

Christians Should Be Celebrating Ted Cruz's New Hampshire 'Win'

Either it was a most unusual party or else it was a most unusual testimony time. I'm referring to a Tuesday evening event at a banquet hall in Hollis, New Hampshire. What made the event most unusual is that the event was both a party and a testimony time.

I'm speaking of the post-election event where many of us gathered to celebrate the strong showing of Ted Cruz in the New Hampshire primary.

Several hundred campaign workers gathered among hundreds of boxes of pizza and dozens of TV cameras to celebrate Cruz's strong third-place finish. Why celebrate third? Because New Hampshire is the most unlikely place for such a man as Ted Cruz to do well. I know. I've lived either here or in adjacent Massachusetts most of my life. Most New Hampshire Republicans are not conservative. Sometimes it's hard to think of them as Republicans at all. And Christians, for the most part, are not evangelical, charismatic or Pentecostal. We are the "un-Bible Belt."

And yet, Ted did so well.

One reason he did is that during the months of whistle stops and town halls, voters discovered Ted is a man of both conviction and compassion. Those who watched the various debates or viewed his television ads saw the brilliant thinker and one-time champion college debater. Too often, though, they were left wondering if Ted really cared about individuals.

Last Saturday night I was privileged to attend the nationally televised debate on ABC. While some candidates were posturing

and others were attacking, Ted told the story of his half-sister who died of a drug overdose. That debate showed a side of Ted those close to him know and admire but people who have only seen him on television may not yet know.

After the debate, I heard more than one person say, 'That's a Ted Cruz I have not seen before. He cares. I'm warming to him.'

In the 72 hours leading up to the vote, I detected a move toward Ted from people concluding it's time for a change, but the leader of that change must be a man of integrity and depth.

What saddened me, however, was the number of believing Christians who voted for Donald Trump instead. I asked them how they could vote for someone who until he was running for president supported abortion and same-sex marriage, continues to use vulgar language and has no thought-through policies to change things. The responses I got saddened me. Representative of many was the comment of one born-again, Spirit-filled man: "I keep my religion separate from my politics. I want someone who will go to Washington to kick butt. I don't care about their private lives and their vocabulary."

Really? No wonder our country is in bad shape when Christians back such a candidate. It would be like the Old Testament Jews backing a king who mixed paganism in with Judaism and supported temple prostitution and child sacrifice. We saw how God punished Israel whenever kings did that. Shall we be like Saul of Tarsus watching as Stephen is stoned? Or shall we stand with those who, like the prophets of old, called the king to account before God? How could we as believers vote for such a man for president?

David's last words are instructive to us: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (2 Sam. 23:3, KJV). If that's what a ruler must be, how dare we support

someone who demonstrates he will not? If God's people vote for a godly man such as Ted Cruz, who, by the way, will go to Washington to shake things up, we can count on God's blessings on us as a people.

If that quote from 2 Samuel 23 refers to the leader, 2 Chronicles 7:14 is God's call to us: "If my people" We are identified with the policies and the character of the one for whom we vote. We may not be the enemy, but we are the watchers on the wall who must sound the alarm. If we do not, the blame for the slaughter is on us.

I started this opinion piece by saying the event Tuesday was both a party and a testimony time. As I met people around the banquet hall I heard one after another—individuals who had traveled to New Hampshire to help the Cruz campaign—say things like, "I prayed and God said, 'Ted is My man. Support him.'" That's my story too.

Rev. Canon Mark A. Pearson was the town chair for Ted Cruz for Hampstead, New Hampshire, in the run-up to the Feb. 9 election, and is a surrogate speaker for the candidate. He pastors Trinity Church and is executive director of New Creation Healing Center, a Christian center of healing combining family practice medicine, Christian counseling and prayer ministry, both located in Kingston, New Hampshire. Pearson is a regular contributor to Charisma magazine. He may be reached at canonpearson@.