After the 2016 election I wrote an essay about how the U.S. got into its current political mess. The problems had already existed before Trump came along as a politician, but he and conservative Christians made the problems worse. Here is a relevant part of that essay, with minor editorial changes:

**When conservative Christianity merged with the Republican Party, the merger corrupted both of them, and it hurt our entire nation.**

In the 1970s several right-wing Christian TV preachers and junk mail organizers mobilized millions of right-wing people around “culture war” issues.  They worked to prevent passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, prevent equal rights for LGBTQ people, roll back abortion rights, and wage other “culture war” issues.

**Because the Religious Right was reacting against Democrats’ support for those “culture war” issues, they effectively merged with the Republican Party for mutual gains:**

* The Religious Right needed a political vehicle to advance their agenda against modern social justice movements (women, gays, and so forth).
* The Republican Party needed a large political base of voters.

Similar to Nixon’s 1968 “Southern Strategy, the modern Republican Party moved farther toward the extremist right wing.  When Republicans got elected, they “delivered” to their electoral base.  This further empowered these right-wing extremists.

Together they attacked the separation of Church and State, which the Constitution’s First Amendment had established.  Their attacks on the separation of Church and State have continued in many ways.  Since 1947 the excellent non-profit organization Americans United for the Separation of Church and State ([**www.au.org**](http://www.au.org)) has fought valiantly to protect politics and religion from hurting each other.

Now – although Trump can’t get the Republican Congress to pass his legislative agenda – Trump actually is delivering powerfully to his political base by appointing extremists who support the Religious Right to a number of executive branch positions and to the federal judiciary.

For years, Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell violated the U.S. Constitution’s intent by refusing to consider Obama’s appointees for many, many vacant positions in federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court.  Senate Democrats let McConnell do this without raising the stink they should have raised.  Now the Senate is rapidly confirming Trump’s nominees for a gigantic number of extremely right-wing nominees.  Trump is appointing right-wing extremists who are young, so they will dictate federal judicial decisions for many decades.  Many of these judges tilt toward the Religious Right as well as tilting toward big business, against workers, against human rights, against the environment, etc.

**Actually, the Religious Right (especially after merging with the Republican Party) has abandoned honest spirituality and has removed itself from God.  It has merged also with the dominant worldview of corrupt capitalism**, worship of wealth (look at the multi-millionaire TV evangelists who flaunt their jewelry and lavish lifestyles!), sucking up to rich and powerful people instead of practicing the humility that Jesus taught, and lack of empathy for LGBTQ people and other people whom Republicans despise.