

'Is Donald Trump Really a Christian?' Opens Up a Serious Issue

Is Donald Trump a Christian? Is he "Christian enough" to be president? Do his words and actions disqualify him for the highest elected office in the United States?

Those are all questions that are, and have been, asked by Christians as they prepare to cast their votes in the 2016 presidential election. And even to the most casual observer, those are legitimate questions for individual voters to ask.

The most recent incarnation of the debate over Trump's Christianity came up shortly after Liberty University president Jerry Falwell Jr. announced the businessman would be the speaker at an upcoming Convocation. Alumni expressed disappointment, although Trump has spoken there previously, because of the manner in which he has conducted himself.

Joel Ready, an alumnus of Liberty Theological Seminary, voiced his frustration via social media shortly after the announcement was made:

I'm deeply disappointed to hear that Liberty University has invited Donald Trump to speak at convocation. Don't get me wrong: I'm a big believer in having diverse points of view at convo. I was thrilled that they invited Bernie Sanders, and I wish they'd bring Hillary. In the old days, public lectures at colleges (and convocation at Liberty, specifically) were meant to introduce diverse viewpoints for the student body to debate and consider—you know, back when colleges were meant to be Universities rather than book-decorated amusement parks.

The difference with Trump is that he claims to share our

values, and even claims to be a Christian. As the Apostle Paul admonished in 1 Cor. 5:9-13, those of the world who do not share our values should be engaged by the church, and welcomed – those who claim to be believers, but are “immoral or greedy” should be “expelled from among you.”

Trump is the grotesque personification of everything that is wrong with American political discourse, and his repeated claims that he is a Christian should disqualify him from speaking at Liberty. I wish I believed that Liberty would make an effort to engage him on his contradictory stances, his recent financial and political support of Planned Parenthood, his unapologetic serial monogamy, how he built much of his fortune by preying on the addictions of the weak in his Casinos, or perhaps even his godless views that he shared so gleefully the last time he was at Liberty to speak. Sadly, based on that very experience, I am sure that LU will once again fail the test. As a three-time alumnus of “the world’s largest ‘Christian’ University,” I am disappointed.

A few Christian media outlets picked up on the post, and reported that alumni were disappointed in the decision to have Trump speak. A whole new round of “is he or isn’t he” began anew.

Perhaps there’s a better discussion to be had. Rather than debating another’s faith or lack thereof—a dangerous proposition, at best—maybe Trump’s candidacy and his upcoming appearance could spark a whole new discussion over the difference between proclaiming Christ as your Lord and Savior and actually walking in relationship with Him.

We’re told, in Luke 6 that we will be able to “tell a tree by its fruits,” and that should be enough. In Trump’s case, there’s plenty of fruit to see, but for others who think professing Christ is enough, there’s an opportunity to have an important conversation.

Many times, particularly in the past, professing Christ has been enough to elicit the support of evangelical leaders. In 2016, however, the bar has been raised—this is a good thing—and there is an opportunity for those same leaders to share the entire Good News.