

5 Reasons Why Christians Can Applaud President Obama

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I only caught the end of President Obama's farewell speech, a few minutes of moving and loving words to his wife and daughters. It brought to mind five reasons why I, as a pro-life evangelical Christian, appreciate President Obama.

To be honest, I've supported few of his policies over two terms—particularly how he ignored the innocent lives lost to abortion. Yet knowing lives are also tragically devalued by careless police actions, abandonment and other means, we can perhaps see his time in office accomplished some good.

While next week will be a moment to celebrate and believe the best of President Donald Trump, this farewell speech gives us a moment to do our honest best to honor President Barack Obama.

1. His Powerful Speech at the 9/11 Memorial in 2011

Back in 2011, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg insisted that no chaplain, priest, rabbi or pastor be allowed to pray at this important 10-year memorial ceremony at Ground Zero—despite the undeniable role of faith driving our nation's rescue and recovery from 9/11.

What does President Obama do? He stepped up to the podium, read only the text of Psalm 46 as his speech, then sat down. Drop mic.

Followed by President George W. Bush offering his own prayers, it was a moment where our nation's Judeo-Christian heritage really shone.

2. President Obama's Affection for and Commitment to His Wife and Daughters

From Day One, he has shown the world he is a devoted husband and father. The author of *First Dads* shares of a conversation then-Senator Obama had with a senior aide on the campaign trail: “‘I miss my girls,’ Obama said as tears welled up. ‘I don’t want to be the kind of father I had.’”

Making quality time for marriage and family isn’t easy for anyone—much less the leader of the free world. In this, President Obama is an example to us all.

3. President Obama Advanced a National Conversation on Race in America

Just his presence in office, a man whom the whole world looked up to, meant new possibilities opened up in the hearts and minds of the next generation of black children. Today, young boys and girls believe: *I really could be president one day.*

In a nation only one generation removed from the life-or-death civil rights struggle, it’s much more than symbolic that America twice elected our first black president. There were many moments when the president helped Americans navigate difficult, complex tensions.

While I didn’t always agree with his approach, the truth is President Obama has a vast knowledge of civil rights history and has worked for racial healing more than perhaps any world leader. His extensive recent interview with *The Atlantic* on understanding how to grapple now with race issues is worth reading.

4. President Obama Signed Into Law the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act

We didn’t hear much about bipartisan victories the past eight years because it didn’t fit the media narrative. But one new law enacted in 2015 received remarkable support: passing in

the House by a 420-3 vote, and in the Senate by a 99-0 vote.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act provided new funding for anti-human trafficking initiatives to ensure victims get help. Citing the new law, one advocate for children stated, "Slowly but surely, the tide of justice is turning for child trafficking victims across the nation."

The law also included certain pro-life provisions. Despite liberal outcry, to his credit President Obama signed it.

5. The National Museum of Africa- American History and Culture Opened on His Watch

Though this museum has been decades in the making, it really came together under President Barack Obama. This latest addition to the Smithsonian Museums on the National Mall opened on September 24, 2016, an opportune time considering what America has been facing.

When I visited the museum this past weekend, I learned so many stories of sacrifice and heroism—forgotten history that our nation must rediscover. It's a place every American should visit and a narrative we should seek to understand.

Certainly, it's easier to be skeptical and think the worst of political opponents. It's easier to ignore issues that seem unsolvable.

I believe the better way is to honor our leaders, both outgoing and incoming ones, while being ready to speak principled truth to both parties when that moment comes. {eo}

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