

# Christian Coalition of Washington

September 2000

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## The Demands of Citizenship

Dear Friends:

The September 19<sup>th</sup> primary will bring to an end the political aspirations of many erstwhile candidates - a number of them Christians. Some will fall short of their dreams 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 have not been introduced to one or more of the candidates in your district this summer, it is not because they couldn't work you into their schedule. To the contrary, most are doing everything possible to meet you in person or at least get your attention.

This season, candidates I have met, have visited precinct caucuses, conventions, schools, clubs, picnics, church potlucks, neighborhood associations, factories, military installations, nursing homes, daycare centers and editorial boards. They have hosted numerous breakfast fund-raisers, salmon bakes, hay rides, auctions, and golf tournaments. 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-in-law, neighbors, anyone 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 *Swede Days* in Rochester, to the great *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 work in their family, church, jobs, mowing the lawn, and soccer games - after they get home from sign-waving at busy intersections.

It remains a mystery to me that some 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. But I am even more puzzled why so many Americans view campaigns as merely a lot of "hype." How guarded can our liberty be when the process of choosing our leaders becomes an inconvenience - something that distracts us from "more important" 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.*"<sup>1</sup>

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. Founder Benjamin Rush went so far as to say, "*A simple democracy is the devil's own government.*"<sup>2</sup> 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 the two forms of governance is the source of their authority. Our Republic is established upon the guiding principles found in the Bible. Our founders said so. It therefore requires much effort on our part to understand contemporary issues in light of God's word, and to choose leaders who will be persuaded by these principles in their decision making.

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 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*" (Rms 1:18).

The question is, will we the righteous do as much for our kind - or will we offer a sacrifice that costs us nothing?

It is not too late to make a difference in campaign 2000. Most who receive this monthly letter, 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 friends at church? Be decisive - be bold. Let them know who you support and why.

**Get out the vote.** We lead busy lives - so do our friends at church. Many times Christians do not vote simply because they forget. How about calling people in your church directory and reminding them to vote next Tuesday? For as many years as I have done this, I have never had anyone upset that I called. Often, in fact, I am asked my opinions about candidates and issues on the ballot. What a great opportunity to influence.

Also, consider buying several yard signs to wave on a street corner for the next few days. Obviously, candidates will be delighted to give you the signs for free. But why not be a blessing and use the signs as an opportunity to contribute to a candidate you would like to see elected to office?

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 nation. Our heavenly citizenship demands no less.

See you at the polls,

Rick Forcier  
Executive Director

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

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