

What the Hiring of Anthony Scaramucci Tells Us About President Trump

Who is the real Donald Trump? If you talk with evangelical leaders who have met with him, they will tell you how humble and gracious he is and how deeply he embraces their values. If you look at some of his public statements or judge him based on his hiring of Anthony Scaramucci, you might come to a very different conclusion. How do we sort this out?

There was nothing enigmatic about President Barack Obama.

Raised in the Muslim world as a child, he was sympathetic to the religion and saw its best side. As a community organizer, identity politics was part of his mindset. Influenced by radical leftists and gay professors, he took on their cause as his own. His religious environment in America supported these stances as well, from liberal Christianity in general to the Rev. Jeremiah Wright.

Not so when it comes to President Trump.

On the one hand, it's not hard to understand how the same man who ran casinos with strip clubs and boasted about his infidelities would settle down later in life. There's nothing inconsistent in that. And it's not hard to understand how some of his positions became more conservative over the years, galvanizing once he began to campaign.

But how do we understand the man today? How can he be such a pro-life champion, such an advocate for religious freedoms, such a friend of the evangelical church, while saying and doing some of the things that he does?

Earlier this month, when Trump learned that some evangelical

leaders were working nearby with other White House staffers, he invited them to the Oval Office and was glad to have them lay hands on him in prayer.

Two weeks later, he hired Scaramucci, who previously described himself as pro-choice, for gay marriage and even “a gay rights activist.” This was as recent as 2016. And as we learned through his unhinged and vulgar interview with a *New Yorker* reporter, he is hardly a model Christian. How do we reconcile all this?

The more I think about it, the clearer it becomes to me.

First, as a businessman, the president hires people he thinks will get the job done. Period. That’s the same reason many Americans, including Christian conservatives, voted for him. They believed he would get the important things done, and his perceived character issues were secondary. As I heard endlessly during the campaign, “We’re not electing a pastor in chief; we’re electing a commander in chief.”

So, just as a soldier risking his life on the front lines would rather have a brilliant general who was profane and slept around than a polite, faithfully-married, but ineffective general, so many voters chose Trump as the most effective person for the job.

It would appear to be Trump’s perspective when it comes to Scaramucci, hired to plug up a very leaky White House. The leakers must go, and the mess must be cleaned up. Better to come with thunder than with a whisper at times like this.

As for Scaramucci himself, he announced on Twitter, “Full transparency: I’m deleting old tweets. Past views evolved & shouldn’t be a distraction. I serve @POTUS agenda & that’s all that matters.” Let the past, then, be the past.

Second, as for the Trump the man, consider looking at him through different eyes.

Here's something we can easily wrap our minds around, although the example is extreme. Imagine an old-world mafia leader, ruthless in his business dealings and murderous in his methods but with a deep love for his mother, his wife and his daughters. He would sacrifice anything for their well-being, and with them, he is as tender as a child, the ultimate gentleman.

Now let's take it one step further. Let's say that this same man has a great respect for the Catholic Church, even though he himself is not that observant. He hears that the local parish is in trouble, and so he secretly donates money, not wanting to take any credit. And when he hears that the local priest has been threatened by thugs, he sends them a strong warning: You threaten him again, and you'll find yourself at the bottom of the river.

Again, these are exaggerated examples, but you can see where I'm going with this.

In the past, Trump seemed to have some respect for the Christian faith, even in his partying days. Now, as an older man who has become more conservative, that respect has deepened greatly. More importantly, as he has spent hours with godly Christian leaders, and as he has people like Mike Pence close to his side, he has been positively impacted by their faith, their character and their influence.

He genuinely wants to stand up for their rights. He genuinely espouses their causes—which include social justice and care for the poor along with pro-life, pro-family and pro-Israel stances.

He genuinely believes that preserving our religious freedoms is key to our nation's success. And he knows like-minded people helped get him elected, so he feels indebted to them as well.

At the same time, he is a 70-year-old, rough and tumble, New

York businessman, more cut throat than compassionate when it comes to getting things done.

He is a man who can communicate impulsively and say unsavory things, a world-famous celebrity and a self-marking expert.

Put another way, he is far from a model Christian himself.

But he is definitely a work in progress. He truly wants to be a champion of many good, Christian causes, and his door remains wide open to committed people of faith.

Viewed from this perspective, he's not really that much of an enigma after all. It does make sense, and when you factor in that God often uses unlikely vessels to carry out His plan, it's not that hard to understand. Do you agree? {eo}