

## Open letter to George Bush

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Dear George,

Life is full of interesting coincidences and contrasts. The other day I stumbled on an interesting item on the internet. I learned you wrote in your book "A Charge To Keep" that that Amazing Grace was your favorite hymn. Well George I thought about it for a minute and realized how funny you should like that hymn. I mean, when you think about it there's an interesting symmetry in that. I know it isn't immediately evident, so let me explain what I mean.

See, here's this marvelous hymn, written by a man who in his early life was a slave trader, a profiteer from the evil and misery that results from forcing people into a life of slavery. There are several variations of the story, but the rough outline is that he was on a ship which almost sank and after his near brush with death he wrote this hymn about Amazing Grace. One version of the story says this experience immediately opened his eyes to the evil of slavery and he became an opponent of slavery right then and there. Another version agrees that he wrote the hymn as soon as it became clear he would survive, but that the realization of the evil he had perpetrated by selling human beings into slavery came upon him only later in life and it was only then that he became an abolitionist.

Whichever version is correct, the fact is that here's this slave trader who writes this glorious hymn, and at some point thereafter undergoes a conversion and joins the anti-slavery movement.

So George, here's the symmetry. See George here's you, President of the United States; a real powerful, influential guy. And your favorite hymn is this one by the slave trader turned abolitionist and you're the fella that history will say did more to bring back slavery to the United States than any other person. So, you see the symmetry?

Yeah. I know. You're gonna object that you have never, ever said that you want to repeal the Civil War Amendments and start allowing people to own other people like sofas, or a pile of lumber or a 1600 acre Texas ranch. (Or a baseball team for that matter) You'll say that you have never even dreamed of letting people head on down to the local Wal-Mart and pick up a couple of permanent type helpers to plow the south forty. But George, let's face it, life isn't that simple anymore. This is the twenty-first century. No one's gonna put up with the real deal, old-fashioned slavery, the sort where some guy says "I'm gonna buy me a slave over at the slave auction." I mean, George, that's so nineteenth century, and you are, if anything a modern guy. The modern world demands modern adaptations, and so you've gone along with the Times. ("Times" with a capital "T" as in "New York Times" because they're with you a hundred per cent on this.)

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Let's be real here George. No one who wants to bring back slavery is gonna actually go whole hog and say he wants people to "own" other people. The PR problems with that are, let's face it, really tough. Even Tony Snow wouldn't get very far at a press conference saying: "The President believes that having people own other people is the best way for America to solve its challenge of competing in the world markets." Nope. That won't work. Imagine Tony trying to say *anything* good about slavery. Why even the word "slavery" evokes images of whips and chains and stuff like that. It'd never work. Gotta avoid that "S" word like the plague.

Plus, look at the practical side of the matter. I mean look, a guy owns slaves, he's gotta make a HUGE investment. He's gotta buy 'em. And that's not cheap. Then, and here's the big downside, he's gotta maintain 'em. That means feeding, clothing, housing; the works. And then there's the medical care. Holy smokes, imagine what that'd cost those guys at the Chamber of Commerce if they actually had to pay medical care to protect their investment. Oh, and then there's the tort liability issue. You got a slave and some Saturday night he gets out and rapes some poor girl in the suburbs; just *think* of what the tort lawyers would do with that!

No. No way are the Chamber of Commerce guys sitting in their headquarters overlooking the White House gonna go for that. But you and the folks at the NY Times, you've got just the thing. It's the slimmed down, low cost, low maintenance, PR-friendly, liability free, modern version of slavery. It's terrific. It avoids the "S" word completely, and it's got all the advantages of real-deal slavery with absolutely none of the problems. It's called the "undocumented worker willing to do the jobs Americans won't do" plan. The Chamber of Commerce guys are goin' nuts for it, so natch you love it too. And Tony Snow has suddenly come around to supporting it 'cause he knows he can peddle it to the voters without being embarrassed; well, at least not *too* embarrassed. (Although maybe the REAL reason he became a convert recently is only because he wanted to get the job as your Chief Flack).

So here's the deal and why the Chamber guys love it. First, they don't have to make an investment in buying people. HUGE cost savings right there. Since they don't OWN the slaves (uh, sorry, willing undocumented workers) they don't have to worry about feeding them, clothing them, housing them. When these people break down they don't have to pay to repair them. I mean, you own it, you gotta fix it when it breaks. So your guys don't have to buy health insurance or pay any medical bills. I mean, just *think* of the savings. Then there's the liability angle. This one's phenomenal. Since they don't own 'em, they're not responsible for 'em. If, as so often happens, one of the willing workers gets into a little trouble, say one of 'em happens to be the Railroad Killer, or gets drunk and plows an '85 Chevy into a family in their sedan, well hell, no way is a court gonna make the employer who pays a worker a few bucks under the table pay, no way is that employer gonna have to pay for that dead girl or the mess out on the County Road 49.

Of course George, I know there's more to this new slavery, (sorry George, I slipped again, I meant "undocumented willing worker") thing than that. I know that it isn't enough for you to import all these desperate people, illegal aliens, from all over the world

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to displace American workers. You, and your buddies at the Chamber of Commerce are too smart to let it go at that, so you encourage American firms to close down their plants in the US and move them to China, depriving even more Americans of good jobs. See, that way you make even the native born citizens desperate, so they'll take lower paying jobs than they used to demand. Hell, pretty soon you got the most of the whole damn country "willingly" enrolled in this new slavery thing.

Now look George, I know what you're gonna say: "Uh uh. No way. I am *against* slavery, just like I'm *for* securing our borders."

But come on George, this is just between you and me, and I'm a Republican too, so we can talk straight to each other. Let's face the facts. The people you are inviting to illegally cross our borders, and the Americans you're pushing far down the economic ladder, they're slaves in everything but the strict legal sense. Hell George, you and I aren't stupid.

So as I said. Here's you, the most powerful guy in the whole damn country. And here you are doin' everything you can to bring back slavery. And your favorite hymn is "Amazing Grace." And that little ditty was written by a guy who started out as a slaver and evolved into an abolitionist, while you, well at least you *probably* started out like the rest of us...opposed to slavery... and you evolved into the big kahuna who brought slavery back into the modern United States.

So you got it George? You see the symmetry?

Hope to hear from you soon. Adios amigo.

Peter