

Could This Pastor's VP Pick for Trump Help Defeat America's Jezebelic Candidate?

One pastor in Iowa recently suggested that despite, or rather, because of the bitter rancor among evangelical Christians over Donald Trump that one particular running mate could persuade naysayers to actually support Trump.

Who is this Hawkeye pastor and why should anyone care about his opinion?

In 2012, conservative commentator Iowan Steve Deace, a #NeverTrump and Cruz supporter, identified the most effective "super-operatives" in Iowan politics. One, he wrote, was an "unassuming pastor" of Walnut Creek Church who "could very well be the most powerful man you've never heard of."

"He could easily mean the difference between victory and defeat for a candidate in a caucus or straw poll ... [making him] a formidable player in the Iowa Caucus. But what makes him dangerous to opposing campaigns is the fact that you don't see him (or his army) coming until it's too late. Just ask Sam Brownback and Tom Vlassis."

What Deace doesn't mention is that both former Sen. Rick Santorum and Gov. Mike Huckabee could not have won Iowa in 2008 and 2012, respectively, without this pastor's influence.

I met the most powerful man no one has ever heard of when I also first met former presidential candidate and Gov. Mike Huckabee. I joined roughly 100 pastors to retrace the steps of Pope John Paul II and several other leaders to record how faith (in whom or what) influences every single political

decision ever made. My conversations with these pastors marked the beginning of incredibly valuable friendships and confidential insight into the world of politics and pastors.

Pastor and author Terry Amann, who endorsed Mike Huckabee for president, suggests that Huckabee is the best vice presidential choice for Trump. He argues:

“Four years ago, there were many people saying they would not vote for Romney because he was a Mormon. Instead of reaching out to evangelicals, he tried to keep them at arm’s length. It was reported that two weeks before the election Romney met with evangelical leader Ralph Reed to utilize his database of 17 million evangelicals. But it was too late. Trump has a Romney problem, though not necessarily for the same reasons.

“There are many voices that say they will never vote for Trump. This is why Trump needs to have a VP selection that will put evangelicals at ease. The logical choice is Mike Huckabee. He has a good relationship with Trump. Huckabee has executive experience without the taint of Washington. He is sober-minded and an exceptional communicator. He has had high numbers in favorability polls and he is a known and vetted commodity.

“And Huckabee has been tested by the Clinton machine for over three decades, and won.”

I reached out to many pastors nationwide to find out if they agreed. Would they vote for Trump, assuming there is no third-party candidate, as opposed to Hillary Clinton? Or would they not vote at all?

The majority of pastors, roughly two-thirds, affirmed that a Huckabee vice presidential running mate would make it much easier to vote for Trump. Nearly all said they would vote for Trump, and for anyone other than Hillary Clinton.

Rev. Brad Atkins, Senior Pastor of Powdersville First Baptist

Church in South Carolina, best articulated what the majority of pastors said about voting: "To not vote is not an option. As U.S. citizens it is our duty to be a part of what makes our nation so great, freedom. Freedom to vote, freedom to campaign and even freedom to hope against all hope that there is still time for a miracle."

Atkins, who supports Cruz, emphasized that he'd "love to hear how Huckabee [would be] able to reconcile such a ticket in his heart and mind."

Another Cruz supporter, Rev. Thomas Peetz of Word of Life Christian Fellowship, in Concord, New Hampshire, told me, "If Mr. Trump is the nominee and Mike Huckabee his running mate, I would vote for them in a heartbeat. What's the alternative? A third term of the Obama administration? No thank you."

And from Las Vegas, Nev., Kevin Boyd, Sr. Pastor of TCM International explained, "Let me be clear, up to this point I have not voted for Trump or promoted him whatsoever. He is obviously not what any of us had in mind, but I would support him, and so would a very large percentage of my church."

"I would definitely vote for Mr. Trump if he's the GOP nominee before I would vote for Hillary Clinton or waste my vote by writing in another name. The Republican Party is still the party of Life & Traditional Marriage (although, there seems to be a continued rejection within the party of true conservatism). Actually, it is this continued moving within the GOP toward the center/Left that has made a President Trump a very real possibility."

"Having Gov. Huckabee as his VP would make it much more palatable ... and quite frankly ... be an answer to prayer! This would also solidify my current belief that Mr. Trump is willing to surround himself and be counseled by truly conservative and godly men and women."

Yet, Executive Director of the Baptist Convention of Iowa Tim

Lubinus, disagrees. And his perspective mirrors that of many #NeverTrump evangelicals. He told me:

“A Trump/Huckabee ticket will change my opinion of Huckabee. Even though we all knew for least a month before the Iowa Caucuses that Huckabee would not prevail this cycle, he has failed to use his considerable God-given talent, skills and reputation to support the only conservative candidate with a path to the nomination. So far, Huckabee seems to be using his resources to undermine rather than support Ted Cruz. If Huckabee joins with a candidate who undermines many of the values that Huckabee claims that he holds, he will make a Hillary Clinton presidency more likely and only confirm my fear that he has made a deal to compromise himself, our Constitution and our country for a hellish stew of power, fame and greed.

“Right now, my plan is for neither to get my vote. Anyone who really doesn’t want Hillary to be president should do everything they can to support Ted Cruz.”

While the responses I received are too numerous to cite, perhaps the very best perspective is one offered by J. Matt Barber, Assoc. Dean and Professor of Law at Liberty University. Barber asks if God’s chosen for America, “a King Cyrus? A man, or woman, who has yet to display through word or deed a heart broken and a will surrendered—a life marked by humility and repentance? [If so,] please surround him with men like Daniel.”

Could America’s next leader, Barber asks, be another Saul of Tarsus? If so, he pleads, “Break his/her heart and give us a President Paul. If done before the eyes of the world, oh what a testament to the transformative power of Christ!” He also asks God to spare America from its “just desserts—an unrighteous leader, an Ahab or a Jezebel.”

According to Amann, “When people say to me ‘Never Trump’ I ask

them if that opinion would change if Huckabee were on the ticket. The answer is almost always positive.

“What’s more, is that Huckabee understands what the Republican Establishment does not—that there is a revolution underway and Trump is leading it. Trump would do well to add a general like Huckabee to the ticket sooner than later, and then, together, we can say, ‘#Never Clinton.’”

If these pastors’ responses bear any indication, Huckabee might be a sure bet to help elect a Cyrus or a Paul, rather than a worse successor of America’s current nemesis, Ahab: an evil queen Jezebel.