

The Most Important Factor in Choosing Our Next President

Our nation is in a spiritual crisis and I believe we need a leader who can hear from God to turn things around. The secular world ignores this spiritual dimension, so you won't read this in the mainstream press.

In 2016, we will elect a new president in what many are calling the most important election in our nation's history.

In the Republican presidential race there are several candidates who are strong believers and whose Christian values guide their worldview with how they would govern. One well-connected Christian leader told me there are so many good ones that it's hard to know which one to support. He said, in a way, he wished they had been spread out over the past few presidential races, when most Christians considered the Republican nominees to be the lesser of two evils.

I believe the nation's problems cannot be solved only by politicians. We need a major revival. But I do believe we need a godly leader—a person who can hear from God—who will set the nation on a new course. With several good ones to choose from, which one should we support? Many citizens, like me, are taking a wait-and-see attitude.

We can't wait long, however. While the so-called values voters may shift a close election, there are not enough of us to elect a president who will not receive support from other segments of voters. Where we can make a real difference, however, is in the early primaries. Often it's the candidate who wins the early primaries who goes on to win the nomination. It's something called momentum.

The early candidates who have gained momentum based on the polls are outsiders—Donald Trump and Dr. Ben Carson—neither of

whom have held political office. (Carly Fiorina, who is lower in the polls, has also never held political office).

The next two, Sen. Marco Rubio from my state of Florida and Sen. Ted Cruz from Texas, are not favored by the party establishment. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush seemed to be the party favorite but is lagging in the polls, and I don't see how his candidacy will ever gain traction.

So far, three candidates have dropped out—all of them governors—Rick Perry of Texas, Scott Walker of Wisconsin and Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, who made his announcement earlier this week.

Last January I attended a prayer rally in Baton Rouge hosted by Jindal. It was not a political rally, but a solemn assembly: a prayer meeting asking for God's mercy on America. Gov. Jindal did not appear timid about praying publicly with boldness, even though there were those strongly critical of his participation. Later, I attended a private meeting with him and came away impressed by him as a person and a man of deep Christian conviction.

Even though Jindal gained traction in Iowa, nationally his poll numbers were low and his fundraising less fruitful than he had hoped. When he dropped out, he declared this is not his time. At 44, I believe we will see more of him in the future.

Rubio, Cruz and Carson are each well-known for their Christian faith. This endears them to many and makes them despised by others. All three would be godly leaders, I believe.

As for the rest of the Republican group, others articulating strong Christian faith include former Gov. Mike Huckabee, whom I strongly supported in 2008. Others such as Fiorina, Gov. Chris Christie and Gov. John Kasich are on the right side of the social issues and seem concerned that Christians are losing their religious liberties. They all articulate Christian faith, so who am I to judge the extent of it?

Frankly, I would support any of them over Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders.

And then there is Donald Trump. Well-known for his casinos and reality television show, he is loud, combative and articulates frustrations felt by many Americans, especially over the threat of Islamic terrorism and unsecured borders allowing massive illegal immigration.

There are good things to say about Trump. I enjoy listening to his speeches, and I'm glad to see him refusing to be politically correct—and seeming to get away with it! Each time he's politically incorrect, his poll numbers go up. He has helped shake up the Republican establishment in a way no one else has in recent memory.

One evangelical leader who has been bloodied by his dealings with the Republican Party told me Trump has done more to disrupt business as usual with the party elite than anyone else. He said that even though he doesn't like the fact Trump owns casinos, has been married three times and lives a lifestyle that in many ways doesn't line up with the Bible.

Nevertheless, Trump articulates Christian values and said the Bible was his favorite book, even though he didn't seem to know much about what was in the Bible. Similar to other Republican candidates, he has reached out to evangelicals.

We ran a commentary by Don Nori Sr. of Destiny Image telling about a meeting where some charismatic leaders including Kenneth Copeland prayed over Trump. Another writer speculated on our *Charisma News* site that God may have lifted up Trump like a type of Nebuchadnezzar, a view that drew a lot of fire from our readers.

So far, not many Christian leaders have spoken up to support specific candidates. As I travel around, I get the sense people are watching the race, but I don't hear Christians being passionate for any candidate. When there is discussion,

some of it is about who can win or who can beat Hillary Clinton.

The fact is that we need a godly leader. While we believe God raises up leaders, if we are discerning, shouldn't we know who that person is? And we need to understand that we can make a difference, especially in the early primary states. So my advice is to pay attention to the races and resolve to get involved closer to the primaries.

And meanwhile, don't go along with trends you hear in the media from the political pundits. Let's believe that God is raising up a leader for America at this very important time.