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Last week, Ralph Reed, founder and chairman of the Coalition for Faith and Freedom, told the group: There has never been anyone who defends us and who has fought for us, whom we loved more than Donald Trump. No one! Reid is partly right; For many evangelical Christians, there is no politician they loved more than Donald Trump. I recently exchanged emails with a pro-Trump figure who attended a presidential re-election rally in Orlando, Florida, on June 18. (He spoke to me on condition of anonymity to avoid personal or professional consequences.) He interviewed dozens of people, many of whom were evangelical Christians. I've never seen such excitement and enthusiasm for a politician in my life, he told me. I honestly couldn't believe the unwavering support they have. And for the man, it was all about the fight. There is a very strong feeling (I think it's justified, you don't agree) that he was upheld. Mueller's inhabited media is inhabited by forces that oppose Trump. The passionate belief is that he never gets credit for anything. Protesters, he said, told him that the Trump era was spiritually moving. When I asked if he meant that Trump supporters believed that God's hand was on Trump, at this point and in the election, that Donald Trump is God's man, in fact, he told me. Yes- a number of people have said they believe there is no other way to explain his victory. Starting with the election and continuing with the conclusion of Mueller's report. Many said that God chose him and protected him. The data seems to indicate this. President Trump's endorsement of white evangelical Protestants is 25 points higher than the national average. And according to a Pew Research Center poll, white evangelical Protestants who regularly attend church (i.e. once a week or more) approve of Trump at rates that are appropriate to or higher than those of white evangelicals who attend church less often. Indeed, between July 2019 and January 2019, 70 percent of white evangelicals who attend church at least once a week approved of Trump, compared with 65 percent of those who attend religious services less often. President Trump's enthusiastic, uncritical embrace of white evangelicals is one of the most mind-blowing events of the Trump era. How can a group that, for decades, and especially during Bill Clinton's presidency, insist that character matters and that personal honesty is an important component of presidential leadership, not only turning a blind eye to Donald Trump's ethical and moral violations, but also constantly defending him? Why do those who were at the forefront of family values want to give to a man with a dirty personal and sexual history Of Mulligan? Part is their belief that they are engaged existential struggle against the evil enemy - not Russia, not North Korea, not Iran, but American liberals and leftists. If you listen to Trump supporters who are evangelical (and unevangelical, like radio talk show host Mark Levin), you'll hear adjectives applied to the left that can be easily used to describe Stalin's regime. (Ask yourself how many evangelicals have publicly criticized Trump for his generous praise of Kim Jong Un, the leader of arguably the world's wildest regime and the worst Christian persecutor in the world.) Many white evangelical Christians alike are deeply afraid of what the loss of Trump will mean for America, American culture and American Christianity. If a Democrat is elected president, they believe it could all collapse around us. For example, during the 2016 election, influential evangelical author and talk show host Eric Metaxas said, Over the years, we have faced all sorts of difficulties. The only time we faced an existential struggle, as it was in the Civil War and in the revolution, when the people started ... We are on the verge of losing as much as we could lose it in a civil war. My friend described that perspective for me as this: It's Flight 93 election. Forever. Many evangelical Christians are also filled with resentment and resentment because they feel mocked, despised, and dishonored by elite culture over the years. (Some of these feelings are understandable and justified.) For them, Trump is a man who will not only advance his agenda on issues such as the courts and abortion; it will be ruthless against those they see as threats to everyone they know and love. For a growing number of evangelicals, Trump's inhumane tactics and brutality are not a mistake; they are a feature. Trump owns libs, and they love him. He's going to lead Glock to the cultural knife fight, and they're relishing it. Jerry Falwell Jr., president of Liberty University, one of the largest Christian universities in the world, put it this way: Conservatives and Christians should stop electing good guys. They could make great Christian leaders, but the United States needs street fighters like @realDonaldTrump at every level of government b/since the liberal fascist Dems are playing on holds and many leaders repub a bunch of wimps! Our policies are very expensive to celebrate Trump's style, but the most painful thing for me as a person of the Christian faith is the price for a Christian witness. Carelessly discarding the ethics of Jesus in favor of a political leader who embraces the ethics of Thrasymachus and Nietzsche-can-do right, the strong must rule over the weak, justice has no inner value, moral values are socially constructed and subjective-enough disturbing. But there are also the hypocrisy of people who once made a moral character, and especially sexual fidelity, central to their political calculus and which now encompasses a man of limitless corruption. Don't forget. Trump was essentially named as an unsized accomplice (individual 1) in a scheme to silence money payments to a star who claimed she had an affair with him when he was married to his third wife, who had just given birth to their son. While on the Pacific coast last week, I had dinner with Karel Koppom, whom I have known for many years and who was instrumental in my Christian pilgrimage. Speaking of the president's widespread, reflexive evangelical support, Koppock, who is theologically orthodox and generally sympathizes with conservatism, lamented the way this moral freak show is having, especially on the younger generation. With an unusual passion, he told me, We are losing an entire generation. They just left. It's one of the worst things that happen to the Church. Coppock mentioned to me the powerful example of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, who was prepared to rebuke the Roman Emperor Theodosius for his role in the massacre of civilians as punishment for the murder of one of his generals. Ambrose refused to allow the Church to become a political backbone, despite fears that it might put him at risk. Ambrose was telling the truth of power. (Theodosius eventually sought repentance, and Ambrose continued to teach, convert, and baptize St. Augustine.) Proximity to power is good for Christians, Coppock told me, but only as long as it does not corrupt their moral meaning, only as long as they do not allow their faith to become politically weaponized. But that's exactly what's happening today. Evangelical Christians need a different model for cultural and political interaction, and one of the best I know was formulated by artist Makoto Fujimura, who talks about cultural aid rather than cultural warfare. According to Fujimura, culture care is an act of generosity to our neighbors and culture. Culture makes sure that our world is not a war zone in which we all fight for limited resources, but to see a world of rich opportunities and promises. Fujimura speaks of a set of feelings and orders that are fundamentally different from what we see embodied in many white evangelical leaders who often talk about culture and politics. The feelings and mores that Fujimura describes are characterized by a commitment to grace, beauty and creativity, not antipathy, contempt, and pulsating anger. This is the difference between an open hand and a fist in the mail. Drawing on this topic, Mark Labberton, Fujimura's colleague and president of Fuller Theological Seminary, the largest multi-faith seminary in the world, spoke about for Christians to imagine their calling, from seeing themselves as living in the Promised Land and demanding it back to a life of faithful, exilic life. Labberton talks about what it means to live like people in exile, trying to find the ability to love in unexpected ways; see the enemy, the alien, the stranger and the alien, and go to the side, not from them. He asks what a life of fidelity looks like as long as a person lives in a world of fear. He adds, The Church is in one of the deepest moments of the crisis, not because of the outcome of the election or not, but because it has been exposed to the poverty of the American Church in its ability to see and love, serve, and participate in ways that we simply do not. And this calling is a calling that must be restored and become real in tangible actions. There are countless examples of how such tangible actions can manifest themselves. But as a startling point, evangelical Christians must recognize the profound damage that is being done to their movement by his braided political relationship-his love affair to bring us back to the words of Ralph Reed-with a president who is an ethical and moral wreck. Until this is undone, until the followers of Jesus are once again ready to speak truth to power, rather than act as court pastors - the crisis in American Christianity will only deepen, his public testimony only dim, his efforts to be a healing agent in a broken world only wanes. At this point, I can't help but wonder whether this really matters to many of Donald Trump's besotted evangelical supporters. 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