

Timeless Voice: A challenge to the head of state

Commentary by Greg Baker

In his speech to the nation from Washington, D.C., on Monday, President Trump began by addressing the unhealthy spiritual climate of our nation. In an area the president has fallen short before, highlighted by recent events in Charlottesville, the president came across as the head of state we need him to be. He rose above the divide and called us to a higher standard. America needs to see more of this.

These past few months have reminded us that there is so much more to the presidency than being the commander of the world's most powerful military, than being the chief executive of a multi-trillion dollar government. Presidents are the symbol of a nation. They are the national voice, image, and example. They are the *head of state*.

Unlike public policy that can be spearheaded by Congress, or military strategy that can be directed by the Joint Chiefs, or even the duties of chief executive that can be directed by cabinet secretaries, the head of state can only be fulfilled by one individual: the president. It cannot be delegated. It is not limited to official acts, but encompasses the president's personal life. If the president fails to fulfill it, the nation will suffer.

For the head of state serves as a national role model, representing what a nation should be, rather than what it is. His or her example sets the tone for an entire nation, which is why a righteous head of state must rise above common politics and speak a greater vision to the people. Ultimately, heads of state do one of two things: They either lead their nations closer to God ... or farther from Him.

As we try to understand the unique role of the head of state, we must look at the designer and builder of the institution of government, God. God is a shepherd, and He has placed shepherds throughout His creation. The shepherd of government is the head of state.

“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away” – 1 Peter 5:2-4.

America’s current spiritual climate would be challenging to any head of state, and no president in these times can be blind to his or her role as an example. The divisions in our nation are becoming wider, pitting Americans against one another over faith, race, social economic status, political beliefs, and more. Darkness and light are clashing before our eyes.

America needs its head of state to rise above these issues, and put aside partisan bickering. America needs a head of state who can cast a vision of a greater America and live out that vision by example. America needs a head of state who leads people back to God. America, therefore, needs President Donald Trump to rise to the office he now holds, and begin being the head of state God has called him to be.

Many heads of state have provided President Trump an example. Abraham Lincoln called America to a higher standard and greater vision in the midst of a civil war. In the Book of Jonah, Nineveh’s king repented in ashes for both his and his nation’s sins, and God relented from judgement. During World War II, King George VI exemplified the humble, positive, and gracious demeanor of a servant that guided Britain in its hour of difficulty.

The Church in America needs to pray for, encourage, and guide our president in this role. President Trump must rise above the divisive politics, rather than keep adding to it. If he doesn't ... our nation will continue to divide more and more, and his legacy will be tied to it. Mr. President, be who you were called to be. Be the head of state.

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