

[Opinion](#)

A Sanctuary Politics: Being the Church in the Time of Trump

Stanley Hauerwas and Jonathan Tran ABC Religion and Ethics Updated 31 Mar 2017 (First posted 30 Mar 2017)

[Stanley Hauerwas](#) is Gilbert T. Rowe Professor Emeritus of Divinity and Law at Duke University. [Jonathan Tran](#) is Associate Professor of Religion at Baylor University.

The two of us admit that, back when Donald Trump's presidential candidacy was at best a strange curiosity, we entertained its possibility as an adventurous thought experiment: "What would *that* be like?"

Now that we live in the world called "Donald J. Trump, 45th President of the United States of America," thought experiments have given way to fear.

We, like many Christians, are worried about this administration and wonder how we might be faithful under it. There are no doubt worrisome things about any presidential administration, but this one scares us more.

Christians do not help matters by portraying this current political moment as fundamentally different than prior perilous moments. Still, Christian complicity in bringing about these perils and the recurring opportunity for the church to correct itself and be the church is worth considering if we are to, as the social theorist Naomi Klein puts it, "think our way out of the present."

Doing so is not here served by going over all the things that worry us about President Trump. Those worrisome things are these days everywhere and obvious. Some, wanting to diminish such worries, have observed that President Trump is only doing what he promised to do. We think we can sum things up by responding, "That's what makes this so terrifying."

It is unclear what if anything can be done about how the 2016 election turned out, but people can prepare themselves for the next four years by understanding how Christian mistakes got us here and how Christians can do better.

We begin with the elephant-in-the-room fact that the two of us are often seen as the type of people who have downplayed the importance of politics for the Christian life. For some, this de-emphasis on Christian political participation is what got us in this mess. The result of the 2016 presidential election is, for them, the fault of theologians like us, those whose seeming disregard for good Christian participation in politics created a vacuum for bad Christian participation in politics.

We hope to turn that accusation on its head by stepping back and offering a different approach to politics - one that does not destine Christians to wrongheaded political behaviour. We believe that doing so in these anxious times offers something of an intervention on how Christianity is practiced and imagined.

The Failure of Political Imagination

Christian participation in politics starts with Christians first appraising the world in which they find themselves. This appraisal involves examining political situations as if God mattered for those situations. This is why for us ethics is a matter of seeing the world in such a way that one can accurately survey one's available options. Those options, moreover, depend on the existence of a people who make options available because of the kind of people they are. In particular, they must be a people who have learned to examine any political situation disciplined by a view of God's activity as described in scripture and as interpreted by Christian tradition.

The failure to attain to such a view, for us, explains what often ensues as a lack of *creativity* in American politics. And it explains much of the Christian vote for Trump, which in many cases followed a form of moral reasoning that portrayed candidate Trump as, for whatever reason, the only viable option. This is astounding, because there were many, many reasons why Christians should have voted otherwise - and still many voted for Trump. If, as is reported, 81% of the white evangelical vote went to Trump, then Christians basically handed Donald Trump the presidency. And they had every reason not to.

(We recognize our argument may be question begging insofar we have not set about the task of verifying its premise that candidate Trump would not make a good president. We also think President Trump, now two months into his term, has himself done our argument the service of verifying that premise.)

It is simply not true to claim as some have that Christians were forced into voting for Donald Trump. Our belief is that believing they *had to* vote for Trump, for whatever reason, followed having already surrendered more basic Christian convictions. One might justify this kind of political behaviour (voting for a candidate when there is a preponderance of Christian reasons not to do so) by saying that such measures are necessary in politics, that *that* is what politics is.

Christians in America have been thinking this way for so long now in relation to war and state-sponsored violence that perhaps they have grown accustomed to this sort of rationale. Maybe they think that Christian faithfulness just requires political participation and political participation just requires otherwise questionable moral judgments. Maybe they imagine Christian moral commitments as quaint, operating in the larger, meaner world of politics where the subsuming of Christianity is part of the *raison d'etre* of political activity. Maybe they think that Christians need to grow up and be realistic (thinking indebted to Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian realism, yet shorn of its most robust elements). The momentum this way of thinking sets into motion will make refusing its terms look like downplaying political participation.

Christianity and democracy share the view that the possibility of losing is no reason to give up one's commitments.

At no point in 2016 were Christians without good options. Christians never needed to feel caught between Trump's obviously problematic candidacy and some imagined worse evil. For instance, Christians were never stuck between Trump and Democratic nominee Hillary Rodham Clinton. If for whatever reason they thought Clinton no more suitable than Trump, still they had other options, if only they had the faith to believe they did.

For example, conservative Christians could have gotten behind the candidacy of independent Evan McMullin, the impressive decorated veteran who espoused an eminently reasonable conservative agenda. If one interjects, "McMullin could not have won!" we might ask, "How do you know?" There was after all an entire process laid out for how McMullin could garner enough electoral votes to deny majorities to either Trump or Clinton and position the Republican-controlled Congress to elect McMullin. If one could not countenance McMullin, one could have written in another candidate. If one could not find another candidate worth endorsing, one could have, in the strongest spirit of democracy, registered one's protest by actively abstaining.

Christians who voted for Trump because they wanted their "vote to count" would have done well to remember that any politics committed to justice will require great patience because unjust systems will make losing quite likely. Christianity and democracy share the view that the possibility of losing is no reason to give up one's commitments.

To us the most troubling thing was not that Christians voted for Trump when they had plenty of reasons and ways not to do so. While regrettable, that mistake follows a more basic one. We are most troubled by the ongoing belief Christians hold that the nation-state, not the church, is the arbiter of Christian political action. This belief obligates Christians to modes of statecraft in order to fulfil their moral commitments. In order to play at statecraft - again, for one's "vote to count" - Christians will have to prioritize those commitments that will survive the state's political processes over those that will not.

Christians in America have played this game for so long now and with so many half-baked strategies that they can no longer differentiate between America and God, something scripture calls *idolatry* (which [one of us has already said](#) is actually what President Trump wants of Americans). Once Christians zero in on the state as the locus of political activity, they become blind to those myriad other ways the church might politically act in the broad horizon of democratic possibility.

Take for instance the political issue of abortion, which some Christians cited as their reason for voting for candidate Trump. When Christians think that the struggle against abortion can only be pursued through voting for candidates with certain judicial philosophies, then serving at domestic abuse shelters *or* teaching students at local high schools *or* sharing wealth with expectant but under-resourced families *or* speaking of God's grace in terms of "adoption" *or* politically organizing for improved education *or* rezoning municipalities for childcare *or* creating "Parent's Night Out" programs at local churches *or* mentoring young mothers *or* teaching youth about chastity and dating *or* mobilizing religious pressure on medical service providers *or* apprenticing men into fatherhood *or* thinking of singleness as a vocation *or* feasting on something called "communion" *or* rendering to God what is God's *or* participating with the saints through Marian icons *or* baptizing new members *or* tithing money, will not count as political.

Looking to the future, it will serve Christians to remember that there are *many* ways to be political. Gathering with others around the given body of Christ, a *polis* through and through, is one such way, and is for Christians the original way.

As soon as Christians decide that some issue of importance to them (keeping abortion as our example) can be dealt with only one way (namely, voting in a general election) they are cornered into choosing between limited options (the Republican presidential candidate and the Democratic presidential candidate). When Christians see how that same issue can be served other ways (like praying for empty abortion clinics) or when they find more options (like independent pro-lifer Evan McMullin) everything opens up for them.

Though it might be unrealistic, even irresponsible, to commit to a cause that will not pan out, it is no less unrealistic, even irresponsible, to close off options that remain available. Christians compelled by issues of consequence can and should look for every available way and option. Indeed, their faith that God gives God's people ways and options is the reason they participate in politics at all.

Many Christians remain unable to separate their pro-life stance from their misogyny, and too willing to abdicate Christian witness in order to win a culture war no one else seems to be fighting.

One of the most tragic results of Christians having voted for Trump in order strategically to secure his support on the issue of abortion is this: Women in America have long worried that Christian pro-life arguments objectify them, reducing them to bodies and glossing over the myriad complexities women face in all facets of contemporary life. After pro-life Christians voted into the White House a person who actually

does seem to objectify women, their nightmares about Christians appear to have been realized.

As people who are anything but happy about abortion, we find it telling that much of the church championed a candidate accused of behaviour which cannot but endorse those most culpably associated with abortion - namely, men who refuse to take responsibility for their actions.

The 2016 election would see matters play out as Trump supporters demonized Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign, making her gender a frontline issue in an ongoing and, we should say, *imagined* culture war. This deeply shameful tactic and the embarrassing spectacle that followed demonstrated how many Christians remain unable to separate their pro-life stance from their misogyny and how willing they are to abdicate Christian witness in order to win a culture war no one else seems to be fighting. All this will prove a deal with the devil for which Christian evangelistic efforts will surely pay.

When Christians can imagine politics in a more imaginative and less circumscribed manner, then the question shifts from *whether* Christians can participate in politics to *how* they can do so. This also resituates the issue of abortion from hinging on whether abortion is legal to whether abortion is imaginable. The former we see as difficult given the cultural legacy of *Roe v. Wade*, and the latter impossible but for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. That near impossibility requires the church to beseech the Spirit, since any robust Christian challenge to abortion (where "robust" indicates persisting beyond myopic strategies) will require the church to be the church (where the church being the church enables reasons and resources beyond myopic strategies).

Faced with that daunting task, the American church has punted to the state and justified itself by proclaiming the state as the only site of Christian faithfulness on the matter of abortion. As a result, clergy ask the state to do what they believe they cannot ask members of their congregations to do. This is an astonishing failure of imagination.

And that is what happened with Christians in 2016. In direct opposition to that kind of thinking, we argue that the church offers an account of political life where activities like lobbying against abortion is meaningful inasmuch as it is continuous with many other things that make those activities coherent, an expansive enough picture of politics to make Donald Trump's ascendance less likely in the conflagrations to come.

Populism, Elitism and Fear

We began by talking about fear and continue here by delineating two kinds of fear operating around Trump's presidency. *First* is the fear that drove some to vote for candidate Trump even when there were plenty of reasons and ways not to do so. *Second* is the fear that surfaced in response to his candidacy, a fear that has publicly intensified during, and largely because of, his presidency.

At first glance these two fears appear to represent two very different constituencies, each fearing wildly different things as indicated by the polarizing choice to vote for Trump or not. Some of this true, but it's also the case that these fears and their constituencies share many things in common. For neither constituency was the fear new. For both, the 2016 election did not mean that things were *about* to get bad, since for each things were already bad. For both, things in America have always been bad, and Trump's election confirmed just how bad -for some, so bad they would vote for anyone, including a Donald Trump; for others, so bad only a Donald Trump could make them worse.

When one looks across the expanse of America's *disenfranchised* - say, those pushed to the underside of the American Dream - one finds ostensibly opposed constituencies suffering surprisingly similar conditions. Comparing disenfranchised whites to the urban poor, who tend to be characteristically not white, one will recognize a common quality of disenfranchisement even if the dynamics of that disenfranchisement radically differ. The differences and, as importantly, the supposed differences, create the sense of a seismic divide.

Upon closer examination one comes to see that these constituencies share more in common than they had been led to believe. Poor folks everywhere have been played against each other to the strategic benefit of those who profit off both their disenfranchisement and its perceived oppositions. Similarities in socio-economic class, and the fact that they bear similar consequences, are obscured by exaggerated differences in features like *race*. This is not to say that things like race do not play hugely important roles (one would do well to recall Stuart Hall's maxim that race is the modality through which class is lived) but, conversely, to highlight how identity politics of the kind parroted by Trump misses what roles they indeed do play, and how Trump cunningly and disastrously plays them.

Liberal elites are in no position to challenge Trump on his elitism qua populism since they, like the real estate vision of development driving tycoons like Trump, equate economic growth with historical progress.

Trump's entry into America's longstanding class war comes in his ability to appropriate a populist agenda and politically manipulate it to elitist ends. Working class white people interpret the economic disadvantages they experience similarly to how Americans typically view anything - namely, through the lenses of race, gender, nationalism and religion - largely removing class from the conversation. Things, of course, do not always go this way. But they often do. Thence, the scapegoating of non-whites, women, immigrants and Muslims.

Rather than help the white underclass ferret out any associated racism (or whatever) from its economic conditions, Trump fans the racism and exasperates the conditions which in turn exasperates the racism. We can understand the rise in brazen hate crimes across America as enabled by Trump, and the brazenness itself as something he emboldened. The conditions that make for this strain of racism - there are others, including those racisms using disenfranchisement as cover - are the many excesses of capitalism riding roughshod over the local ecologies that poor folks call *home*.

The nationalism of senior Trump advisor Steve Bannon and the so-called "Alt-Right" presents itself as a compassionate friend to those dispossessed by capitalism, bemoaning the loss of virtue and character and intoning a crisis of Western civilization. But when its antidote to global capitalism turns out to be the establishment of a 1950s version of Judaeo-Christian Victorian society without the recognition of that culture's stewardship of capitalism or America's guiding role in its operations, then its nationalism turns out to be only that, *nationalism*, and of the most nostalgic kind: to make America white again. The end result will be a nationalist-because-anti-globalist agenda that can achieve little more than a protectionist version of capitalism and a pseudo-intellectual endorsement of white supremacist activity. Not particularly original, but highly dangerous.

Combine this with Bannon's apocalyptic "clash of civilizations" Islamophobia and the administration begins eerily to resemble a mirror image of the Islamic State, though without ISIS's pretence of asceticism.

Liberal elites are in no position to challenge Trump on his elitism *qua* populism since they, like the real estate vision of development driving tycoons like Trump, equate economic growth with historical progress. In the elitist liberal mindset, progress gets conflated with capitalism's advance - to support one is to support the other and to resist one is to resist the other, eventuating in the notion that the material fruits of capitalism are the fruits of historical progress. Though they are too sophisticated to admit it, liberal elites think that history *should* further the cause of the rich; for them, the rich run the world because they should. They can afford this vision of history because it costs them little to hold it. This is the height of privilege.

Washingtonian "swamp" elites like Hillary Clinton cannot compete with Trump's appropriated populism for the simple reason that they, as committed centrists, do not think that the poor vote counts for very much. Clinton was wrong in this assessment. What remains unclear is whether President Trump actually cares about these people or whether he uses their support as fodder for his considerable self-regard. If it is the latter, one can only pray that things might, hope against hope, turn toward the former.

What makes Christians Christian is their willingness to look for redemption by fighting for justice even if redemption is not evident and even when justice does not readily come.

When driven by these kinds of elitist sensibilities, Christians adopt without remainder an expectation that history, even in the face of oppressive cultural conditions, will progress on its own toward justice. Yet without confronting their entrenchment in unjust systems, their classism will impede the justice they seek. The mistake for them, then, can be expecting justice in unjust ways.

Christians can compound the mistake by supposing this view to be Christian. It is not. One can understand the confusion given how closely it resembles the Christian claim about God's redemption of history. But saying that history will be redeemed is not the same as saying that history enacts that redemption. The Christian claim about history's redemption is a claim about history's need of redemption, and the invitation for Christians to participate in that redemption by doing the work of justice. Christians believe that history will bear witness to redemption through moments of hope, but they also believe that much in history will remain despairing.

What makes Christians *Christian* is their willingness to look for redemption by fighting for justice even if redemption is not evident and even when justice does not readily come. The world cannot survive Christians pussyfooting around those pursuits in expectation that redemption and justice will arrive as a matter of course. Neither can anyone claiming to be Christian.

If Christians can, as they sometimes have, lay claim to history as the theatre of political action they might discover God as the author and perfecter of that action. We believe Christians can in this political moment do so by following the lead of those who un beholden to unjust systems turn their faces to the many who suffer the ravages of those systems. As much as it is a fantasy of elites to believe that suffering is far from them, it rarely is. And this proximity, in the networks all moderns inhabit, might end up being their political salvation.

It is in this way that a very different region of politics might lead Christians to Jesus. In turn Christians will find friends they didn't know they had, partners in a vocation they had forgotten. If they do not make this turn, they will continue in a faith emptied of everything but the luxuries of privilege. If they persist with their myths and accommodations, then they will continue self-righteously dumbstruck in the face of eventualities like the election of Donald Trump.

The Church's Sanctuary Politics

Much has been made of President Trump's shaky hold on the truth. When everything disagreeable is "fake news" then reality goes out the window. One approach to this state of affairs is to get the media to pile on as much discrediting evidence as possible with the expectation that Trump will be found to be caught in a lie. While this strategy has worthwhile benefits, we think it also has serious limitations, not least of which is that it positions the media politically in an endless troll/counter-troll game that will over time erode the public trust that is the source of its authority.

The strategy also presumes that Trump is capable of lying. The way he presents himself makes us unsure that he is. Lying first requires an ability to distinguish truth from fantasy, an initial capacity to differentiate how things are from how one wants them to be. For anyone who has given himself to self-deception as constantly and continuously as Trump seems to, no amount of evidence will matter. Evidence can prove such and such (that he is lying, that he is helping, that he is harming, that he is strong president or a weak president) when connected to forms of life that makes that evidence meaningful, truthful of such and such.

Lying first requires an ability to distinguish truth from fantasy, an initial capacity to differentiate how things are from how one wants them to be. For anyone who has given himself to self-deception as constantly and

continuously as Trump seems to, no amount of evidence will matter.

Within this larger frame, this reality (or what one might just call a *politics*), the truth of Trump, including the truth of Trump *to* Trump, becomes achievable. We believe the church has not only these political possibilities, but itself is this politics.

In these fear inducing times, Christians can find sanctuary in the body of Christ as the politics through which God gives God's people everything they need to be faithful. Christians can lean into the church as the impetus for political action, and the church as itself political action, by way of an account of history that inscribes the church as sanctuary for the oppressed wherever and however they are oppressed.

One of us has already [described in some detail](#) Trump's fortress mentality vision of America, acted upon by executive order in the days following his inauguration. Members of one of our communities recently posted the following statement advocating for church sanctuary movements that would shelter immigrants from those orders:

"Profession of the Christian faith commits it to the formation of a hospitable, just, and truth-telling community, especially for the sake of its most vulnerable members, in whom Christians discern the face of Christ."

We think this statement and others like it speak powerfully to the notion of how the church might be the church in a time of Trump, as literal sanctuaries of grace and truth in the terror of this present moment. The statement displays in bold relief the prophet Isaiah's picture of God: "You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall and like the heat of the desert." (Isaiah 25:4)

The current work of sanctuary churches, comprised of approximately 800 American churches to date, reprises the church's sanctuary movement of the 1980s when American congregations sought to shelter refugees fleeing American engineered civil wars in Central America, a practice of hospitality that pitted, as one immigrant described it, "the law of God" against "the law of man."

Acting as the church hospitable, Christians welcome those fleeing poverty, violence and oppression. As the powers threaten this hospitality because it challenges unjust political orders, the church militant responds with the grace and truth expressed in the sanctuary statement, against the grain of a crucifying world and with the grain of the universe. Upending oppressive arrangements, the church as sanctuary, a true international, attests to the absurdity of borders when millions starve and the thievery of states in a world given as gift.

If the Trump administration should follow its brinkmanship logic and begin forcibly to register Muslims, Christians might identify as Muslims - something God in God's extravagance did in identifying with creation for the sake of creation, and something Christians in their closefisted self-regard failed to do with Jews under the Third Reich.

A full account of Christian sanctuary will offer a wide enough berth to accommodate the extensive range of contingencies for which the invitation of sanctuary comes as good news. As a place of worship, the church sanctuary receives God, which entails receiving along with God those with whom God in Christ identifies, *all* migrants in need of sanctuary. Sanctuary as conceptualized through the passage from Isaiah has God's people extending hospitality to anyone poor, distressed, or unsheltered, for any who flee the ruthless, everyone who suffers the desert's heat.

If the Trump administration should begin forcibly to register Muslims, Christians might identify as Muslims - something God in God's extravagance did in identifying with creation for the sake of creation, and something Christians in their closefisted self-regard failed to do with Jews under the Third Reich.

The rationale of sanctuary breaks down ideological categories that pit against each other the urban and rural poor, both of whom bear the ravages of capitalism's reduction of creaturely life to surplus value. After all, Rust Belt whites, Syrian refugees and Central American immigrants will, if given the chance to find one another, likely discover that they share more in common, including religion in many cases, than they will with Trump or Bannon and other elites who look to appropriate or scapegoat them.

The presumption that white elites share common cause with the white underclass just because they are white shows just how unhelpful American identity politics can be, as tortured as the accompanying belief that poor whites and poor ethnic minorities share little in common. Poverty, to be sure, disproportionately affects minorities and women, yet poverty in America is a persistently pervasive enough phenomenon that there remains plenty in which to share.

Insofar as it breaks down divisions erected by Trump's parroted identity politics, sanctuary politics avails shared life, including life shared over against the disproportions (what we earlier referenced as the distorting roles given to race, gender and so on) that would otherwise make the gathered enemies of one another. At its inception and in its best moments, the church as Christ's body offered the world communion where there was previously animosity, ploughshares and pruning hooks from swords and spears, the peaceable kingdom come alive. The church not only welcomes the stranger, but *is* the stranger, constituted as she is entirely by migrants, herself a migrant through the world.

America's entrenched political culture has encouraged Christians to short change the promise and demands of Christian discipleship, not to mention a genuinely democratic vision of citizenship, how far hospitality must extend and to whom it can be granted, what justice requires, of what truth tells, and where the face of strangers like Christ turns up.

No doubt the idea of sanctuary embedded within our current political climate will look dangerous. In that context, people tend to respond to the idea either by encouraging sanctuary by denying its potential dangers, or by denying sanctuary by stressing its dangers. This zero-sum logic is redeployed again and again in conversations about Trump's various proposed bans, those supporting the bans emphasizing their protections and those challenging them emphasizing their harms.

President Trump is responsible for this political culture. And this political culture is responsible for President Trump. Christians, if they are to offer genuine alternatives, cannot in their advocacy for things like sanctuary afford the illusion that sanctuary politics comes without dangers, of all sorts. Denying potential ill effects for the sake of advocacy misconstrues what sanctuary names - a situation where extending hospitality risks something for someone. Just as well, Christians blocking the idea cannot do so by forgetting its real benefits; doing so also misses something about sanctuary - that it is a situation where *not* extending hospitality risks something for someone.

Those Christians who voted for Trump because of his willingness to use questionable tactics to keep them safe have forgotten what it means to be Christian.

Shockingly there remain to this day Christians who support Trump's anti-migration policies because they believe his policies will "keep us safe." Surely one could not wish for a more misleading understanding of what it means to be Christian. Christians worship at the church of martyrs; they seek fellowship with the crucified Lord. Being a Christian is not about being safe, but about challenging the *status quo* in ways that cannot help but put you in danger. Thinking it possible to be safe in a world where Christians are sent out like sheep among wolves is about as unfortunate an idea as thinking that war is necessary to secure peace. We can only guess that those Christians who voted for Trump because of his willingness to use questionable tactics to keep them safe have forgotten what it means to be Christian.

A Christian participatory politics requires of Christians an examination of the terms American politics imposes on the church - terms that enfeeble democratic life by narrowing its scope and possibility, use identity politics in a junk populism that further robs the poor, put safety before all other considerations, so on and so forth. Christian politics, therefore, begins with sanctuary, gathering in worship those previously divided by oppressive logics draining American political life. It does so by taking stock of the stakes - or, as we have said, appraising situations as if God matters.

The same Spirit that presided over Isaiah was present with Jesus as he read from Isaiah in a sanctuary two millennia ago, inaugurating a ministry of good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind, setting free the oppressed, and proclaiming the Lord's favour. This same Spirit now presides over sanctuaries across the world, in Christian churches and otherwise as they provide sanctuary to those pursued by every new King Herod. The final inauguration of Christ will be the remaking of the world as God's sanctuary. That animating work of the Spirit begins in Israel and the church.

Through these strategies the church continues its life of worship: gathering, greeting, proclaiming, sending. Worship - which is what makes a sanctuary *a sanctuary* - has the formative effect of firing the imagination in order that Christians see the world and its politics as God's and so possessed of grace and truth. Because Christian political life starts in worship, because actual worship in actual sanctuaries is the first political thing Christians do, they are taught to see the world rightly which in turn enables them to believe that even though trouble is found in this world, now as much as ever, Jesus has overcome this world.

The call to begin in worship does not license doing nothing but enables doing anything, including speaking truth to power, providing sanctuary and praying for enemies. This is to say that while voting and lobbying and marching and sheltering are all political, more basically political is the gathered body of Christ. We end, then, where we began, with adventurous thought:

Furious Lord,

make us, your lost unfaithful frightened people,
possessed by your Spirit.

Thusly possessed, may we be forced
by the courage so unleashed
to be your imaginative alternative in a world
that seems devoid of alternatives.

Make us a people who trust in your miracles.

May we even pray for the soul of Donald Trump.
May he catch a glimpse of what justice looks like
in a world not ruled by deal makers.

Above all, save us from the self-righteousness

that comes from our not being part of Trump's people.
Help us remember that many of his people are like us.

In this time, a time out of joint,

give us patience so that we might be
capable of being forgiven
and thus able to forgive such that peace may be a reality.

Amen.

Stanley Hauerwas is Gilbert T. Rowe Professor Emeritus of Divinity and Law at Duke University. He is the author of, among others books, [The Work of Theology](#) and [Approaching the End: Eschatological Reflections on Church, Politics, and Life](#). Jonathan Tran is Associate Professor of Religion and author of [The Vietnam War and Theologies of Memory: Time and Eternity in the Far Country](#) and [Foucault and Theology](#). The authors are both endorsers of the [Ekklesia Project](#).



Terms of Use