

CRIBB<S>NOTE - August 31, 2008

The “official” election season has opened. Political speeches and heated campaigns are flooding our lives. Money is being poured into television and radio commercials to capture our votes. There is no way to escape the mania spreading like wildfire across the homeland. It is exciting and begs our participation.

Of course, there will be cynics who will do everything they can to dissuade our enthusiasm. There will be disappointments and disillusion. But, mostly, there will be an endless flow of debates, pundit commentaries, and public responses to the rhetoric and energy of this historic election year. American voters have a very real choice in the different candidates vying to become president of the United States. This is not a time to wither on the sidelines and only be a spectator. Get involved. Do more than just vote!

For the first time in a very long time, we have the opportunity to work very hard to make the democratic process really mean something. Whatever is your political affiliation, perspective or passion, this election year proclaims a crucial, clarion call for full participation.

Howard Thurmond, the great theologian and mystic, wrote, “We are never able to do anything in quite the way we want to do it. No single experience, however great, is quite able to represent us adequately. Life is essentially dynamic and alive. It’s this aliveness that guarantees and sustains all the particular manifestations of life by which we are surrounded and of which we are a part.” (From *Deep River and the Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death*)

This is such a time. While perfection and completeness will, undoubtedly, elude us, we must engage this political process that can liberate us from practices, traditions, behaviors, and attitudes that mire our progress toward improved human relations. Our thinking is too often clouded by memory and fear. We are afraid of what we suspect will be detrimental to our best interests. Yet, we practice conduct that is unbecoming people of faith. We are not always open to the gifts and possibilities other people possess. We block our blessings because we don’t trust who we don’t know.

Today, we are called to step in to the Public Sphere with confidence of a new outcome. We enter the arena bearing our hopes and offering our vision for a nation and world made better by our commitment to serve generously and give ourselves freely. We do so with the awareness of others joining us in a cause that is just, right, and good. We are not alone.

We have come to the crossroads of politics and religion. At its best, this intersection provides clarity to forge a path of opportunity and salvation. The hungry and those who suffer will find relief. The bewildered and destitute will receive companionship and comfort. The forsaken and abandoned will discover hope and community.

There is an absolute choice laid before us in the two major party candidates and among some of the minor parties. Our votes are not to be taken for granted. Our voices will not be silent. The whole world is watching to see what Americans will do when given the chance to make a change. We have no excuses.

Across the board, conditions created by human error require resolution. We can do better. We do not vote to put the burden of change on the shoulders of one person.

We vote to align ourselves with the human and celestial forces of righteousness and justice.

We in the United Church of Christ believe “God is still speaking.” We also know ‘God is still calling’ us to ‘act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly.’ Listen to how God is calling your name, and respond faithfully, cheerfully, and enthusiastically. Then, call your favorite candidate’s campaign office and go to work to make the change that is both needed and desired.