

# OPINION

## GOP has settled for Trump, much as some accept a toxic relationship

We often make the mistake of believing that we can change someone. That if we endure long enough, the person will eventually become who we wish them to be. I exhaustively tried to cure someone of his toxicity. I dismissed, excused, and rationalized the characteristics and actions that were inexcusable and harmful because I believed he'd eventually change. When he didn't, I justified the unacceptable. I convinced myself the unprecedented ugliness was normal, my fault, or forgivable. What I wanted the relationship to be shadowed reality. I feared the alternative to being with him and couldn't fathom starting over. Though not easy, I roused from the fugue of my denial and acknowledged the red flags. I stopped compromising what was important to me, healthy for me, and good for my future. I finally left. Republican leaders and many Americans remain disillusioned and want Trump to be someone he's not. There are some who love that he's a venal weasel in bed with the Russians, spurring hate and intolerance and rousing up racism in a country built on immigrants. However, I believe we all deserve better.

The Dark Triad of psychology refers to the personality traits narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Trump's malevolent qualities perfectly fit the mold. However, rather than recognize his repugnant rhetoric and blatant disregard for morality, the Constitution, and American values, Republicans do what's easier in the moment and selfishly consider their political careers and stand by while Trump wreaks havoc on our country's future and their party. Rather than recognize Trump's incompetence, they distract, attack, gaslight, and obstruct. They excuse the inexcusable provided Trump remains pro-life, pro-gun, and anti-immigration. Republicans have settled. They're afraid of their party having to build itself back up into something respectable, so they pretend that what they have is as good as it gets.

Democrats aren't going through the impeachment process because they're afraid to face Trump in 2020. If that were true, they'd take the easy route and complacently bow down to him like their Republican colleagues. Many Republicans declare that they'll support Trump unquestioningly. That's the definition of a crumbling democracy and a sign that due process, accountability and non-partisanship for the good of the country are non-existent. It's evidence of Republicans' extreme fear of loss of power and their resistance to equality and justice. When there's important work to do, you don't worry about how you look or what's easiest in the moment. You do what it takes to do what's right. In some cases that means you walk away; in others it means you persist. The good news is, when you take off your blinders and do the hard work, you simultaneously regain your pride, power, and possibilities.

The impeachment process led by democrats is not for naught. It's the leadership needed to hold our president accountable for his abuse of power. Hopefully Republicans will begin to see that not only their party, but our country, deserves better. They must recognize that Trump will never break free of the Dark Triad that is his personality and be willing to make sacrifices and work to rebuild leadership in this country.

Danz is manager of Zandbroz Variety and a regular opinion contributor to The Forum.



**JOSIE DANZ**  
Commentary

## How can Christians be Trump supporters?

### OUR VIEW

At this time of year when Christians are celebrating the birth of Christ, and at a time when our country is more polarized than ever, we're pondering a riddle: Should avowed Christians support President Trump? Frankly, it's difficult to conceive of a high office holder whose personal life and divisive leadership are less Christ-like than those of Trump.

It's easy to come up with examples, in fact, of Trump's statements and actions that utterly contradict the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus taught his followers to welcome the stranger and not to oppress foreigners. Trump has railed against illegal immigrants, sought to ban Muslim immigrants and has sharply reduced the number of refugees allowed into the country.

Jesus taught compassion for the poor and downtrodden. He told his followers how they treat the poor is how they treat Him. The poor don't figure among the Trump administration's priorities.

Jesus taught his followers to love your neighbors — and even your enemies — while Trump has sowed division, turning this into a country that hates its neighbors. Jesus said that the meek shall inherit the earth and told his followers to turn the other cheek; Trump demonizes anyone who disagrees with him.

One of the Ten Commandments is not to bear false witness against your neighbor; Trump lies habitually. Another commandment forbids adultery; Trump made hush payments to conceal dalliances with a former

Playmate model and stripper.

In short, there is a fundamental conflict between what Jesus taught and demanded of his followers and what Trump says and does. We ask: If you call yourself a Christian, how can you be a Trump supporter? Are we missing something?

Trump clearly has pandered to the religious right, one of his key constituencies.

Many conservative Christians praise Trump for his judicial appointments; he has named two justices to the Supreme Court and a slate of federal judges who were vetted by conservatives for their views, notably opposition to abortion. Religious conservatives yearn, among other goals, to reverse Roe vs. Wade, the 1973 decision legalizing abortion.

If that's the case, they have struck an unsavory bargain. They've made a whopping "ends justifies the means" rationalization — and placed themselves on a morally slippery slope. Where will that downward path lead? Is that bargain worth it?

Some observations by Timothy J. Keller, an influential evangelical leader and theologian who was recently interviewed by The Atlantic, are worth noting here. He believes "most Christians are just nowhere nearly as deeply immersed in the scripture and in theology as they are in their respective social-media bubbles and news feed bubbles. To be honest, I think the

'woke' evangelicals are just much more influenced by MSNBC and liberal Twitter. The conservative Christians are much more influenced by Fox News and their particular loops."

Both, Keller said, were immersed in those worlds eight to 10 hours a day, and go to church once a week "and they're just not immersed in the kind of biblical theological study that would nuance that stuff."

Regardless of one's faith tradition, Trump stands as a leader who has shredded norms and values and morals. He has undeniably used his office for personal gain — and for the benefit of his sons, daughter and son-in-law — yet the far right refuses to hold him accountable.

We are supposed to be a nation of laws, not of men. Our Constitution spells out separation of powers as well as checks and balances between equal branches of government.

However we deal with Trump's misconduct, there will be consequences, for the country and for conservative causes. We want a viable, upright conservative party to shape policy.

Those who believe they are being loyal to a party for their support of Trump should think of the long term, not merely of the next election, and should think of their country before their party. And they might ask, What would Jesus do?

We have news for Christians. Trump wasn't a Christian before he took office, and he won't be after he leaves office.

Editorials represent the views of Forum management and the Editorial Board.

## Like Obamacare, Democrats may regret impeachment vote

Minot, N.D.

According to Heidi Heitkamp, now that Democrats have impeached President Donald Trump, what they really need to do is spend a lot of money on explaining what they just did to the American people.

The erstwhile senator has somehow fashioned for herself a post-Senate career playing an expert on the fly-over-country voters on television. Of course, if she were really any sort of an expert, she might still be serving in the Senate.

"The Democrats need to not just do town halls, they need to do a clear, concise message on why they're taking this vote, and there needs to be money behind that message," Heitkamp said during a segment on ABC News.

This is comical, though as is often the case with Heitkamp's blundering punditry, it's unintentionally revealing.

For months, in front of intense media coverage, proceedings have taken place in the House of Representatives where the Democratic majority has called the shots. They controlled the witnesses and testimony and evidence.

If they haven't made their point to voters yet — they haven't, if anything Trump's polling has improved in recent weeks — they're in trouble.

It's reminiscent of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, in charge of a previous Democratic House majority, telling the American people that Congress would have to pass Obamacare for us all to find out what's in it.

And we all know what happened to that Democratic majority in 2010.

Like Obamacare, not a single Republican voted for impeachment.

In fact, despite Pelosi arguing that was a prerequisite, the only bipartisanship was in opposition. Two Democrats voted against the charge that Trump invited Ukrainian interference in domestic politics. Three voted against the charge that he obstructed Congress. A fourth Democrat, Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, cast a "present" vote on each charge in protest of what she decried as a "partisan" proceeding.

A proceeding, remember, which was controlled by Democrats.

Also like Obamacare, the articles of impeachment don't match up with the rhetoric about them.

Democrats have deployed talking points like "nobody is above the law." They've accused President Trump of misdeeds like bribery.

These points might have been helped if Democrats had actually impeached Trump for breaking a law.

What they actually impeached him for was pressuring a foreign leader to investigate a political rival and obstructing Congress.

Yet the foreign leader says he wasn't pressured, which means the first charge was a bit like indicting someone for murder while the alleged victim watches from the gallery, and if a president squabbling with Congress is an impeachable offense, then I guess we should have impeached every single president from George Washington forward.

Had Democrats made these issues a part of their campaigns in 2020 they would have been on solid ground. They could have even justified passing an official censure of Trump.

Impeachment was always about placating a rabidly left-wing base which has been howling for impeachment since inauguration day.

Three weeks into Trump's term in office — three weeks! — about 83% of people who voted for Hillary Clinton said they believed Trump needed to be impeached.

Democrats have finally delivered, but at what cost?

Rob Port, founder of SayAnythingBlog.com, a North Dakota political blog, is a Forum Communications commentator. Listen to his Plain Talk Podcast and follow him on Twitter at @RobPort.



**ROB PORT**  
Forum News Service

Commentary



### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Are we becoming a banana republic?

By Tom R. Kovach  
Nevis, Minn.

The House Democrats voted to impeach a duly elected president on totally baseless assumptions. Is This how all future presidential elections will be decided? If you don't like the president, simply impeach him or her and get your own person in.

Are we becoming a Banana Republic? What's next? Follow the Latin American example and decide the presidency by

violent riots? That is what the radical Democrats, and trust me, they are radical, seem to be getting at. So why bother to vote in future elections if the votes of about 63 million Americans are ignored?

So if a Democrat gets elected president in 2020, should the Republicans start immediate impeachment proceedings? The Democrats — and some Republicans — may not like Donald Trump and his sometimes crude

language. But that does not make for an impeachable offense. The world used to look up to America — or at least most of the world did. But the Democrats are hell-bent to destroy everything America stands for.

The economy is doing great, trade deals are being made, and terrorism is at least being kept in check. Trump is not the one who should be impeached — it's the Democrats in the House. What a dishonest and shameful bunch.

# The Forum

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