

May 2014

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Our Heavenly Citizenship

Do those who are “at ease in Zion” opt out of the electoral process?

“God who gave us life gave us Liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?”

—Thomas Jefferson (1774)

Washington’s August 5th primary will bring to an end the political aspirations of many erstwhile candidates—a number of them born again Christians. Some will fall short of their goal by only a handful of votes and will be left with gut-wrenching thoughts that maybe, if only for a few more phone calls or handshakes, things would be different.

If you do not get introduced to one or more of the candidates in your district this summer, it will not be because they couldn’t work you into their schedule. To the contrary, most are currently doing everything possible to meet you in person or at least get your attention.

Candidates will be searching you out at precinct committee meetings, conventions, schools, clubs, picnics, church potlucks, neighborhood associations, factories, nursing homes, daycare centers, shopping malls and editorial boards. They will be hosting numerous breakfast fund-raisers, salmon bakes, hay rides, 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 their mothers, siblings, uncles, neighbors, and anyone else they’ve ever met or hope to meet. Maybe you?

Candidates man booths at county fairs and march in countless community parades from the Balloon Festival in Walla Walla and Pioneer Days in Tenino, to the great Seafair Parade in Seattle.

By November, some candidates will have personally door-belled as many as 12,000 homes. And, oh yes, in their spare time they tend to their families, church, jobs, mowing the lawn, and soccer games—after they get home from sign-waving at busy intersections.

It remains a mystery to us that anybody would subject themselves and their families to the rigors of a political campaign and the sacrifice of public service in an era when there seems to be such public disdain for the profession. We are even more puzzled why so many Americans view campaigns as merely a lot of “hype,” and why so many Church leaders dismiss the importance of choosing godly judges and representatives as not part of their job description. How guarded can our liberty be when the process of choosing leaders becomes an inconvenience—something that distracts from “more urgent” pursuits?

As Christians, we should be aware that it takes great effort to maintain our republican forms of government. Choosing wise and prudent leaders is more than a privilege. It is an awesome responsibility. Founder Noah Webster said, “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.”

America's forefathers were careful to construct for their posterity, a republic rather than a democracy. They regarded a democracy as a lazy man's form of government. Founder Benjamin Rush went so far as to say, "A simple democracy is the devil's own government."¹ 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."

The biggest difference between the two forms of governance is the source of their authority. A republic is based on core principles that are considered unalienable and immutable. Our Republic is established upon the guiding principles found in the Bible. Our founders said so. They also acknowledged that it requires much effort on our part to understand the issues and to choose leaders that understand and adhere to core principles in their decision-making. 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.

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

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. So do the "gay-rights" folks and a host of other special interest groups who are willing to spend vast sums of money to get people elected "...who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18).

The question is, will those who are currently "at ease in Zion" continue to opt out of the electoral process, preferring a form of government that costs us nothing?

This is an opportune time to make a difference in campaign 2014. We have found that most who receive this monthly letter are somewhat interested in current events, tend to be well informed on the issues and have most likely identified one or more candidates who are worthy of support. So why not share those insights with neighbors, friends, and pastor? Be decisive. Be bold. The other side sure is!

We might point out that there are several extraordinarily competitive primary races this season that may be decided by fewer than a thousand votes—and possibly—a hundred-or-less. Remember the Gregoire-Rossi contest? One such match-up is in the 4th congressional district featuring State Sen. Janéa Holmquist, State Rep. Dan Newhouse, and former NFL star Clint Didier, each hoping to replace Rep. Doc Hastings who is retiring. For those living in Central Washington, don't wait to get involved. Now is the acceptable hour!

Get out the vote. Yes, Christians lead busy lives. But too often, Christians do not vote simply because they fail to re-register after a change of address. It is worthwhile to call people in your church directory and remind them that to be eligible to vote in the August 5 Washington State Primary, they must be registered online by July 7 (or July 28 in person) to participate. In as many years as we have done this at the Christian Coalition, no one to our recollection has been upset by the reminder. Most often, we are asked about candidates and ballot issues—providing an opportunity to influence.

The great evangelist D. L. Moody was once criticized for believing that politics is another tool of evangelism. 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, let us do everything we can to influence for good, the direction of our state and nation. Our heavenly citizenship demands no less.

Rick Forcier

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