

September 2006

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Citizenship Revisited

A colleague (and former staffer) forwarded us a blog on the subject of *democracy v. republic* by Bill Wilson, a longtime Washington, D.C. based journalist and author of *Warshod*, a book with a prophetic take on current events. Wilson says he was shocked to read the introduction to his son's (Christian school) history textbook. It says America is distinguished by its commitment to democracy.

Noting that the President speaks frequently of his foreign policy goal to spread democracy around the world, especially to Islamic countries, Wilson says he wants to set the record straight. America is not a democracy. America is a republic!

Six years ago this week, we touched on that subject in our monthly newsletter. We also urged readers to actively support good candidates for public office. Since both topics seem timely as we head into next week's PRIMARY ELECTION, we thought you would enjoy again, The Demands of Citizenship (Sep 2000). Following is a condensed version:

The September 19th primary will bring to an end the political aspirations of many erstwhile candidates—a number of them professing Christians. A few will fall short of their dreams by only a handful of votes and will be left with thoughts, that, but for a few more phone calls or handshakes—things would be different.

If you have not been introduced to one or more of the candidates in your district this summer, it's not because they couldn't work you into their schedule. To the contrary, most have done everything possible to meet you in person or at least get your attention.

Candidates visit precinct caucuses, conventions, campus forums, clubs, church picnics, neighborhood meetings, factories, nursing homes, daycare centers and editorial boards. They host breakfast fund-raisers, salmon bakes, auctions and golf tourneys. For them, each day begins and ends on the telephone—in search of cash to pay for the next radio spot or a small batch of yard signs. Who do they call? They call friends, relatives, and everyone they've ever met or hope to meet. Maybe you?

Candidates man booths at county fairs and march in community pageants from the Balloon Festival in Walla Walla to the Seafair Parade in Seattle. By November, some will have personally doorbelled as many as 12,000 homes. And, oh yes, in their spare time they attend to family, church, jobs, and yard work—and lots of sign-waving.

Unfortunately, too many Americans view election campaigns as merely “a lot of hype.” To them, the opportunity to choose wise and prudent leaders becomes an inconvenience—something that distracts from “more important things.” But founder Noah Webster warned, *If [our] government fails to secure public prosperity and happiness, it must be because the citizens neglect the divine commands, and elect bad men to make and administer the laws.*¹

Our forefathers were careful to construct for us, a republic rather than a democracy.

They regarded a democracy as a lazy man's form of government. Benjamin Rush went so far as to say, *A simple democracy is the devil's own government.*² Therefore our founders established in Article 4, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution, a requirement that "each state maintain a *republican* form of government."

A republic is based on core principles that are considered unalienable and immutable. This is in stark contrast to a democracy [libertarianism] that fails to define its core values and whose laws eventually reflect the unbridled passions of its people.

The difference then between a republic and a democracy is the source of their authority. According to the founders, our Republic is established upon the guiding principles found in the Bible—principles embedded in the Constitution. It therefore requires much effort on our part to choose leaders who not only understand these principles, but will be guided by them in their decision making.

Which brings us back to the candidates who await our decision.

The old adage that "we get what we pay for" is especially true in politics. The gambling industry knows this. The abortion industry knows this, and so do a host of other special interest groups who spend vast sums of money to get their friends elected. The question is who can candidates of moral integrity turn to for help?

Get out the vote. It is not too late to make a difference. Most who receive this monthly publication are by nature, interested in current events, tend to be well informed on the issues and have identified at least several candidates who are worthy of support. Therefore, why not share your insights with neighbors and co-workers? Let them know who you support and why.

It is especially worthwhile to call people listed in church directories to remind them to vote. People often fail to vote simply because they forget. Quite often, a friendly call presents an opportunity to answer questions about issues and candidates on the ballot—particularly "the judges." Information on legislative and judicial candidates can be accessed on our web site at: www.christiancoalition.us.

Also, consider buying yard signs to pass to friends. Obviously, candidates are delighted to distribute their signs for free. But why pass up a blessing? Use the signs as an opportunity to contribute to a candidate you would like to see elected to office.

Sure, it's politics. But even the great evangelist Charles Finney viewed politics as another tool of evangelism. So did his contemporary D. L. Moody who was once criticized for voting. He responded to his critic, "...it is true I am a citizen of another kingdom, but I own property in Cook County."

As citizens of another kingdom, should we pretend we are in our future estate, or should we engage and take a stand—for Heaven's sake?

Rick Forcier

Executive Director

¹ Noah Webster, *The History of the United States* (New Haven: Durrie and Peck, 1832), pp. 336-337

² Benjamin Rush, *The Letters of Benjamin Rush*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951) p. 454