

Trump: Defender of evangelicals?

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — What happened to the evangelicals? They were supposed to be the

bedrock of the Ted Cruz candidacy. Yet on Super Tuesday he lost them to Donald Trump.

Cruz still did make a reasonably good showing, winning Alaska, Oklahoma and Texas, the latter by an impressive 17 points. But he didn't have the great night he needed to put away Marco Rubio and emerge as Trump's one remaining challenger.

Cruz had done all the groundwork to win evangelicals and sweep the South by putting together strong alliances with local pastors and leaders. And yet, outside Oklahoma and Texas, he lost them to Trump by stunning margins — by 21 points in Alabama, 13 in Georgia, 14 in Tennessee, 16 in Virginia and 36 in, of all places, Massachusetts.

How could this have happened? A more scripturally, spiritually flawed man than Trump would be hard to find. As several anti-Trump evangelical voices have argued, Christian witness cannot possibly support a thrice-married man with such an impressive list of sins, featuring especially spectacular displays of the seven deadlys.

These theological arguments are both eloquent and impassioned but, in this season of fear and anxiety, beside the point. This time around, evangelicals are not looking for someone like them. They're looking for someone who will protect them.

They've tried backing exemplary Scripture-quoting Christians — without result. After Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum and considerations of Cruz himself, they are increasingly reluctant to support like-minded candidates who are nonetheless incapable of advancing their cause in a hostile political arena so dominated by secularism.

They have no illusions about Trump. They have no expectations of religious uplift. What he offers them is not spirit but "muscle" (to borrow a word from the notorious former Professor Melissa Click of the University of Missouri).

The transaction was illuminated by Trump's January speech at Liberty University. His earlier halfhearted attempts to pose as a fellow evangelical were amusing and entirely unconvincing. At Liberty, he made another such I'm-one-of-you gesture by

citing a biblical verse in "Two Corinthians," thereby betraying a risible lack of familiarity with biblical language and usage.

Yet elsewhere in the speech, he described how Christians abroad are being massacred and Christians here at home are under cultural and political siege. He pledged: "We're going to protect Christianity."

Interesting locution. Not just Christians, but Christianity itself. What Trump promises is to stand outside the churchyard gates and protect the faithful inside. He's the Roman centurion standing between them and both barbarians abroad and aggressive secularists at home.

The message is clear: I may not be one of you. I can't recite or even correctly cite Scripture.

But I will patrol the borders of Christendom on your behalf. After all, who do you want out there — a choir boy or a tough guy with a loaded gun and a kick-ass demeanor?

Evangelicals answered resoundingly. They went for Trump in a rout.

The essence of Trump's appeal everywhere, far beyond evangelicals, is precisely the same: "I'm tough, I will protect you." That's why he remains so bulletproof. His lack of policy, the contradictory nature of his pronouncements that pass as policy — especially their capricious eruption and summary abandonment — have turned out to be an irrelevance.

Who cares? His support has nothing to do with actual prescriptions. Tuesday night, the immigration issue ranked low among Republican voters' concerns. Only about 10 percent deemed it their No. 1 issue. The political success of Trump's draconian immigration stance lies not in the policy but in the attitude — a not-going-to-take-it-anymore defiance.

That's the reason none of the rhetorical outrages that would have destroyed another candidacy have even left a mark on Trump. He mocks John McCain's heroism, insults Carly Fiorina's looks, fawns over Vladimir Putin — nothing. If anything, he gains support for fearless "telling it like it is" candor.

This is a man who three times last Sunday refused to disavow David Duke and the Ku Klux Klan. No other candidate could survive that. Trump not only survives, he thrives. Two days later, he wins seven out of 11 Super Tuesday states and ascends to the threshold of presumptive nominee.

Which is why the only possible way to stop Trump is a full-scale, open-the-bomb-bay-doors attack on the very core of his appeal: his persona of the tough guy you can trust to protect you.

It may be too late. But everything else will simply bounce off the Teflon.



Charles Krauthammer

A more scripturally, spiritually flawed man than Trump would be hard to find.

We deserve better

Find it very interesting that Oregon LNG keeps telling us how great they would be for our area: Improving our quality of life; a plethora of jobs; and no tax increases for us, because they would pay \$90 million in property taxes a year. Ever hear the old adage that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is?

Leucadia Corporation, a hedge fund company, which merged with Jefferies Group, another hedge fund/holding company, is providing Oregon LNG with its financial support. The simple definition of a hedge fund is a limited partnership of investors who use high risk methods, such as investing with borrowed money, in hopes of realizing capital gains.

The investors can be here or abroad. They are not in the business of constructing buildings or operating them. They are in the business of selling to reap profits for their investors, such as selling the energy permits. How, then, can Oregon LNG tell us how many jobs they will provide, and how much our taxes will be cut? They aren't going to be doing the hiring or building.

Whoever purchases the energy permits from them will be the company in control, and they don't have to honor anything Oregon LNG is telling us. They could have their own construction crews and workers. And, as far as the \$90 million a year in taxes, where are they coming up with this figure? And where do they think they can build this terminal? The Corps of Engineers has won twice in court against Oregon LNG. The only other place that is located in Warrenton, close to the water, is Tansy Point.

The one good thing to come out of the ads that Oregon LNG is constantly bombarding us with is that more people are realizing that this is not what we want in our wonderful community. People move here because of the natural beauty, and to visit the coast to relax and have a pleasurable visit. Not to listen to the sound of industrial jackhammers running constantly seven days a week, or huge construction trucks clogging the roads. Or to worry about the carcinogens leaking into the air that they, and we, are breathing.

How many existing businesses, and their jobs, will this plant destroy during construction due to noise and increased traffic, making it hard to access current businesses? Not to mention the thousands of acres of old growth timber lost, if they are able to utilize eminent domain for a pipeline. LNG is also a fossil fuel, just like coal, and when transported long distances the greenhouse gases are worse for the environment than coal.

As Abraham Lincoln said, "You can fool some of the people all of the time,

and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."

Oregon LNG does not belong here. We deserve so much better than them.

DIANA TALARSKY
Warrenton

Email lies

This business about Hillary Clinton's emails happens to be one of the few things I know something about, having sent and received zillions of State Department messages in my former job.

Simply put, classified ones said so, and had to be encrypted and decrypted at the other end. If they did not say immediately that they were top secret, secret or confidential, then they were unclassified by definition, and could be sent over any kind of system including open telex or Western Union. Embassies had separate commo rooms, staffed by locals, who handled the unclassified stuff.

What's happening now is that Republicans and other creeps at the State Department who hate Hillary for whatever reason, are going back over unclassified stuff and retroactively saying that it would be considered classified now, since situations, roles, and alignments have changed over the eight or 10 years that have elapsed since they were sent.

That will always be the case at any point in time, no matter who was in office. It is entirely political. But it's complex enough that the public will never understand it, no matter how many times she explains it, and we no longer have "journalists" capable of digging out the truth, just talking heads with corporate bosses who don't care about facts.

Republican Congressmen — who absolutely know better — can keep saying in their "investigations" that she divulged secrets, and they'll discover the truth of the matter about a month after the election. It'll then be CNN's story of the day, for about a day.

This is lying to the public on a scale new to history. Why would anyone belong to a party who wants to lie its way into office?

JOSEPH WEBB
Astoria

Vote 'no' on recall

There is much to-do over the firing of Cannon Beach Fire Chief Mike Balzer. Very little has been said in support of the three board members who voted for his termination. These three individuals are members of the community, and have also given many years of volunteer service to make the Cannon Beach Fire

Department a fine organization. Those in the fire district enjoy reduced insurance rates, thanks to the direction that they have given.

A lot has been said about the manner in which the termination was handled in the public meeting. But the manner was Mr. Balzer's choice. The state of Oregon requires that an individual be informed of the meeting and given the option of an executive session (closed meeting), or having the discussion in public. Mike Balzer chose to have it in a public session. He also knew that he was going to be terminated, and he should have arranged for transportation home after the meeting, leaving the department-owned car.

There are many facts which cannot be made public until the trial. Until all of the facts are known, I would hope the people in the district would remember the years of fine service given by these officials, continue to support them and give them the courtesy of voting no on the recall.

For four generations my family and I have lived and worked in Cannon Beach. I have only the best interests of the community at heart when I urge you to vote no on this important decision.

DAVID KENT PRICE
Gearhart

Pleased with poets

Having participated at one level or another in the FisherPoets Gathering since 2002 — but most often as a spectator inspired admirer — I want you all to know you are more than a weekend. You transform our mystic seaport of the west into a bountiful colloquia of and by the scholars-of-the-sea. You have created a true Americana legacy niche event.

Every year, regardless of how much I listen to the FisherPoets, I begin to hum along and get swept up in the inspiration you all have worked very hard to provide. And it really does as much socially, creatively and economically as any happening could provide to our city — perhaps more.

So for all FisherPoets and friends of FisherPoets here's my inspiration, a 2016 nitty-gritty ditty from your merry-making festival, to you:

Sweet lips reminisce in the diesel mist. Out on the rolling-rolling sea. Not always the kind of place you want to be. Counter-weighting compensating for the swell rising in the sweet seaweed-kelp breeze — pressing against the visual acuity. Where I can make the leap into the deep, delighted in what the day's search is for. Every day different — a collaborating compositional bliss.

DAVID ISAACS
Astoria

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