

Deacon Jodi Moscona's
Monthly Memo On:
Ethics, Spirituality and Success

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ELECTION TIME OR IS IT?

Before I get started, let me give a great big THANK YOU to all veterans. We all need to remember that FREEDOM is not FREE. It is bought and paid for by the efforts of our great men and women who serve in the military for all of us.

In the last couple of weeks two things that have caught my attention are the Democratic debate and the entry of Fred Thompson into the race for the Republican nomination. Both could have far reaching effects. Many people say that the Republican field is weak, but let's take a look at the Democratic field to see just how strong it is.

The Democrats have **Joe Biden, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Christopher Dodd, John Edwards, Mike Gravel, Dennis Kucinich, Barack Obama** and **Bill Richardson**. Now I have to admit that I did not torture myself by watching the entire Democrats' debate. I went to a variety of websites and read reports about the debate. From my perspective after reviewing commentary about the debate, I only see one qualified person among the candidates—Bill Richardson. Considering that he is given almost no chance of securing the nomination, then the reality is that the candidates with a serious chance would come from the list of, in my opinion, totally unqualified candidates. Let me explain how I came to this opinion.

The presidents that have been the most effective in recent years have been former governors—Ronald Regan, Bill Clinton and our current president. Jimmy Carter had been a governor but is generally considered an ineffective president. Members of Congress have not generally been successful as presidents unless you limit the background of George Bush "41" to his time in Congress and dismiss his international service. But some would even say he was ineffective. Look at the experience of the top Democrats—Obama is a first term senator; Hillary just started her second term; Edwards served exactly one term in the Senate. Gravel served two terms as a U.S. Senator, but has not been in office for nearly twenty years. So, would someone please tell me what qualifies these folks for the presidency?

The Republican field is made up of: **Rudy Giuliani, Mike Huckabee, Duncan Hunter, Dr. Alan Keyes, John McCain, Ron Paul, Mitt Romney, Tom Tancredo** and **Fred Thompson**. This group includes two former governors, two long-time U.S. Senators, the former mayor of New York, which has a budget that is greater than some states, and a former diplomat. Now, I may be wrong, but just on experience, the Republican field looks like it is head and shoulders more qualified than the Democratic field. As I mentioned

earlier, the debate and the entrance of Thompson have caught my eye. But more on that later.

THE NEWS

The big story of the Democrats' debate was Hillary not being able to adequately answer the question of driver's licenses for illegal immigrants. Then, damage control started. Bill Clinton comes to her rescue and begins trying to get people to lay off because she is a woman. What is that all about? It reminds me of a WWF tag team match. Hillary says that they are piling on **not** because she is a woman but because she is the front runner. Then Bill comes out and in essence says to lay off because she is a woman. The New York Times says, "Operatives in all three camps argued that the Clintons were keeping a "boys vs. girl" story line alive to try to stoke sympathy for Mrs. Clinton — something Clinton advisers emphatically deny". The Edwards campaign has taken the position that it shouldn't be difficult to answer questions. He has been asked to do this all the time. The Edwards camp is in effect questioning Hillary's ability to address the issues. And so am I.

Looking at the field of Democratic candidates, I am not comfortable with the ability of any of them to handle a situation that faced President Bush after the 9-11 attack. I believe that we have become complacent and have forgotten the impact of 9-11 on America. Certainly, all of the decisions made in response to the attack have not been perfect. But, for all the imperfections noted, we haven't had any attacks on our soil since then. And certainly, we have the President to thank for that fact. And Americans forgetting this is one thing hurting Republican candidates. Notwithstanding this fact, I think the choice that the Republicans have is between many qualified candidates.

The entry of Fred Thompson in the Republican field offers the possibility of a candidate who can capture the pro-life/ religious right vote. I am not sure if that will happen, but the problem, if it does occur, is the possibility of a repeat of the Ross Perot effect during the initial Clinton victory. Everyone has to remember that it was Ross Perot who elected Bill Clinton. In 1992, Clinton received 43% of the vote, Bush 38% and Perot 19%. In 1996, Clinton only garnered 49% of the vote. But in 1992, the Perot vote made such a sufficient impact that it caused Bush "41" to lose. This commentary is not about advocating any candidate or any party. I'm only making an observation of what I see occurring. I hope to update as the campaign season moves on.

ATTITUDE

It's unquestionable that members of the main stream media are overwhelmingly liberal and tend to vote for and support Democrat candidates. That is certainly one reason why Republican candidates are held in such low esteem by the media. Also, the media has suppressed the reality of 9-11 to the point of not showing the film clips using excuses that it might harm children. What the media reports or fails to report tends to have a significant impact on how we as a society function. Our "forgetfulness" can to some degree be blamed on them. But it is important that we not forget what happened to this country on September 11, 2001. I get a lot of e-mails that contain photos of the soldiers fighting terrorist around

the world. I forward them to others because it is the least that I can do. The media has done a great disservice to the military. The recent successes in Iraq have been downplayed and are conspicuously missing in many of the main stream media stories about the war.

It is important that Americans not forget that we live in the most prosperous society ever created. Even our “poor” are better off than many considered “rich” in other countries. We live in a very prosperous time. As I write this newsletter, the stock market is down, but still over 13,000. I can remember not so long ago we were cheering 11,000. But even though much of the media is pounding the economy, the fact is that it is still higher than ever in history. And this reporting affects consumer confidence.

THE SPIRITUAL

It has been said over and over again that voters vote their pocket books. I believe that is why the media is so aggressive in reporting the dip in the economy. But my observations tell me that a lot of folks vote on a more spiritual basis. The reason Fred Thompson is in the race is because voters, generally referred to as the religious right, have been dissatisfied with the other candidates. Rudi Giuliani is pro-abortion. Mitt Romney, in the past, has been liberal on many issues but has now changed his position on some. But this vacillation has some people unsure of his position. McCain has been seen as a moderate and the other candidates have not risen to the point of high electibility. So, enter Thompson.

Some people are single issue voters—abortion and gun control are each considered a make or break issue. This voting posture is true of both parties. And, I feel each of these issues can be looked at from a spiritual perspective. I am becoming more and more convinced we should all look at our obligation to vote from a spiritual perspective. How we vote is a reflection of what is important to us. If we don't vote it shows that we don't care. I don't have a problem with anyone that is a one issue voter. I just personally have a problem sometimes looking at a candidate from only one perspective. For example, to me abortion is not a single issue. Rather, the view indicates how that person sees life in general, a much larger multi-dimensional perspective.

Let me be clear at this point that the purpose of my newsletter is not to try to persuade anyone, but to try to get folks to think. I hope all of you put a lot of thought into the upcoming election because the outcome will drive the direction of this country for many years into the future.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In my last newsletter I wrote about the situation in Jena, Louisiana. I took some heat for that newsletter from a few folks because they claim that I am insensitive to racism. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am not insensitive to racism. What I am sensitive to is that the Jena situation is an example of how the existence of racism in a place can either be used to remedy or inflame a situation. My choice is to remedy, not inflame.

I am very hopeful that the election of Bobby Jindal as our next Governor will at least to some degree show the rest of the country that Louisiana is moving in the right direction. It is hopefully the dawn of a new day in our state; a day that will find corruption on the way out.

Thanksgiving is next week. We have a lot to be thankful for not the least of which is the fact that we are blessed to be in the one out of seventeen that live in this great country. I will pray for all of you and thank God that you are my friends. I hope this is the beginning of a very blessed holiday season for you and your family.

Peace and Grace.

Jodi

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