

October 2016

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Offering Some Bread and Wine

Political campaigns should not be more bruising than ice hockey

I exhort therefore...supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. —1Tim:1,2

If there are hardcore conservative political junkies anywhere in the Pacific Northwest, they are probably on our mail list. But even they are threatening a fast from political news stations—even Fox News—until late evening November 8. Evidently, too much, has become TOO MUCH!

The weariness among registered voters, left and right, can be traced to two top-ballot candidates who have engaged in political discourse at a level perhaps not seen since the bitter presidential campaign of 1828 between incumbent president John Quincy Adams and Senator Andrew Jackson.

Jackson, who had previously been defeated by Adams in the 1824 presidential sweepstakes, claimed that he lost due to a "corrupt bargain" between Adams and Speaker of the House Henry Clay, who was also in the hunt. In his second time at bat, however, Jackson won in a landslide. But, even then, he was bitter, blaming the death of his wife, Rachel, which occurred just after the election, on the Adams campaigners, who called her a "bigamist."

In tawdriness, however, it is hard to imagine that even the contest of 1828 could rival anything we have witnessed in this season's soon-to-be concluded presidential selection process.

For the first time since 1916, the editorial board of *The Gazette*, a usually Republican-leaning Colorado Springs-based daily, will not be endorsing a presidential candidate. Whether foolish or cowardly, we think what they did say about our nation is worth noting. They write:

"When government functions as it should, Americans barely pay attention to the president, Congress and the courts. That's as it should be. Individuals should feel free to safely pursue prosperity and happiness that result from daily endeavors that improve the lives of relatives, neighbors and communities. The well-being of Americans should not depend on Washington.

America has been great for most of 240 years. It will remain that way if the public demands enforcement of laws that created the republic. We will remain great if the public vigilantly maintains a stable federal government designed to serve, not rule, the people who pay for it.

The United States has flourished as an experiment in self-governance, in which success and failure depend on effort and achievement. A country of limited government, with no guaranteed outcomes, survives only in a context of morality, charity and self-restraint among the governed. The country was not designed to succeed or fail on a basis of election outcomes or on the morality and actions of presidents.

Either way, the country's future depends more on the actions of the people than those we elect to serve."¹

Not too many years ago, this writer, together with some 240 Thurston County precinct committee officers had the opportunity to witness a most unusual campaign debate. Here's some background:

In 1998, noted evangelist Luis Palau, held a breakfast meeting in Olympia to solicit prayer and financial support from local pastors for a forthcoming outreach in the region. His goal was to raise \$225,000 from the 200 or so Christian leaders in the room—which he did. Afterwards, Rev. Randy Burtis (see list of pastor-advisors to the left), said Luis wanted to discuss the possibility of organizing a special breakfast just for elected officials and candidates. (I was a Republican Party County Chairman at the time).

Within a matter of a few days, about 130 targeted officials, Republicans and Democrats, including our State Supreme Court Chief Justice and an Associate Justice who is now Chief Justice, met for an early breakfast in a spacious dining room at the former Tyee Hotel in Tumwater.

Suffice to say that Palau was anointed, sensing how and what to speak into the lives of those gathered. After a low-key salvation prayer at the conclusion, Luis asked everyone who intended that prayer for real, to fill out a card on the table. Amazingly, some 30-plus officials complied.

Even more interesting, a table to this writer's immediate left, had four congressional candidates who were running against each other in the Primary to replace the Hon. Linda Smith who was moving on. That morning, three of those rivals gave their hearts to Jesus Christ!

Several weeks later, the four congressional contestants returned to Olympia to debate before a very large audience of Thurston County Republicans. Few PCOs had yet to settle on one preferred candidate.

About two-hours before the event (after much preparation) I felt impressed to dish the role of moderator to Steve Hosch, a precinct officer who was a Tumwater area attorney, and, when available, a superb parliamentarian. But Steve was wheelchair bound, and getting across town on short notice was problematic. When he accepted the last-minute assignment, it seemed to confirm my sudden inclination.

Here is why it may have been the Lord who put Steve in place that night:

As the candidates took their seats on the platform facing the audience, Steve, who was facing the candidates from below, pulled his microphone close, and specifically addressed the one seated to his far left. "Candidate A," said Steve, "please introduce to this audience, your Primary opponent who is seated to your immediate left; and tell us what you admire most about him, and why he would make a great congressman." To be sure, the others caught the spirit and didn't require further prompting!

If there could be an exceeding warm glow at a political event, it was there, that night. For the next 90-minutes-plus, one could hear a pin drop in that auditorium. At the conclusion, a straw vote was conducted to determine a winner of the debate. Not surprisingly, the audience gave exceptionally high marks (and kudos) to all four candidates—essentially rendering a defining poll worthless.

And, now that this servant has had the opportunity to share a special memory, may our best wishes be extended to two longtime members of the Washington State Legislature who will retire from public office at the end of this year. With some 32 years in public office, Sen. Jim Hargrove (D-Hoquiam) has consistently demonstrated solid-core biblical values, especially when voting on key social issues. He will be missed.

Another retiring official with 22 years of service is Sen. Don Benton (R-Vancouver). It so happens that Senator Benton was one-of-the four candidates who participated in that "unique" debate. More so, he heard, and responded to a very important appeal that certain morning at the Tyee Hotel.

May our churches be a "House of Prayer" this election day, as we pray for kings and for all in authority.

Rick Forcier

¹ <http://ijr.com/2016/10/719747-weeks-before-2016-elections-colorado-paper-issues-unusual-endorsement/>