

It's Either Really Good or Really Bad With President Trump

One thing is certain with the presidency of Donald Trump. The good is really good and the bad is really bad. Just consider some of the big news from this week alone. Some of it is wonderful and some of it is terrible. And all of it is related to President Trump.

On August 29, the Huffington Post bemoaned, "Democrats Just Confirmed Lots Of Trump's Judges So They Could Skip Town. The resistance wilts in August."

According to the article by Jennifer Bendery and Igor Bobic, "Senate Democrats just gave a huge gift to President Donald Trump: They agreed to expedite votes on 15 of his nominees to lifetime federal court seats because they wanted to go home."

The implications of this are massive: "It's a major win for Trump and McConnell, whose No. 1 priority is filling up federal courts with conservative judges —many of whom are incredibly anti-abortion, anti-LGBTQ rights and anti-voting rights. Trump has gotten 26 circuit court judges confirmed, more than any other president at this point in his term. Another way of putting it: 1 in 7 U.S. circuit court seats is now filled by a judge nominated by Trump."

Add in the pending nomination of Justice Kavanaugh, and "you've got a president drastically reshaping the nation's courts for generations."

This alone would be an incredible accomplishment for the president. This alone would merit the votes of many a conservative American. Talk about leaving a positive legacy.

But that was just one piece of big, positive news. (Shall we label it "huge"?)

The president also called out the social media giants, accusing them of unfairness towards conservatives. How many leaders have the gumption to do that? And who better to tackle such a massive issue than the president of the United States, with the help of Congress?

Also this week, Nikki Haley, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, publicly questioned "Palestinian claims to a 'right of return' to modern Israel, saying she believed that the hot button issue should be taken 'off the table.'"

This is something that should have been done years ago, since talk about the "right of return" not only hinders the peace process, but it has no legitimacy at all.

And then there was the announcement of the new trade agreement with Mexico, which caused the stock market to soar.

For all this (and more), Trump supporters have reason to feel good. The man we voted for is doing a great job. Kudos to the president!

At the same time, Trump supporters have reason to feel ashamed. The man we voted for is acting in ways that are totally unbecoming for the president. In fact, if one of my grandchildren acted like this (they range in age from 11-17), I would feel ashamed. But the president of the United States? This should not be.

There is simply no justification for Trump to call veteran journalist Carl Bernstein "a man who lives in the past and thinks like a degenerate fool."

Yes, it does appear that Bernstein blatantly lied about Trump. And Bernstein's apparent lie was quite damaging, buttressed by the fact that Bernstein came to fame as one of the major

Watergate reporters. The great journalist was about to bring down another president!

So I can understand Trump's ire toward both Bernstein (and CNN).

But for the president of the United States (or any civil person) to refer to another public professional in such terms as "degenerate fool" is wrong and uncalled for. It also hurts the president's cause, alienating those who might have been miffed at the lies they were being told.

Must the president always be so divisive? Must he always be so inflammatory? Can he not be strong and clear-headed and courageous without such nasty displays?

I'm personally hoping that candidates who support Trump's agenda will be elected in the fall. And, despite my lack of confidence in the Republican Party as a whole, I'm hoping that Republicans will maintain their Congressional majorities. And, to say it once more, if Trump were running against Hillary today, I'd vote for him without hesitation.

At the same time, I will urge him to step higher and I will bemoan his destructive words and actions. How can I not do both?

My ultimate loyalty as a follower of Jesus is to someone higher than the president (and to something greater than America). So I will stand with the president however and whenever I can, but I won't lose my conscience in the process.

Because the relationship between evangelicals and President Trump is so complex I've written a new book addressing it titled *Donald Trump Is Not My Savior: An Evangelical Leader Speaks His Mind About the Man He Supports as President*. I truly hope the book will help us get greater clarity in our dealings with this unique leader as the midterm elections approach. So much hangs in the balance, and much of it sits on

the shoulders of a very flawed, very strong, very human president. How should we respond?