

Pentecostal Minister Seeks to Affirm 'God's Agenda' as Elected Official

Michigan state Rep. Triette Reeves supports traditional marriage and hopes to use her position to strengthen families. Politics wasn't Michigan state Rep. Triette E. Reeves' first choice for a career. "Every time I tried to get out [of politics]—and I tried—I still ended up in politics," she told Charisma. "It was my undeniable destiny."

That call to public service has put Reeves in support of legislation defending traditional marriage and requiring Michigan bookstores to cover sexually explicit magazines or put them in restricted areas. And though Reeves is a Democrat, conservative groups count on her to vote against abortion.

She describes it as a "strange alliance," one that surfaces only when she is addressing moral concerns. Issues that affect the poor and disenfranchised are often sources of contention, as Reeves, 38, has also supported forums on maternal and infant health care, affirmative action and legislation that would establish a prescription-drug program for seniors.

"She is serious in response to her call to ministry and politics to be an advocate for the poor, women and marginal people, lifting up their rights and responsibilities as a voice of God," said Tony Curtis Henderson, an adjunct instructor at the Detroit extension of Atlanta's Interdenominational Theological Center.

A married mother of three and an associate minister at True

Believers, a Pentecostal church in Detroit, Reeves believes her call is to promote God's will, not an agenda. And though she believes she has little in common with conservatives, she has seen God build relationships between white and black Christians in different political parties, something she says "only the Holy Spirit can do."

In 1999 she began participating in a small prayer group started in the legislature and befriended a white Republican colleague, former state Rep. Mark Jensen. They didn't always see eye to eye.

"Generally, issues divided us based on the constituents we each represented," Jensen told Charisma. "We thought we were on opposite sides, but after we talked I often changed my mind because our core beliefs were very much the same, especially regarding right to life and respect for humans."

Now their families go on outings together. "Spending time to understand each other's communities opened our minds and hearts," he said. "She has been a real blessing to me and my family."

Reeves began her political career in 1998 after she lost her job following the birth of her third child. The former legislative aide said she felt the Holy Spirit leading her to run for office. "I didn't know why God was doing what He was doing because I didn't like politics," she said.

Campaigning as a minister, with the slogan "It's Time to Serve," Reeves won by an overwhelming majority to serve Michigan's 13th district, on the outskirts of Detroit, then was re-elected four years later to represent Detroit in the

10th district.

Most recently, she has been outspoken in her opposition to gay marriages, and she says Christian politicians must stand together against same-sex unions. "The institution of family that God created in the beginning between a man and a woman is the most important thing to promote and nurture," she said

But ultimately, she believes the fight against same-sex marriage is a spiritual one, and she urges Christians to "deal with the spirits through spiritual warfare." To that end, she began Family Life Ministries, a nonprofit advocacy group that links churches with resources to help strengthen families. Pursuing a master's degree in spiritual formation, Reeves also oversees Fisherman Ministries, a prophetic training course that shows people how to answer God's call on their lives.

Staying sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading in her own life has been challenging, even causing her to change her views several years ago when she stood to vote on partial-birth abortion. Following the traditional Democratic position on abortion, she was prepared to vote pro-choice when she says the Holy Spirit whispered, "What is it?"

She had her office research the procedure, and after reading the packet of information she "cried like a baby," unable to believe it was legal in the United States. She believed God was telling her, "This time you are going My way," and she has opposed abortion ever since.

"[Abortion is] wrong from my perspective based on my convictions through the Word of God," Reeves said. "I believe you can be a Christian and not receive certain convictions by

the Spirit. It came by conviction for me.”

Now she presents information on abortion and same-sex marriage to churches and pastors conferences, presenting them as issues that destroy individuals and families. “The statistics shock them,” Reeves said. “Most church leaders don’t have any idea of the prevalence of abortion, especially in the African American community.

“Abortion is not a top 10 sin—more significant than racism, hate, lying, adultery or oppression,” she added. “If it’s against God, it’s against God, whether moral, social or economic.”

She believes Christians should be engaged—“not in politics, but a Christian’s role is to be God’s prophetic voice to political leaders, the community and have an agenda that promotes God’s will.”

LaVenia Jean LaVelle