Donald Trump was the resounding choice of white Christians who identified themselves as evangelical or as born-again. According to exit polls from the November election taken by a consortium of ABC News, NBC News, CBS News, CNN, Fox News and the Associated Press, fully 81% of white evangelicals voted for Trump. Only people who identified with the Republican Party voted for Donald Trump at a higher percentage. Why? What did he stand for that attracted them so strongly.

Perhaps Reverend James Dobson, the founder of Focus on the Family and Family Talk radio, summed it up most succinctly. He identified three factors: “the sanctity of human life, the Constitutional guarantees of religious liberty that are being shredded, and the promise by Mr. Trump to appoint pro-life justices to the Supreme Court.”

The first and third of these are the same point: candidate Trump promised to advance the anti-abortion cause and move to prevent more abortions. The second point refers to Christian opposition to the legal advances made in gay rights in recent years and the steps that have been taken to require everyone to obey the law. In particular, it refers to Christian businesses being sued for refusing to sell their products to gay couples (e.g., wedding cakes) and to government officials who refused issue marriage licenses to gay couples.

Of course this is not the first time that opposition to abortion and gay rights has motivated evangelical voters. When Richard Nixon ran for the presidency after the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion, he saw it as an issue that could favor Republicans and led his party to emphasize its opposition. Later, in 1979, Jerry Falwell and other evangelical leaders founded an organization called the Moral Majority.

Although the Moral Majority lasted only 10 years, it paved the way for the entrance of evangelicals into political activity. For decades prior, evangelicals as evangelicals had largely stayed away from politics because politicians did not engage with matters that concerned them, such as preaching the gospel and evangelization. Falwell’s organization provided a way for these Christians to see their concerns in “secular” political terms that encouraged them to get involved and to vote.

The Moral Majority’s platform emphasized three issues that still resonate today: traditional family values, opposition to abortion and opposition to gay legal rights. While most of the organization’s members and contributors were believers, the platform deliberately left out the Christian emphasis on the key teachings of Jesus, in particular, communicating the gospel and salvation, and helping the poor and downtrodden.

The three issues emphasized by the Moral Majority were key issues of the 2016 election, more than 25 years after its demise. All three swirled around Donald Trump. On the one hand, Trump made clear his opposition to abortion. He said many times that he opposed gay marriage equality, although he was less consistent on that point.

On the other hand, perhaps the most problematic aspect of Trump for evangelicals was his failure to live up to the picture of a traditional family man or to biblical expectations of a somber and mature male leader of society. It was not just that he had been divorced three times and had committed adultery, it was that his speeches and ongoing “tweets” were often contrary to Christian expectations of moral behavior—especially with regard to his treatment of women and those who opposed him.

It is clear from the vast majority of votes Trump received from evangelical Christians that in the end this last concern was less important than his position on abortion and gay rights. Evangelicals did not want him to represent Christianity and its beliefs, but to be their champion in the opposition to abortion and to gay marriage.

Perhaps evangelicals should be congratulated for voting on principle rather than “identity politics.” After all, the Christian in this race was Hilary Clinton, a person who attended church all her life, taught Sunday school for years, and who regularly sought God’s guidance through prayer, both in private and with colleagues and staffers.

During the coming years, it will be interesting to see how matters play out. Will Donald Trump deliver for his ardent evangelical supporters? Will he come to be seen as their representative, whether as a champion or as a tarnished man? Will the future of evangelical Christianity be strengthened or weakened?