

Have We Been Fair-Weather Friends of Donald Trump?

While Donald Trump remains the frontrunning, potential presidential candidate in the GOP, an increasing number of Trump voters say they would prefer that he not run in 2024, myself included in that number. Are we guilty of being fair-weather friends of Trump, supporting him when he was in power but rejecting him now that he's out of power? That's certainly a fair question.

If Trump is your man, you obviously feel he has earned your trust and he's the best man for the job. My intent here is not to argue with you or question your judgment.

But what about those of us who voted for him twice but would prefer another candidate now? Are we being fair-weather friends?

I'll help you bring the charge against me.

You could argue that: 1) I was against Trump during the 2016 primaries, preferring any number of Republican candidates to him; 2) when he became the Republican candidate, I voted for him with both hope and trepidation in 2016, but primarily as a vote against Hillary; 3) I voted for him more enthusiastically in 2020 after watching him keep his promises for four years; 4) I distanced myself from him in the aftermath of January 6.

Isn't this like wearing your home team's jersey when they're winning but calling them bums when they're losing. Or worse still, like wearing their opponent's jersey when they're losing?

I'm sure it could appear like that to some, and for many people, perception is reality.

That's why I wasn't surprised at all when I was branded a Never Trumper and a RINO and weak and unpatriotic (and more) when I said that it was time for us to move on from Trump.

Of course, as a registered Independent, it's hard to be a RINO. And as a two-time Trump voter (who often defended him when he was falsely accused), it's hard to be a Never Trumper.

But the reality is that the same factors that caused me (and many others) to vote *for* Trump in 2016 and 2020 are the same factors that cause me (and many others) to wish for a different candidate in 2024.

And, given the intense loyalty and the large number of Trump supporters, it requires backbone, not weakness, to swim against this vocally fierce tide.

To be clear, I am *not* suggesting for a moment that millions of Trump supporters are backing him because it's convenient or easy. Not at all. I recognize their sincerity and I understand why they still believe he's the best man for the job. And they still suffer reproach for standing with their man.

I'm simply saying that it's a whole lot easier to keep one's mouth shut than to call the failed Trump prophets to account. Or to state publicly that, while not legally responsible for the storming of the Capitol, he was morally responsible.

For me, the conservative Christian principles that led me to vote for Trump in 2016 and 2020 are the principles that lead me to look for another candidate.

It has nothing to do with who the frontrunner is or who is currently in power.

It has everything to do with pros versus cons, with gains versus losses, with positives versus negatives. And some things only become clear over time, which explains the chronological history of my attitudes toward Trump. Perhaps I

Speak for others here as well?

At the beginning, I didn't trust him at all, assuming he was using evangelicals like other presidents had done before him, especially given his own wheeler-dealer, worldly background.

When some of my friends got closer to him, sharing their positive perspective with me, and when it seemed there was something uncanny about his ascendancy to the top of the pack, I lowered my resistance.

When it was Trump vs. Hillary, my choice was clear. Still, I had concerns.

Over the course of Trump's presidency, in my view, the good outweighed the bad, and so I planned to vote for him again in 2020, with even more confidence than in 2016.

But in virtually every article I wrote speaking well of him, I also added caveats.

But this was not to "hedge my bets." Instead, it was because I saw that our unreserved, wholehearted association with Trump as Christians was hurting our witness, not to mention hurting us too, as we seemed to emulate him more than we emulated Jesus. And I recognized the damage he could do.

To me, integrity required us to say (to give a case in point), "I really appreciated the president's Mt. Rushmore speech, and it sent a strong message of racial harmony. But why did he have to shoot himself in the foot by going after NASCAR driver Bubba Watson only hours later?"

Then, as we got closer to November 2020, I became more deeply concerned.

There was a loud chorus of prophets guaranteeing four more years of Trump with almost cult-like support for their words.

There was an almost frenzied concern that, if Trump was not

reelected, the whole country would collapse, as if only Trump could save America.

There was an increasingly unhealthy merging of the gospel with politics and of the kingdom of God with national patriotism.

Yet I still voted for Trump, without hesitation (after all, it was Trump vs. Biden), even as these other concerns grew.

Then, in the aftermath of the elections, as I watched Christian leaders pronounce curses on those who allegedly stole the elections, as I watched many prophets try to cover their tracks, as I watched believers have emotional meltdowns over Trump's apparent defeat (or, the steal), as I watched QAnon conspiracies flood our social media pages, I realized things were even worse than I had realized.

Then, watching some of the rhetoric at Christian rallies leading up to January 6—it was downright dangerous—and witnessing Trump's failure to read the crowd or recognize the irresponsibility of his own rhetoric, I was convinced that we needed a very serious course correction. And that's where I stand today.

I also agree with the assessment of Elon Musk, when he was asked where he differed with Trump on policy (since Musk expressed his preference for Florida Governor Ron DeSantis). He replied, "Yeah, but too much drama. Do we really want a bull in a china shop situation every single day?!"

Personally, I have deep appreciation for the good that Trump did and for his loyalty to his evangelical base, and I commend him for keeping his promises. There were even some things about his presidency that were exceptional.

But with so much collateral damage and with other viable candidates available, the same principles that prompted me to vote for him now prompt me (and many other former Trump voters) to look for someone else.

You can differ with our assessment and think we're dead wrong. Fair enough. Just don't mistake us for fair-weather friends. Quite the contrary.

Speaking for myself, this is about loyalty to God, concern for the church and love for America. {eoa}

Dr. Michael Brown () *is the host of the nationally syndicated Line of Fire radio program. His latest book is Revival Or We Die: A Great Awakening Is Our Only Hope. Connect with him on Facebook or Twitter, or YouTube.*