

Don Colossus: Pastors Spark Idolatry Row After Praying Over 22-Foot Gold Donald Trump Statue

Beneath the glitter of the gold Donald Trump statue lies a raw struggle over where political loyalty ends and religious devotion begins.

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MAGA evangelical leaders are facing backlash after praying over a giant gold Donald Trump statue at Trump National Doral Miami during a dramatic dedication ceremony led by pastor Mark Burns. X via [@pastormarkburns](#)

A towering gold Donald Trump statue at the Miami golf resort has ignited a theological row in the United States this week, after evangelical pastors prayed over the 22-foot effigy and insisted the gleaming tribute was 'not a golden calf' or an object of worship.

The [statue](#), formally titled 'Don Colossus,' was installed on Wednesday at Trump National Doral, the luxury golf complex owned by the 79-year-old Republican frontrunner. Financed by cryptocurrency entrepreneurs and Trump supporters, the bronze figure stands around 15 feet high and is covered in gold leaf, depicting Trump with his fist raised in the air after surviving an

assassination attempt in June 2024. The sculpture's future had been in limbo for months while its creator waited for final payment.

The unveiling might, in other circumstances, have passed as just another exercise in Trumpian spectacle. Instead, the dedication ceremony led by televangelist and Trump ally [Pastor Mark Burns](#) has collided with one of the most sensitive nerves in American Christianity: the biblical ban on idols. Burns, clearly anticipating the reaction, moved quickly to stress that the statue was not intended as an object of veneration.

'Let me say this plainly: this is not a golden calf,' he posted on X late on Wednesday, pointing directly to the Old Testament story in which Moses finds the Israelites worshipping a gold idol and reacts with fury. In a follow-up message, Burns argued that the statue was 'not about worship' but about 'honour,' describing it as a 'celebration of life and a powerful symbol of resilience, freedom, patriotism, courage and the will to keep fighting for America.'



A picture Donald Trump posted on Truth Social to promote the new Trump Gold Card.
@realDonaldTrump/Truth Social

Statue Draws Accusations of Idol Worship

After social media users and critics on the religious right and left began circulating images of the statue online, some placed it alongside illustrations of the biblical golden calf. For many Christian observers, particularly those already uneasy with the fervour surrounding Trump, the visuals did not require much interpretation.

Burns appeared stung by the backlash. By Friday, he had doubled down, insisting that the gold Trump statue was being wilfully miscast by detractors. 'What amazes me is how quickly some

people have compared this beautiful statue, created and made possible by more than 6,000 patriots, to a golden calf or idol worship,' he wrote.

He then restated his theological position in blunt terms. 'Let me be very clear. We worship the Lord Jesus Christ and Him alone,' he said, adding, 'Honor is not worship. Respect is not idolatry.'

The argument may do little to quell [long-standing criticism](#) that parts of Trump's base treat him less like a politician and more like a messianic figure. For years, commentators and former insiders have described what they see as cult-like devotion at his rallies and online. The fact that some supporters interpret his survival of the 2024 shooting in which he escaped with an ear injury and other foiled plots as signs of divine protection only intensifies that impression.

Burns himself echoed that belief. In his initial post about the statue at Doral, he wrote that it 'reminds us of the hand of God over President Trump's life,' adding, 'We thank God for preserving him and not allowing his life to be taken, not once, but multiple times.'

Sculptor Behind Trump Statue Left Out of Ceremony

Amid the swirl of religious symbolism and political messaging, the sculptor at the centre of it all had a more prosaic concern: getting paid. The statue's creator, American artist Alan Cottrill, told AFP on Friday that he had finally received the outstanding funds two weeks ago, drawing a line under months of uncertainty.

'The next day I installed the statue in Florida,' Cottrill said. He added, with a hint of dryness, that he was not invited to the dedication itself. His brief comment undercut some of the grandiose language being deployed around the work, pulling the story back to earth: this was also a commercial commission that had been stuck in limbo.

For Trump's supporters, the statue will likely settle in as yet another landmark on the movement's physical landscape, a selfie backdrop and rallying point at a property that already functions as a political stage set. For his critics, particularly those within the evangelical world, it will sit uncomfortably close to the line between political loyalty and outright veneration.

Nothing about how the statue will be used in the long term as mere décor, as a pilgrimage site, or as something in between is confirmed yet, so interpretations of its meaning should still be taken with a grain of salt.