

Donald Trump Waves the Gay Flag

On Oct. 30, at a rally in Colorado, Donald Trump proudly held up a rainbow-colored, gay flag on which was written "LGBTs for Trump."

As Christian conservatives, what are we to make of this? Is it yet another proof that we must compromise our morals to vote for him? And will he betray us once elected?

Interestingly, major gay websites like were not impressed with his gesture, declaring, "It's an empty gesture from the Republican nominee, who opposes marriage equality and has a proudly homophobic running mate."

The Washington Blade was more neutral, stating, "LGBT advocates continue to criticize Donald Trump for the anti-LGBT positions he's laid over the course of his presidential campaign, but they can't say he's never waved a rainbow Pride flag."

The Blade also quoted Chris Barron, "a gay conservative activist and founder of LGBT for Trump," who called him "the most pro-LGBT Pres candidate ever nominated by either party." (Spoken with true Trumper hyperbole!)

In contrast, the Advocate noted that, "LGBT advocates have spurned Trump, saying that his gestures amount to little more than pandering—he opposes marriage equality and has wavered on transgender rights and the Equality Act, which would ban anti-LGBT employment and housing discrimination. Besides, his running mate, Mike Pence, has a history of support for anti-LGBT measures, including a law during his time as Indiana's governor that would allow businesses to deny services to LGBT people based on religious reasons."

The Advocate also pointed that “the Log Cabin Republicans [the primary gay Republican group] refused to endorse Trump” and an “earlier poll shows that almost three-quarters of LGBT voters will choose Clinton in the election.”

And it was the influential Human Rights Campaign (HRC) that labelled Trump a “Huge Bigot,” stating, “We have seen so much progress for the LGBTQ community under the leadership of President Barack Obama, and it all could be reversed by a Donald Trump presidency.” (For a scathing attack on Trump from the HRC dated Aug. 25, 2016, [click here](#).)

Overall, then, it would seem that most LGBT Americans will not be impressed by Trump’s gesture in Colorado, as he walked around the stage during the singing of “God Bless America” and proudly unfurled the rainbow flag.

But how should we react if we are conservative followers of Jesus who plan to vote for Trump? Doesn’t this mean we are forfeiting our integrity and selling our souls?

It all depends on our attitude and expectations: Why are we voting for Trump? (See [here](#) for my reasons for voting for him, with caveats.)

First, Trump’s courting of LGBT Americans is nothing new, as the gay websites noted as well. Most notably, Trump had Peter Thiel, the openly gay co-founder of PayPal, speak at the Republican National Convention, and Thiel did so as an out-and-proud gay man. So if Trump’s proud display of a gay flag at one of his rallies surprises you, then you do not understand who you are voting for.

Second, what Trump was excited about was that LGBT Americans were supporting him, just as he would have been excited about Hispanic Americans or Black Americans or Jewish Americans supporting him, especially since all of these groups largely vote Democrat. So it was not so much the gay flag he was celebrating as much as the support from LGBT Americans at his

rally.

Third, Trump genuinely wants to be a friend of conservative Christians, preserving their liberties and a friend of gay Americans, preserving their safety, and as far as I can tell, he has not yet come to grips with the inevitable conflicts that will arise between religious rights and gay rights. Of course, all of us should fight for the safety and fair treatment of every human being, let alone every American.

So Trump says he wants to know where immigrating Muslims stand in terms of gay issues, not wanting to allow radical, gay-hating terrorists to enter our country. But he fails to realize that some of the screening questions that might be asked—such as, “Do you believe gay marriage should be prohibited?” or “According to your religious beliefs, is homosexual practice wrong in God’s sight?”—would also exclude conservative Christians and Jews.

Of course, the difference between conservative Christian opposition to LGBT activism and radical Islamic opposition to LGBT activism is the difference between day and night, but again, according to everything I know, Trump has not yet worked through the potential conflicts that could arise when gay rights come in conflict with religious rights.

At the same time, I firmly believe that Trump wants to be the champion of religious liberties—he’s the first candidate who has challenged the Johnson Amendment—and that he is drawn to conservative Christians like Mike Pence, Ben Carson and the leaders on his Faith Advisory Council. But how, exactly, will he act when push comes to shove and gays feel their rights are being violated by Christian beliefs? That remains to be seen.

Interestingly, friends of mine who have worked with him have told me that he has spent time in poor cities in urban America, not simply because he’s courting the voters there but because he feels they have been trashed by the Democrats and

he can do a better job for them.

So he wants to be the champion of hurting Americans everywhere, and he can probably look at his gay friends, like Peter Thiel, his evangelical friends, like Mike Pence, and his black friends who hailed from poor neighborhoods, like Ben Carson, and say, "I'm here to fight for you!"

And again, I believe that he believes he is the man to fight for all of us.

What, then, are we to do as conservative Christians?

First, if we are voting for Trump, we do so with our eyes wide open, not making him into a larger-than-life deliverer who will save the day and turn the tide. To do so is to give place to myth rather than reality and to set ourselves up for disappointment.

Second, we do our best to surround him with godly counsel, affirming the value of every human being and applauding Trump's desire to be the president of all Americans but urging him to prioritize religious freedoms, on which this country was built.

And third, we look beyond the elections to our long-term duty as Christian citizens, committed to loving our neighbors as ourselves while refusing to compromise our biblical convictions. And while our stances will be perceived as hateful by our LGBT neighbors, who are understandably hurt by our rejection of gay "marriage" and our claim that homosexual practice is sinful, we must demonstrate genuine love to them as family members, neighbors, co-workers and friends.

In short, the dilemma of Donald Trump is a macrocosm of the dilemma that all of us face, and the only way he will get things right is with the help of wise and godly believers.

So I urge every Christian conservative who plans to vote for

Donald Trump not to sell your soul to him as you vote, but rather to commit to pray for him, recognizing his many serious flaws. And if he is elected, then pray all the more that he will be surrounded in the White House by men like Joseph and Daniel who will bring wise counsel to the Oval Office.

And lest you think this is impossible, I would reply that where we find ourselves today, one week before the elections, would have seemed far more impossible just 18 months ago.

Reality, these days, is far more surprising than fiction.