

James Robison Asks Eric Trump the Tough Questions on Faith

James Robison: This year I have prayed with, and exhorted, many of the presidential candidates. In April, I was invited to visit with your dad—primarily because Dr. Ben Carson suggested that he spend time with me because he knew of my deep concern for the future of freedom, our country and the family. Your dad agreed, and I asked that you come in for the first part of the meeting if you could.

Why do you think your dad gave me that meeting and why were you comfortable coming in for the first part of it? I'm curious about that.

Eric Trump: I heard you were coming, and I knew about you and the work you did helping children. I thought it was relevant to my role with St. Jude's Children's Hospital. It's a lot of fun when Dad and I are both in the office; sometimes it's our little way of spending time together. I just thought it would be really interesting to sit in with you and Dad. He cares deeply about evangelicals and the loss of religious freedom in our country. In fact, the first thing I mentioned to you and Betty the night we invited you to have dinner with me and Lara is that he is concerned about the disappearance of our value system and many of our traditions in this country.

We care about the importance of the family. You can look at our family and how close we are. Ivanka, Don and I had lunch together today. We are immensely close; we always have been. The family structure in our country is disappearing. That's something that has to get fixed. It's something my father very much believes in.

James: One of the very first things I said to you when you came in was I really felt like God was bringing us together to

be a source of encouragement and inspiration to your dad as well as to the country. I said, "Your entire family indicates that he is a great dad, a great father." You said, "He really is."

Then I said to you, "Many in our nation are fatherless and need a father. Do you think we could work together and pray together to see your father learn what the father of a nation looks like?" I briefly shared the strengths of George Washington and how he sought wise, godly counsel, and you agreed that our nation needs that and it is something worth working toward. Am I right about that?

Eric: There's no question. You are spot on. The reality is, we do need a father in this nation and we need family structure back in this nation. This week my father has been talking about the plight of African-American youth, unemployment in inner cities and the graduation rates from high school in inner cities and how that affects the ability to go to college.

James: That reflects the fatherlessness in those communities. You and your dad seem to recognize that.

Eric: No question about it. If you don't have that family structure, it can lead to a worse graduation rate and a host of problems. Family is incredibly important, and mentorship is incredibly important. Discipline is also incredibly important. Without it, there are real problems.

Look at the macro and micro effect that ends up happening on society. A child doesn't graduate from high school, so they can't get into college. They don't graduate college, so they don't have a good job. They have a lower level of education, so they can't get skilled jobs—which means there are less skilled employees in a certain area. For a business to come to an area, they need skilled employees. You have a vicious cycle that affects every element of the person's household and the

individual themselves.

But it's also affecting the U.S. economy because you have major parts of states that can't survive, and the industry can't survive or thrive because you don't have the educational base that you need for the high-tech manufacturing that's happening now or for other important jobs.

That leads to high unemployment, and that leads to lack of productivity, and that leads to more people being on food stamps, welfare and needing government assistance—which leads to our national deficit. There really is a massive trickle-down effect on a very macro level that is pretty easy to quantify.

James: Your dad pointed out that he thought the people in the inner city and the urban communities have been used for political power. He knows he is not likely to get the African-American vote, and yet I listened to him and wondered if he wasn't actually saying, "I care deeply about the situation. I believe we can correct it and must correct it. These are our neighbors and it's everyone's problem."

Eric: No question you heard a plea for people in desperate need. Quite frankly, people who are living in poverty, living without the benefit of education, living on dangerous streets, who have to walk home scared every day or walk to schools that are underfunded and the students have to pass through metal detectors—those communities receive far less attention than others, and that's not how it should be.

I think you have the exact opposite that happens. I think other communities in this country get a disproportionate amount of focus and urban communities are left behind, and that's not how it should be. Those are the communities that need help. Those are the communities that need assistance and need attention.

It's kind of interesting. I know you're not overly political

as it relates to this topic, but if you look at inner city Chicago, they've had 2,500 shootings so far this year. It's one of the most dangerous cities in the world, and that's Obama's home town. He hasn't once been back there to say, "Look, you've got to stop the war." Yet look at Martha's Vineyard and how much time Obama has spent there having a great time playing rounds and rounds of golf.

The communities that are the best suited and need the least amount of attention, that had very little crime, where everything seems perfect and beautiful—they have solid infrastructure and perfect schools—that's where our leaders are spending time and focus, not on the areas that are war-torn and have real problems. No one wants to focus on them or visit them. They are the communities that need attention and need a father figure. Somebody better start focusing on them. It's very sad and it needs to be fixed.

James: We need a leader who will inspire people of all parties and all previous persuasions to come together at the table of reason to actually find sound, effective solutions because we have been maintaining ineffective government programs that are unsustainable and total failures.

I grew up in poverty. I didn't have a father, but nobody taught me to hate people outside my community. Nobody taught me to despise people of another race, and nobody taught me that I had to depend upon the government. It's wonderful that I wasn't taught that, because too many people are being taught that today. "Poor little you, you can't make it without us." Yes they can—I did!

We need a leader who will help create opportunity in every community. But you're not going to have businesses in your community if you don't have effective law enforcement or you burn down the businesses that were already there because you have a disagreement. We've got to get people to the table of reason and wisdom and allow love and forgiveness to prevail,

truly expressing love for our neighbor.

I know I am speaking as a preacher—I don't endorse candidates; I endorse principles. I endorse love for others and compassion. I've been reaching out to the helpless through the ministry work of LIFE Outreach, and our supporters love to be an answer to someone's prayers. That's one of the things I am saying to church people today is we've had lots of praying, how about let's become the answer to some prayers? How about putting feet to our prayers?

Eric: Absolutely. You do have to address the problems, but you need the missing components back in those impoverished communities, and the other element we haven't talked about is bringing religion and faith back. Some of those communities have also been hit the hardest in terms of lack of religion and lack of religious teachings, and I think that contributes to rising crime rates.

Religion teaches morals, it teaches character. It positions you in front of people who are older and wiser, and it teaches you principles and a whole list of other things. It requires time, attention and focus. It takes high level thought on subject matters that quite frankly aren't being addressed in many communities. It's important they be addressed.

It comes back to not only the resurgence of the family structure, which is critically important, but the resurgence of education and also of morals, values and religion. These things must be brought back into our communities. Proper teaching allows youth to focus on something so much larger than themselves. {eo}

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