

Mr. Trump, I Have a Few Questions

I've interviewed a number of presidential candidates, governors and other politicians in my 45-year media career. But interviewing Donald Trump in the midst of his unlikely campaign was markedly different.

With Trump, what you see on TV isn't what you get behind the scenes. There was a humility about the Republican nominee that many don't see in the liberal media soundbites. He still shoots straight, but his sincerity was far more striking than what we can portray in black-and-white in a magazine.

In my brief interview with Trump when he visited Orlando, Florida, I asked him the questions I thought mattered most to our *Charisma* readers. I believe his answers show a confident, determined man who truly is committed to making America great again through government based on principles that honor God rather than defy Him.

Steve Strang's Interview With Donald Trump

Strang: Evangelicals and Catholics have been under attack from the Obama administration for their pro-life convictions and desire to be left alone to forced government acceptance of that which violates their biblical views on marriage. How can you reassure them that you will respect religious liberty?

Trump: Religious liberty is the foundation. Without religious liberty, you don't have liberty. I feel that so strongly and so many other people do, and plenty of politicians do, but they don't express it. Religious liberty is something that I cherish, and you will never be disappointed.

Strang: You have said that you would support repealing the Johnson Amendment so that churches and ministries could

maintain tax exemption. How would you do that?

Trump: I have started it already because I put it in the platform. You know, a lot of people didn't even know what it was, and now a lot of the pastors and ministers have seen it and can't even believe it.

How did this happen in the first place? It's shocking how they were able to take it away. So this is not something that was written from the beginning. This is something that was written by a very strong politician, that's all it is. It silences great people, it silences people we want to hear. They're afraid to talk about it because they could lose everything.

One of the first things I will do, if I win, is lobby very strongly to have this terminated, and I will tell you something, it won't be hard, because your lobbyists are so powerful. Even Democrats can all approve it because this is bigger than men, bigger than women, because of the numbers of people, and I'll be able to get it done. I have absolute confidence that I'll be able to get it done.

Strang: As president, who will you reach out to for spiritual counsel and why? Do you feel the president needs God's wisdom and guidance?

Trump: I have many friends within the community. One of them who's been so incredible is Franklin Graham—he's been amazing, really terrific. So we're close to Franklin. Pastor (Robert) Jeffress has been terrific. Paula White has been incredible. So many, so many.

I really like to stay with people who have been so loyal because they were here at the beginning when this was a very, very little, tiny flame, and they were here when everyone else was saying, "Well, you can't beat 17 (Republican candidates)." The actual number was 18 if you include Gilmore. How do you beat 16 seasoned politicians? So they were there at the beginning.

Strang: You talked about the rough and tumble campaign against 17 candidates and so forth. Yet you have won over the evangelical vote, and it seems you've changed a lot. How has this whole process changed you spiritually?

Trump: Well, I can tell you I've always been spiritual, but I really appreciate the evangelicals because they really support me. When somebody supports you, you feel pretty good about it, and I would go into a very evangelical state and people say, "Oh gee, I won't win that state." I ended up winning in a landslide because I had tremendous support. Did you see the polls that people are leaving and supporting Trump over other people whom, in theory, they could have supported very easily? They didn't. So I think the fact that I had that tremendous support from the evangelicals meant a lot to me and will mean a lot to me in the future.

Strang: You've said that you supported Israel's claim that Jerusalem is the capital. Many evangelicals are very strong supporters of Israel. How would your policies toward Israel differ from your opponent?

Trump: Well, for one thing, I support Israel. I don't think Obama supports Israel. I think he's the worst thing that's ever happened to Israel. The Iran deal is a disaster for Israel, and I'm very supportive of Israel and have tremendous friendships in Israel and have a son-in-law who's Jewish, married to my daughter. I will be very strongly in favor of Israel.

Strang: In the book of Deuteronomy, it says to be kind to the stranger in the land. How would that Scripture guide policy in your administration?

Trump: Well, I think that's good, but I think we have to be careful at the same time. We're allowing people to come into the country, and we don't know anything about them. There's no paperwork, there's no documentation. You see what's going on

in Germany, France and many other places where they have an open-door policy, and it could go on here too. We've allowed thousands and thousands of people into our country, and we have no idea who they are.

At the same time, we want to build safe havens, and we want to get the Gulf states to fund that money because it's a tremendous amount of money. So we want to take care of people, but we can't allow them in because we just don't know who they are. You see what happened in San Bernardino, you see what happened in Orlando, right here, you see what happened with the World Trade Center. We can look all over to see what's happened in France, Nice, Germany. We have enough problems, so we can't do that.

Strang: Many believe our nation was founded on Judeo-Christian values. In our secular society, a lot of people now discount that influence. Do you believe that America was founded on Judeo-Christian principles?

Trump: I think it was. I think when I look at football coaches who were fired because they held a prayer on the field, it's absolutely terrible. I think it's a terrible thing to see so many things happening that are so different from what our country used to be. So our religion is a very important part of me, and I also think it's a very important part of our country.

Strang: What is the most important thing in your life?

Trump: Well, you always have to say family. Family is the most important thing from that standpoint. Religion is very important, but I'm assuming you're not talking about religion or family, but those two things are very important. Belief is very important, but you would always have to put family as No. 1.

Strang: You have a very strong bond with your adult children. What has been the secret of your having such a close

relationship with your children and their obvious respect for you?

Trump: I worked very hard when it came to my children, and one of the things that I would tell them all of the time is, “No drugs, no alcohol, no cigarettes.” I would say that every time that they would go out: “No drugs, no alcohol, no cigarettes.”

I have friends who have very smart children, but their children are hooked on drugs or alcohol. I added cigarettes because of the health thing. It’s just easier if you don’t smoke. I was lucky enough not to smoke. I have friends that can’t get off, and they’re strong people, but if you’ve never started, it’s not a problem. Same thing with drugs, same thing with alcohol. If you’ve never started, it’s not a problem. That’s a big factor, the fact that they’re not hooked, but you never know; it’s a fragile world, so who knows what happens?

Strang: Give us some advice as we tell your story. Talk to our readers like you’re encouraging the crowd, except in front of the church.

Trump: Well, I’m going to do a great job. I’m going to get the job done. I’m going to do a great job for religion and for evangelicals. I’m going to do a great job, and that’s why we got a standing ovation from the pastors who don’t give much for standing ovations because they’ve heard a lot of people speak, so that was a great honor, but I will do a great job. I will get the job done, and I’ll get it done properly, and it will be a great thing for the evangelicals.

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