

Lovett Response to Dr. Wayne Grudem

September 15, 2016

Dear Wayne,

May I express my gratitude for your cryptic and thoughtful response to my lengthy introduction of this conversation, titled, Dear Trump's Theologian. Here are my reflections and thoughts on your response. Is your response the Conservative response or a Trump response? Are you elaborating on what you would hope Trump should be stating as Conservatives ideals in contrast to what he is really saying? It appears to be the former.

1. **Gender Views:** It is refreshing to know as a Conservative that you are not necessarily influenced by gender in your opposition to Hillary Clinton. That would be anti-biblical since in Christ race, ethnicity and gender are no longer factors in determining our vocation under His Lordship.
2. **Immigration:** After citing the oppression of women and gays in several Muslim nations to support Trump's call to temporarily ban Middle Eastern immigrants from entering the country, **LGBT** leaders accused him of fear mongering after a massacre at a gay nightclub in Orlando. Trump suggests that there are no gay Muslim immigrants. [**Washington Post** -Trump Sticking to "us vs. them" in outreach- **Blacks Women Pitted Against Migrants-** by Jose A. DelReal- Tue. August 30, 2016] It appears that both candidates believe in control of one's borders. The issue is how ought such control be administered given that America is no longer a "*melting pot*" but rather a "*salad bowl*." In our pluralistic nation one is not forced to be American in order to be accepted or to survive. Open borders with poor control will lead to chaos. Driving every conceivable illegal person out and allowing them to return via new screening criteria may reveal our notions of fairness in a nation conceived in liberty and justice for all. Will a Trump Wall deny people who truly want to improve their lot and live a qualitative life without fear or unnecessary restraints, equal access and opportunity?
3. **Trump the Candidate (the person) or Trump's policies:** You make a distinction between Trump as a candidate (person) and his policies. You did not make Trump a good moral candidate, but a good moral choice because you believe that his policies are better than his rival. I radically believe that character determines behavior and behavior influence policy choices and that they are virtually inseparable. Is Trump a Conservative Christian (Presbyterian)? If so, to

what extent would his policy choices be influenced by his faith? What is Trump's public policy stance on international relations. The difficulty in analyzing his public policy is the problem of vacillation. Clinton's policy on same-sex marriage went from "evolving" to a statement supporting same in the last eight years, with the contention that marriage between a male and female carries with it a "freighted history."

4. **Terrorism:** Are you trumpeting Trump's views on radical Islamic fundamentalism or the Conservative posture when you reject their presence in the USA based on their revolutionary stance? What is the Conservative stance on the recent Alt-Right Movement who covertly embraces white identity rhetoric? While Trump has verbally denounced David Duke, former head of the KKK, not sure about a statement condemning the Alt-Right group. Many of us are more threatened by radical white group's who use anti-racial inflammatory rhetoric as they build underground bunkers as survivalist preparing for a race war in order to "take America back." We are on the look out for "domestic terrorism" but not quite prepared for those who wear three piece suits by day who also have ropes in the closet. A racist cop strikes terror in the hearts of people of color more than radical fundamentalist who may get through our security screens. No, all cops are not racist. When no cops are convicted for shooting unarmed black citizens, a crisis does exist. I believe in law and order. But order to the exclusion of justice leads to Fascism. White males do not have this problem, as Black African-American peoples, we have this problem perennially. What are Trump's social policies on such behavior as he only says "*he can fix the inner city.*" (rhetoric but no policy). In Michelle Alexander's Alexander's book, **The New Jim Crow**, we are reminded that The "*war on drugs*" from the Reagan years was extended into the Clinton's presidency and resulted in mass incarceration of people of color for minor drug offenses while whites received lesser terms for major drug offenses such as the use of cocaine. What is Trump's policies on the de-criminalization of marijuana (largely among whites) and the use of "crack cocaine" in inner cities (among black's)?
5. **Minorities/Taxes:** Rev. William Barber II, President of the North Carolina NAACP recently stated "he objects to Trump's reductive view of the Black community that all African Americans live in poverty, that their communities are the sources of crime and that they have been fooled into voting for Democrats." [see Jose DelReal, Washington Post- Trump Sticking to Us vs. them" in Outreach, 8/30/2016]Past Republican policies has resulted in runaway inflation both during the Reagan and Bush years. Raising taxes are welcomed if benefits such as affordable health care, responsible use of Social Security and improved school

systems, tuition grants, etc. are achieved. We need a strong military for defense but we also need to rebuild or educational system and our deteriorating infrastructures throughout the nation. During the post-war Depression era (WWII) when depression virtually destroyed America, we created jobs. People were paid for "*sweeping air*" long before this technological era. The jobs are waiting but any new president must re-arrange our priorities. Wayne, what does Trump offer to re-build the crumbling infrastructure of America? Precisely, what are his social and domestic policies to fix such things?

6. **Conservative Political Views:** Conservative once meant to preserve values from the past in order to make the present meaningful. Liberal once meant to be open for change and revision of one's values. Both terms out of context can be disastrous. There is a tendency to hide behind terminology. On the abortion issue how does one when the life of the mother is threatened during childbirth. This happened to a classmate who was devoted to Christ. Against the advice of the attending physician, her spouse chose to complete the birth and she died. I believe there may be medically extenuating circumstances where a medical abortion may be necessary when the life of the mother is at risk. I believe that Scripture should be our guide for faith and practice. I do not believe the Bible literally, but I take it seriously. I hold strong views against the taking of human lives for any reason as a radical follower of Jesus.

Conclusion: The fundamental purpose of politics it to humanize the existing order. Aristotle defined politics as "*the art of achieving the possible.*" We are called as Christians to co-participate with God through our humanizing witness on earth. When Trump campaigns on the notion of "*making America Great Again*" are these code words for "*making America white again?*" His rhetoric is racially charged and volatile. Is this moral? His disdain for our current president is very telling. Once a political candidate is endorsed one's subjectivity is clouded. Wayne, it appears that your thinking is more linear in your political assessment of Trump as a good moral choice. A strong theological assessment would have been more desirable. How does one define good, better, best or worse in any candidate unless scrutiny is given to the world view that drives the person? If Trump is the best moral choice I have misunderstood and misread Jesus. If Trump is right, Scripture is a joke. His policies vary on a weekly basis. Thanks for the conversation, it has been challenging. Follow me at the Marketplace of Ideas "*where truth is spoken and never compromised.*" www.theagora.net **Leonard Lovett**