed. Progressive humanists, however, have shunned anti-Semitism while still being critical of the First (Old) Testament and other religious texts embraced by Jews.

Trump wants to merge church and state. During the presidential race, he said he would make it safe to say "Merry Christmas" again – a nod to the sham "war on Christmas." He wants to give taxpayers' money to religious schools. Humanists, conversely, favor strict separation between church and state.

Trump is anti-intellectual and anti-science. He denies that humans contribute to climate change and works closely with conservative Christians that are opposed to evolution. Humanists, on the other hand, respect and foster critical intelligence and do not knock educated people such as Obama or scientists as "elitist." Humanists are concerned about climate change and are 100% in favor of teaching evolution in the public schools.

The Trump administration believes in the Orwellian "alternative facts." Humanists, though, just accept good old fashioned *facts*. Moreover, humanists favor reality-based solutions to problems instead of the faith-based solutions endorsed by so many of President Trump's followers.

Trump wants to drastically increase military spending. He wants to “modernize” the U.S. nuclear arsenal and buy more planes, warships and weapons, which could start a new arms race with Russia and China. Conversely, progressive humanists believe in “butter before bombs” and want to *reduce* the number of nuclear weapons throughout the world.

Trump is probably the first paranoid conspiracy theorist to make it to the presidency. To the embarrassment of many of his fellow Republicans, he has accused former President Obama of wiretapping him at Trump Tower. Now, a Senate panel will probe this absolutely baseless claim. To his credit, John McClain has insisted that Trump provide evidence to back up his outlandish claim.

This is not the first paranoid conspiracy theory that Trump has accepted. Well into his quest for the White House he was still promoting the “birther” idea that Obama is not a U.S. citizen and that he is a secret Muslim. Unlike Trump, however, humanists reject paranoid conspiracy theories and value evidence over emotionally charged and groundless rhetoric.

Trump’s contempt for science has the scientific community in an uproar. When have scientists ever planned to march on Washington to oppose the hindrance of scientific research by a U.S. president? The March is planned for Washington, D.C. and hundreds of other cities on April 22, 2017. Many scientists have complained that President Trump will not meet with leaders of major scientific organizations. They believe he will silence government research scientists and not make them available to the public in an effort to suppress evidence in regard to the alleged vaccine-autism link, climate change and other alleged “controversies” in science.

Trump mocks physically challenged people. In late 2015, at a political rally in South Carolina, he made fun of Serge Kovalski, a reporter with a severe joint condition. Not surprisingly, Trump lied and denied it, getting into a childish spat with film legend Meryl Streep. (Needless to say, both lying and mocking the physically challenged are not examples of humanistic behavior.)

Trump insults people on a regular basis. He calls women ugly, pigs and makes fun of those with small breasts. All of this leads into another Trump flaw – sexism. He has bragged about grabbing women by the vagina and seems to believe women must be valued chiefly for their looks. Humanism this is not.

Trump does not seem to care at all for the poor. He is poised to attack Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security. Progressive humanists, on the other hand, want to protect all three and more.

Trump attacks immigrants and demonizes Latinos. He alienates African Americans and seems to be only concerned about U.S. interests. Progressive humanists, though, are welcoming of immigrants and strive to be inclusive and international in their outlook.

Finally, Trump is all about corporate greed. Progressive humanists, like the late Paul Kurtz, however, have fought hard against the abuse of corporate power and the concentration of power in the hands of a few.

What, then, is the difference between progressive humanists and progressive Christians? The most significant difference seems to be that progressive Christians have the same Bible that their conservative religious counterparts embrace. That can make it difficult to do battle against conservative Christian Trump supporters that are every bit as convinced that they are doing the will of God as are progressive Christians.