

Nihilism Grips the World: Thanks, Evangelicals!

Question: What happens when a nihilist meets an evangelical?

Answer: Win-win.

Donald Trump is a nihilist: he disdains all moral principles and makes decisions simply on the basis of what he perceives to be of greatest benefit to himself. Larger moral concerns are for schmucks.

Truth, fairness and justice, even simple human decency, have no value in Trump world, except when they can be feigned for political advantage. And even then Trump's efforts are so clumsy and artificial that it is hard to imagine that anyone would believe him. His habitual mendacity precludes any sort of reasonable public discourse. He is an amoral tyrant who is fully prepared to torture children for political gain.

The great irony of this debacle is that it was only possible because of Trump's strong support from American evangelical voters. As a nihilist Trump is the embodiment of what evangelicals are supposed to despise. So why do they support a man they otherwise would see as an agent of the devil?

It is a Faustian bargain. Trump gives them what they want right now – mainly socially conservative Supreme Court nominees – in return for giving him a means to achieve power. Thus, evangelicals have created a world in which a narcissistic, petulant and ignorant man, with no moral grounding, has his finger on the nuclear button.

Trump, as a nihilist, does not, of course, believe in any of the evangelical causes – he would turn on them in a second if it suited his interests. He uses them, shamelessly, and they follow along, shamefully, in their willful and catastrophic innocence.

Why does Trump inspire this sort of loyalty from his moral opposites; why have evangelicals been so willing to make this deal with the anti-Christ? Perhaps their penchant for entrenched, unquestioning faith, and their disinclination to engage in critical, analytical thought, is a chicken that has come home to roost. In Trump they trust.

Faustian bargains have dire consequences. In this case all Americans, indeed maybe all humans, will pay a steep price for the follies of the American evangelical movement.

—Gary Bauslaugh

Humanist Perspectives

www.HumanistPerspectives.org

Vol. 51, No. 4 Winter 2018-19
Issue 207

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Canadian Humanist Publications is a non-profit organization with charitable status (Reg. No: 11883 3284 RR0001). Donations are eligible for tax credits from Revenue Canada.

Humanist Perspectives quarterly is a member of Magazines Canada indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index and is available on microfilm or microfiche from ProQuest in Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48106, USA.

Articles published in *Humanist Perspectives* magazine will also be available on our website and in online databases partnered with Canadian Humanist Perspectives.

Submissions via digital media are preferred. Manuscripts may be edited for clarity and length, and will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Writers' guidelines are available.

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Please return undeliverable magazines for Canadian addresses to the above address of Canadian Humanist Publications in Ottawa.
(ISSN 1719-6337)

This issue was produced in November, 2018. Printed in Canada