

“Enough!” With President Trump
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Part 2

To my evangelical friends who fervently support Trump I respectfully suggest that your advocacy for the President could be a blind fanaticism to religious ideology. Please consider these prescient words of the former Czech President and dissident, Václav Havel:

In an era when metaphysical and existential certainties are in a state of crisis, when people are being uprooted and alienated and are losing their sense of what this world means, this ideology [communist totalitarianism] inevitably has a certain hypnotic charm. To wandering humankind it offers an immediately available home: all one has to do is accept it, and suddenly everything becomes clear once more, life takes on new meaning, and all mysteries, unanswered questions, anxiety, and loneliness vanish. Of course, one pays dearly for this low-rent home: the price is abdication of one's own reason, conscience, and responsibility, for an essential aspect of this ideology is the consignment of reason and conscience to a higher authority. The principle involved here is that the center of power is identical with the center of truth. (In our case, the connection with Byzantine theocracy is direct: the highest secular authority is identical with the highest spiritual authority.) (“The Power of the Powerless,” pp. 129-130)

Think about what he said regarding totalitarianism and apply that to the devotion many evangelicals provide Trump. Does this seem even a little familiar: “everything becomes clear once more” (because Trump is fulfilling prophecies about Israel and our nation), “abdication of one's own reason, conscience, and responsibility” (because many Christians ignore Trump's appalling behavior and sanction Paula White's influence on the President), “the consignment of reason and conscience to a higher authority” (because many supporters of Trump simply mimic uncritically his slogans and distorted values), and “the center of power is identical with the center of truth” (because Trump “has been hand-picked by our Lord for a very specific role”).

Dear friends ask yourselves a few diagnostic questions:

- What is your source of revelation? Are the scriptures alone your authority or do other sources of divine input sway your opinion, i.e. dreams, visions, “words,” and mystical experience? Do these extra-biblical sources trump (no pun intended) the Bible's authority?
- What is your view of spirituality? Is it important to “love God with all the mind” or do you stress the subjective and experiential aspects of spirituality?
- Does the prayer of 2 Chronicles 7:14 (“If my people who are called by my name ... forgive their sin and heal their land”) apply to ancient Israel or modern North America?
- Who are the people of God? What are the distinctions between Israel (ancient and modern) and the United States?
- What is the relationship between theocratic Israel in the Old Testament and the New Testament church?
- Are there really “two peoples of God”: Israel and the United States? Is our nation a theocracy (like Iran, Saudi Arabia or even North Korea)?

How you answer these questions likely determines your view President Trump. Your answers may also indicate that you are ensnared by religious ideology. In Havel's words you suffer this lamentable result: “abdication of one's own reason, conscience, and responsibility.”