

# To White Conservative Christians Who Plan to Vote for Trump

ID: A20215

***The reason you're voting for Trump is not because of the economy or the response to coronavirus that he's delivering, but rather the image of protecting White people in America.<sup>1</sup>***

Thoughtful people in this country have been trying to explain why Trump has not lost his base support after revelations—some by people who worked closely with him—of his incompetence as a national leader, his abandonment of his sworn responsibility to protect our democratic way of life, his constant exaggerations and misrepresentations of the truth, and his deep attraction to dictatorial national leaders, particularly, Vladimir Putin.

Of all the attempts that I have read to explain Trump's behavior as president, the clearest, simplest, and most directly stated formulation is the one sentence above. It says simply that there's only one reason for voting for Trump. And that reason is the belief that Trump will protect White Privilege in America.

In his campaign speeches and TV ads, Trump continually raises the specter of rioting and looting by people of color in the cities, saying that this violence will extend into the suburbs and small towns in which **You** live. Behind this fear-mongering are data analyses from scientific studies of population growth, which conclude that by 2050, the percentage of White people living in the U.S. will drop from 87% in 1995 to 67% in 2010 to 51% in 2050. Meanwhile, the percentage of people who identify themselves as Black will rise slowly from 12% in 1995 to 13% in 2010 to 14% in 2050.

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<sup>1</sup> Manuel Pastor, sociologist and director of the Equity Research Institute at the University of Southern California, quoted in Ronald Brownstein, "Why the stability of the 2020 race promises more volatility ahead," 9/15/2020, [www.CNN.com](http://www.CNN.com).

The Asian population will increase from 3% of the population in 1995 to 5% in 2010 to 8% in 2050. And finally, the percentage of people who identify themselves as Hispanic will jump from 10% in 1995 to 14% in 2010 to 26% in 2050.

In other words, during the next 50 years, White people will lose their substantial majority in the population and find themselves in a world where roughly half the population is not White. This change in the character of the American population will be the result of immigration, of higher birth rates among Hispanics and Asians than among Whites, and of racial and ethnic intermarriage.<sup>2</sup>

Put simply, White people are losing their dominant position in American society, while Black and Brown and Yellow people will be rising into positions of power. The nation will then have to make policy decisions by real negotiation rather than by the imposition of the will of the majority on the minority sub-populations.

This is the inevitable change which will alter the way government will work in this nation, as well as the way daily social interactions will be played out. I believe that fear of this outcome is the motive for Trump's actions, especially efforts to deny Brown people entry into this country. And now, during the campaign season, he highlights this fear within the nation's White citizenry—within you.

I'd like to raise the question to my brothers and sisters in the White Conservative Christian demographic who support Trump whether White Privilege is a value worth protecting.

You are wrong to support Trump and to call yourselves Christians at the same time. Christians, real Christians, who follow Jesus and appreciate his word in the gospels, cannot justify supporting Trump. And here's the

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<sup>2</sup> James P. Smith and Barry Edmonston, Editors, *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration*, National Academies Press, 2020, Table 3.10, page 121.

reason why. – You won't want to hear this, but the fact is that Jesus was brown in skin tone, just like Arabs of today, because the ancient Hebrews were descended from the same nation of people as the Arabs were descended from. They were, and still are, brothers and sisters—Arabs and Jews. And so, they had similar genetic makeups, including the complexion of their skin.

At some point, perhaps in the eighth century B.C., the group of people whom we call Arabs migrated away from their mother-nation (probably in Anatolia, in modern-day Turkey), taking with them the language which was spoken there at the time. This language has developed into the modern-day Arabic dialects.

Centuries earlier, another group of people, called Amorites, also migrated away from the same mother-nation in Anatolia and took with them the language which was spoken there at that time (a more ancient form of the language, called of course Amorite). The Amorites settled on the eastern Mediterranean coastal area and into the hills to the east. One group of these people migrated away from the rest of the group, taking the Amorite language with them. This group came to be called Hebrews, and later Jews. The language that they spoke developed into the Hebrew which was used in temple worship at the time of Jesus and in which most of the Hebrew bible—the *Tanakh*—was written. (The people of the nation of Israel, including Jesus, spoke another development of the Amorite language, called Aramaic, in their daily interactions.)

So, the Hebrew language of the first century A.D. and the Arabic language also spoken at that time both developed from the same ancestral language in Anatolia. Jews and Arabs have always been closely related socially, and the history of their languages demonstrates this close relationship.

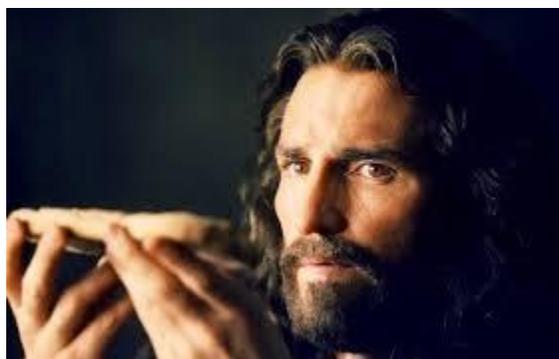
In the first century, then, the ancient Jews and the Arab people both looked and behaved like people of the eastern Mediterranean coastal culture.

Neither the Jews nor the Arabs had any background relationship with the European peoples who came as invading armies to drive these Semitic peoples into submission—first the Macedonian Greeks, and then the Romans.

So Jesus was certainly of the same olive-brown skin tone as the people who in the present time live in the same eastern Mediterranean lands. Jesus was not Caucasian. Jesus was not White, as the native peoples of Europe are. However, there are some theorists and biblical commentators who claim that Jesus was White, because they want to identify Christianity with White Privilege—with White Supremacy.

But it's impossible for this claim to be true because the facts are against it: the facts of where the Hebrew nation came from, which is the ancient Semitic mother-nation in Anatolia, as part of the larger Amorite migration, and of where the Arabic-speaking peoples came from, which is the same Semitic mother-nation. They were all brown in skin color, with black hair.

So the Jesus to whom you pray so devoutly is not that Arian-looking Jesus who is so popular on funeral cards and in Bible illustrations in our time. Jesus looked perhaps more like the young Osama bin Laden than like the young and well-groomed James Caviezel, who played Jesus in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*.



The second point: Trump Christians must consider the crucial lesson Jesus learned about prejudice and open-heartedness from the Canaanite woman who approached Jesus as he was on vacation in “the district of Tyre and Sidon,” in what is today called Lebanon.

*Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly. (Mt 15:21-28, New Revised Standard Version.)*

Jesus learns an important lesson from what happens in this episode. When he first encounters the Canaanite woman, he sees her through the lens of the prejudices which he was brought up to believe—that Jews knew the true God and therefore were superior to all other peoples. That Jesus had this elitist attitude is attested in this story. He believed that his message of loving God and loving and helping the people around you was only for Jews, and that all Gentile people were “dogs” (as he says here and in Mt. 7:6: “Do not give what is holy to dogs”) and “swine” (Mt. 7:6: “and do not throw your pearls before swine.”)

The Canaanite woman here breaks through Jesus’ cultural prejudices, not by reacting confrontationally at his insulting epithets, nor by teaching him in words the truth he needed to learn, but simply by remaining humble and using her sense of humor. She responds to his insult by saying in effect, “Yes,

it's true that I am a dog whom you despise, but even we dogs get a crumb once in a while that falls from our masters' table."

Her response catches Jesus by surprise. By taking Jesus at his word—that she and all Samaritans are Gentile “dogs”—she builds his insult into a humorous story about the dogs of rich people who stay under the eating table at mealtime and quickly sloop up any piece of food that falls from the table. She says, in effect, “Yep. You’re right. I most certainly am a dog. And here I am with you, acting like a dog, waiting for a crumb from you.”

In this answer, the woman shows her humanity in her wit. Jesus immediately penetrates his prejudice against Samaritans and breaks through his stereotypes. When he does, he sees the human being whom the woman really is. He sees her not as a “Samaritan dog” but as a quick-witted person, who in fact is much more faithful to him than he is being to her.

Jesus understands what she is trying to say to him. He cracks through his prejudice and sees the humble human being who is simply seeking his help in her protective love for her daughter. He shouts out in good humor: “Woman!”—using a term of respect and gentle openness. He recognizes their kinship with each other, and he praises her faith in him. Then, freed of the prejudice which had constricted him, he open-heartedly grants her request for the healing of her daughter.

In this story, then, Jesus comes to love this woman whom at first he would not even acknowledge. Despite their differences in culture, in religious practice, and perhaps even in language, he sees in her a human being worthy of respect and motivated by love for her daughter and by the desire for goodness.

Through his encounter with this woman, Jesus learned a new perspective on the command to love your neighbor as yourself. After the time of this story, he never again in any gospel refers to Gentiles in a demeaning way. And by the end of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus has become a truly pan-

national spiritual teacher, who demonstrates his openness to joining with the hearts of all people, even of us White people, when he tells his disciples to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of **all** nations” (Mt. 28:19.)

Jesus stepped beyond the protective borders of “my people” and of his own culture and of “my God.” He opened himself to other people and saw strangers not as aliens but as sisters and brothers, despite cultural differences. For, by whatever name any society calls the One Who Creates All Things, whether YHWH (Adonai), Allah, Zeus, Jupiter, or any other name, it is always the same God, the One God who brings to life both the earth and the heavens.

From the two points just presented, we can take two lessons: First, to Jesus and to Christians who follow him in love of every person, White Privilege does not exist. Even the Lord and Savior of every Christian was not White. He shared the brown complexion of the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean and of the *campesinos* of Latin America and of *La Guadalupe*.

The only privilege which exists for Christians is to live fully the other-centered life of humble nurturing and consolation of the suffering, in imitation of Jesus.

And second, the entire life of the Jesus whom you worship was devoted to proclaiming the difficult lesson which the Canaanite woman taught him: that the obligation within the faith of Christians is the duty to love and care for every person you encounter, every “neighbor,” with whatever gifts you each have been given.

This essential obligation of every Christian—not to raise oneself above others, but to humbly serve others—is also a founding principle of our federal government: that all people are created by God as equals—none having superiority by any accident of birth or destiny over any of the others. Each and every one of us, because of our God-given human dignity, deserves respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, social class, achievement, level of

affluence, physical appearance, mental capacity, or ability to negotiate one's way in society, and deserves to be accorded the rights to which every human being is by nature entitled.

And yet, there are just a few states (two certainly, in my research) in our Union of states which enshrine this principle, to some extent or another, in their constitutions. One of these states is New York, whose constitution expressly states that "the aid, care and support of the needy are public concerns and shall be provided by the state and by such of its subdivisions...."<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the constitution of North Carolina states that "Beneficent provision for the poor, the unfortunate, and the orphan is one of the first duties of a civilized and Christian state. Therefore the General Assembly shall provide for and define the duties of a board of public welfare."<sup>4</sup> This article specifically notes that provision of care for the needy is a characteristic of a Christian society.

Many state constitutions contain clauses providing for "the protection and promotion of public health," such as those of Alaska and Hawaii (cited here.) But it is one thing to provide state health departments to prepare for flu season and for epidemics. And it is quite another thing to recognize the necessity of providing health care to the indigent, the undernourished, the homeless, and the economically or psychologically incapacitated. Professor Leonard (note 4) points out that state courts are reluctant to find that individuals or incapacitated individuals have a right to health care. Rather,

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<sup>3</sup> Article XVII of the New York State Constitution, cited in <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/our-programs/advocacy/legal-victories/the-callahan-legacy-callahan-v-carey-and-the-legal-right-to-shelter/>. This whole article is of interest in depicting how mercilessly the mayors of New York City, from Koch to Bloomberg, have fulfilled this constitutional promise and mandate.

<sup>4</sup> Article XI, section 4, cited in Elizabeth Weeks Leonard, "State Constitutionalism and the Right To Health Care," <https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1135&context=jcl>, discusses state constitutional obligations with respect to health care exclusively. Nonetheless, the author quotes from the constitutions of several of the seven states she reviewed. These are Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Mississippi, South Carolina, Montana, and New Jersey.

the courts read the constitutional provisions, the laws, and the court precedents very narrowly, to prevent dramatic impacts on state finances. Thus, in general, even those states whose constitutions make broad promises of help for the poor are adept at circumventing these promises in practice.

It is appalling that this nation, which used to style itself a "Christian nation," and still sees itself, in the eyes of its many ordinary church-going Christians, as a nation which was founded and still reveals itself, fervently and ostentatiously, as a stronghold of Christian faith, takes such neglectful or even hostile attitudes toward the needs of the poor, the needy, and the broken.

Shame on this nation for its selfishness and heartlessness. Shame on the states for ignoring or for taking only token actions to address the needs of the poor and of the unjustly treated minorities. And shame on Trump's government, as well, for he has labored to enlarge the coffers of the wealthy (by his own public admission), but he and his administration have caused only more dissent and suffering among the needy and the oppressed people of color, and have done nothing to address the charges of injustice in their treatment of the poor and of minorities, which the citizens bring before him.

In New York harbor rises the Statue of Liberty, which stands as a beacon of this Christian promise. The Statue says, Send me all your suffering, destitute, nameless and ignored people, and I will take care of them and offer them hope and opportunity. That is the promise of a wealthy and affluent but humble nation to those less fortunate who arrive on its shores. It is a simple restatement of the command to love your neighbor as yourself. There is no White Privilege in this promise whatsoever.

Christians who are truly intent on following Jesus should easily understand the promise which our nation makes to those arriving on its shores and the hope which they carry in their hearts for simply a peaceful and

sufficient life. Such Christians cannot support Trump, who at every turn, rejects the needy and crushes their hope.

Purify your hearts, Christians, and let America be what it promises to be, a place of hope and of opportunity. Abandon self-centeredness and look to the needs of others, knowing that if Trump is elected again, the poor arriving here and the oppressed who reside here will continue to be spurned and ignored.

Be what you say you are. And do not dare to contradict the teachings of Jesus in your actions and in your words and in your vote.

Finally, familiar as you are with the scriptures, I ask each of you to open your bible to the Book of Revelation and to read carefully Chapters 17 and 18 completely—the story of the Whore of Babylon. And as you read, bear in mind that Babylon is depicted here as the place of great wealth and luxury, ruled by the Whore who fornicates with the kings of all the nations of the world, and who grows drunk on the blood of the innocent followers of Jesus, while the kings and the merchants of the world stand far away and are aghast at the destruction of the Whore, the corrupt one who sustains the corrupt city of Babylon.

And as you read these chapters, perhaps you might ask yourselves whether living in the wealthiest nation on earth has not also corrupted your own moral values. And then consider whether you are willing to be slaughtered by the Whore in the name of Jesus, who commanded you, and taught us all, to love our neighbors, or whether you prefer to fornicate with the Whore of Babylon.

Your destiny is in your hands, you who have the free will to choose the Way of Jesus or the Whore of Babylon.

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