

Ted Cruz, Donald Trump and New York Values

As someone born and raised in New York, and as a supporter of Ted Cruz for president, I took great interest in the exchange between Donald Trump and Senator Cruz on the subject of “New York values” during last week’s presidential debate.

For Trump, it was a high point, helping to make up for Cruz’s very strong showing in their earlier exchange about Cruz’s citizenship, an exchange Cruz clearly owned.

It was quite the opposite in their exchange about “New York values.”

When asked what he meant by that phrase, Cruz responded, “There are many, many wonderful working men and women in the state of New York. But everyone understands that the values in New York City are socially liberal, pro-abortion, pro-gay marriage and focus on money and the media.”

In response (in part), Trump replied, “When the World Trade Center came down, I saw something that no place on Earth could have handled more beautifully, more humanely than New York. ... We rebuilt downtown Manhattan, and everybody in the world watched and everybody in the world loved New York and loved New Yorkers.”

Some commentators have claimed that this was Trump’s best line so far in the entire campaign, as if this virtually sealed the Republican nomination for him. (Already, though, there is a backlash from some New Yorkers against Trump, claiming he has actually done nothing to help the first responders to 9/11.) Cruz and his team hit back beginning the next day, pointing to a 1999 TV interview in which Trump explained his pro-gay, pro-choice values in the context of being from New York, even contrasting his views as a New Yorker with—of all places at

this time in the presidential race—people who live in Iowa.

Cruz has also issued a formal apology to the people of New York. It reads as follows:

“I apologize to the millions of New Yorkers who have been let down by liberal politicians in that state. I apologize to the hard working men and women of the state of New York who have been denied jobs because Governor Cuomo won’t allow fracking. Even though there had been many high paying jobs just south in Pennsylvania, New Yorkers are denied the ability to provide for their families. I apologize to all the pro-life and pro-marriage and pro-second amendment New Yorkers who were told by Governor Cuomo that they have no place in New York because that’s not who New Yorkers are.

“I apologize to all the small businesses who have been driven out of New York city by crushing taxes and regulations.

“I apologize to the millions of unborn children, many African-American and Hispanic, whose lives have been taken by politicians who relentlessly promote abortion on demand with no limitations. I apologize to all of the African-American children who Mayor de Blasio tried to throw out of their charter schools that were providing a lifeline to the American Dream.

“I apologize to the people of New York who are offended when the New York Daily News lambastes anyone who prays for victims of violence.

“I apologize to the people of faith who are ridiculed and insulted by the New York media. And I apologize to all the cops and the firefighters and 9/11 heroes who had no choice but to stand and turn their backs on Mayor de Blasio, because Mayor de Blasio over and over again stands with the looters and criminals rather than the brave men and women of the law.

“And to the millions of conservatives—working men and women in

New York, with common sense values, trapped by the failures of your political leaders—I am glad to tell you, help us on the way. 2016, like 1980, will bring America back.”

How will this controversy play out in the coming months?

Only time will tell, but I do have a few observations of my own right now.

Having been born in Manhattan and raised on Long Island, living there until our family moved to Maryland when I was 32 years old (my wife, Nancy, was born and raised on the Island), I still identify as a New Yorker and retain much of the New York “personality” (for better or worse).

I can understand, then, why many New Yorkers were offended at Cruz’s comments during the debate, including not a few conservatives. But when I polled my radio listeners, asking for input in particular from those listening on my New York station, WMCA, 570 AM, those who did call were in agreement with Cruz’s comments. One caller from Queens even stated that she doesn’t bother to vote in the presidential elections, since it’s such a blue state that she feels her vote doesn’t count. (I did encourage her to vote anyway.)

Similarly, when I asked on my Facebook page if people were offended by Cruz’s comments, the vast majority said no, including a good number of New Yorkers. Perhaps it’s the media that is more offended than the general populace? Again, I do understand why many New Yorkers were upset, but with at least one focus group crowning Cruz the decisive winner of the debate, perhaps the media’s indignation does not mirror that of the populace at large.

As for the question of what, exactly, New York values are, what Cruz had in mind were things like this:

- In 2012, four out of the five New York City counties voted overwhelmingly for President Obama. The stats

were: Bronx, 92 percent; Manhattan, 84 percent; Brooklyn, 82 percent; Queens, 79 percent.

- New York City mayor Bill De Blasio won his 2013 election by a margin of 72.2 percent to 24 percent over his Republican candidate, yet De Blasio is considered to be to the left of President Obama.
- The abortion rates in the city are staggering, to the point that in 2012, far more black babies were aborted than were born (31,328 to 24,758 to be exact).
- While the percentage of gays and lesbians living in New York City is similar to that of other large U.S. cities, the city does have more gay residents than anywhere else in America.

Given the political savvy of both Trump and Cruz, we can expect this issue to continue to play out in the days to come. In the end, though, the question of who holds to New York values may prove to be a big key in terms of who wins the Republican nomination.

Trump has taken the emotional high ground with his brilliant and heartfelt debate comment, but the more he is perceived as a “typical” New Yorker, the less popular he could be in other parts of the country.

As for Cruz, to the extent he can be perceived as friend of the people of New York while being a champion for conservative New Yorkers, he will be able to strike back and gain ground.

Either way, we should stay informed and stay involved, and we should pray earnestly for God’s best choice for our nation, whoever that person may be—New Yorker or not.

It is God’s values that we must pursue and endorse.