

Why I Can't Defend Everything Trump Tweets

President Trump has never launched a nuclear attack, but his words this week triggered a virtual war. Responding to four Democratic congresswomen who have been critical of his immigration policies, Trump tweeted on July 15 that the women—Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts, Rashida Talaib of Michigan and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York—should “go back” to the countries they came from.

The tweets sparked outrage. Critics called his words blatant racism. But the president defended himself, even after Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said Trump was “xenophobic” and Omar said his message was “stoking white nationalism.” The uproar has dominated the headlines for the past 48 hours.

This happens every few weeks. President Trump uses Twitter to smack his political enemies, and they smack him back publicly. The language gets ugly. Then it really gets weird when Christians who voted for Trump feel they must defend every word he says, no matter how crass or insensitive.

I try to avoid political topics in this column because I absolutely hate the nastiness and divisiveness of our current political climate. I don't want to stir up more anger. Hateful people on both sides of our cultural divide are ripping this nation to shreds. I'm sick of it.

But it's obvious we will not have a truce. Lines are drawn, knives are sharpened and the torches are lit as we head into the 2020 presidential race. We might as well brace for many more months of outrage. You can forget the days of civil discourse. People today want blood.

I've always tried to be a “kingdom Christian”—that is, a

follower of Christ whose primary allegiance is not to a political party but to biblical values. My trust is certainly not in Trump, any more than it was in Obama, Bush 2, Clinton, Bush 1 or Ronald Reagan (who was my favorite president because he was conservative, tough and a gentleman).

There was a time when Democrats and Republicans got along. We actually share a lot of the same wholesome values—especially a belief in democracy and a love for the core freedoms that made this nation great, including freedom of the press and freedom of religion.

But those shared values have been trampled today. We are polarized. Some Republicans are so adamant about policing the Mexican border that they've lost all compassion for immigrants. And some Democrats are so intent on "reproductive freedom" that they pass laws to kill full-term babies at birth.

Some Republicans are so pro-business that they have no concern for the poor. Some Democrats want to raise the tax rate to 70 percent and outlaw capitalism so they can turn America into Venezuela.

Don't lecture me about who has the moral high ground. If God examined the scales—and you can be sure He does—both Republicans and Democrats would be found wanting. Do you get upset when Republicans push for stricter immigration laws and resort to mistreating the children of border-crossers? I do. But I also hate the fact that limitless Democrat-sponsored abortions have resulted in the genocide of African-Americans.

Our political polarization has turned us into hypocrites. You can't be pro-immigrant and pro-abortion. And you can't be pro-life and anti-immigrant. In the kingdom of God, we value all life.

There is no question there are white supremacists who favor the Republican Party. But there are also fascists on the far-

left side of the Democratic Party who would be happy to see evangelical Christians wiped off the face of the earth. These atheistic, anti-God activists hate anyone who doesn't share their goal of eliminating the traditional view of gender and marriage. These radicals cry, "Racism!" yet they are just as bigoted as the bigots they hate.

The gospel of Jesus Christ opposes both right-wing racism and left-wing atheism. Let's stop acting like one party speaks for God. Samuel Rodriguez, leader of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, puts it this way: "Our hope as a nation isn't in the hands of a donkey or an elephant; our hope rests in the Lamb of God."

When I travel overseas, my international Christian friends often ask me how they should pray for America. They also ask me about Trump's angry tone, and they wonder if he hates immigrants. My response is that, as a Christian, I'm not going to defend every word that comes out of President Trump's mouth. His tweets are often rude. He should ask a mature member of his staff to edit them before he tosses them like grenades.

But I also tell my friends overseas that I'm not going to support Trump's opposition just because liberals claim moral superiority. In many cases, the actions of leftists are as evil as anything they have accused Trump of doing.

Ultimately, I remind my international friends that Jesus didn't take sides in the political debate. Instead, He taught us to pray in Matthew 6:10: "Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." No election, no political party and certainly no tweet will be able to bring heaven on earth. So prayer will be my priority throughout this tumultuous season.