

Our founders were deeply spiritual and also deeply secular — a well-balanced condition of the mature mind that eludes today's political fundamentalists. Our founders respected human freedom and the urge toward greater equality. Over the centuries, we have tried to make this nation a better expression of their intent, so that there would be no second-class citizens, no arbitrary authority that limited our life, liberty or pursuit of happiness. And the better angels of that Revolution stand yet upon our shoulders as we oppose the clan of authority, that cult of death, whose cloak of human oppression has cast its shadow over our children's future.

What must we do? We must bring the light of consciousness to people who are enslaved by the darkness. We must show them — make them see — the clear links between the Taliban and the American fundamentalists. It is about power, male power, and subservience. Why can't a young girl in trouble get an abortion in the preferred world of the fundamentalists? It isn't because of the sanctity of life, or the fundamentalists would be acting to preserve life by getting medicine to Africa instead of impeding it. They would be halting executions and building up our institutions of peace.

The desperate attitude of the far right toward not only the unborn baby but even brain-dead people on life support reveals something about their true religion: they have little. There is nothing in their actions that reveals a belief that life is eternal, that there is no death except as a doorway to something better. Their brand of Christianity simply does not relate to the teachings of Christ. The worst of the hate-mongers who misuse the Bible to make million-dollar church incomes and push a political agenda of male domination and hate are easy to spot, for they cherry-pick Bible passages to suit their purposes. They disregard any turning of cheeks, they disregard the fact that Jesus never mentioned the homosexuality that they so fear. They seem not to fear that, as very rich men, they themselves might have a hard time driving their Hummers through the eye of the needle into heaven. They claim that every word of the Bible must be followed, but if they really believed that they would have stoned themselves to death years ago, as they are as sexually frisky and full of covetous looks as anybody else. They forgive themselves freely, of course, even when they promote the murder of foreign leaders.

They refuse a young girl an abortion for the same reason they would refuse her birth control: because in either case she would be exercising power and control over her own future — and such power and control is reserved for the authorities; male authorities — below whom she is to cower and serve and reproduce. It is all about that, and we have to start saying so, so that the far right will no longer have the women marching in its toxic ranks — at least the smarter women.

If I ran the Democratic Party, I would lay it all out in expensive advertising campaigns. I would have sociologists and psychologists talking about the tricks of mental slavery that are being used to trick decent Christians and other people into following un-Christian leaders and policies. As with any kind of mental counseling, progress depends on the spread of consciousness — of self-awareness. I would let more and more people, especially the women, come to understand the nature of the lies that surround them and defraud them. I believe they really are for life and liberty, but they must be given better information, better moral and emotional support.

It would be important to have well-known voices of authority deliver that message — the Walter Cronkites and Oprah Winfreys of America — if they would ever be brave enough to do so. And here is why the message must be delivered by such voices.

Imagine walking down a street in my Peterborough. You run across a retired couple and start talking politics. You get on the subject of abortion.

"Listen," you say, "the Europeans have a very small percentage of the abortions we have in the United States. They have cut the number of abortions by providing better sex education, providing more contraception, and accepting a more open and honest attitude about the sexual lives of their young people. If your concern is to reduce abortions, surely you must become an advocate of these programs that actually do the trick!"

But the couple disagrees. They tell you, "It isn't about what works in Europe and what might work here, it is about doing the right thing for the right reason, and following the word of God."

Well, that was a real conversation in Peterborough, though I'm sure they must have been visitors.

If you wonder why the other side of the political aisle seems resistant to the facts, it is because they are not interested in what works, what is pragmatic; they're interested in obedience to authority. This is of course unworkable in the civic arena, where pragmatism is the belief system we must share as our common ground. The only way to break through that problem is if our few national voices of authority will please give these authority-dependent people permission to think freshly about our important issues.

There is another string leading out of this dark maze. Better leaders can make great differences in the life of a society, but we cannot elect them if we do not change from electoral organizing to social organizing.

When I went on a 23,000-mile voter registration journey before the last election, I walked through many housing projects and low-income neighborhoods where no one from the outside had dropped by to talk politics since the previous election. The Democrats only come around, I was told, every few years to ask for their votes, but they weren't there to listen to their problems, to help them craft political solutions, and to stand behind them and amplify their voices. These people were of the opinion that, if the Democrats won or lost, their own lives wouldn't really change much.

It is simply exploitive politics to come around begging for votes without giving so much as a crouton in return. We have to be involved all year long, every year, and in every neighborhood that needs political help. That is movement building — not just stumping for candidates.

The residents of Cabrini Green in Chicago, and the people of the slums of Ft. Myers, Miami, St. Louis and New Orleans told me they needed our organizing help and our voices added to theirs—for they love their children too and want decent lives. Many of the streets I walked in New Orleans were later strewn with the drowned poor, as if America had progressed no further than the days of the *Titanic*, when those traveling in steerage are never offered the lifeboats. So much criticism has fallen on the President for the flooding disaster in New Orleans, but the Democrats have had a long century to make life better and they have not done so. The New Deal and other programs, offered at a distance, are helpful but no match for a Party meeting-house in every neighborhood to raise the political competency and expectations of the area.

Politics is not just about raising money for candidates. Politics is about creatively serving the needs of your people, and the election is just the report card of how you are doing and how many people you have helped and how many people are follow-

JACK OHMAN (THE OREGONIAN)



## 'THE TIGER OF THE SENATE' HAS HIS DAY

*The City of Eugene has proclaimed October 20, as 'Wayne Morse Day'. His old friend and "driving companion" G. V. Stahakis wrote a memorial to the late U. S. Senator from Oregon, from which the following is excerpted.*

Thirty-one years after his passing, we celebrate the 105th birthday of Wayne L. Morse on October 20. Eugene was his home from 1931 until his passing in 1974. He is one of the most prominent and outspoken advocates for the people that our nation has ever known.

He is an icon of freedom, fairness and citizenship. He was a statesman, a family man and a farmer. He is still honored today for his unyielding dedication to open, clean government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

He was a plain spoken orator, an independent spirit, a constitutional scholar, and a populist who encouraged and used dissent as an essential tool of democracy.

Wayne Morse is loved and respected as "The Tiger of the Senate," "Mr. Education" and the "Conscience of America." On his birthday we celebrate his life, his spirit, his wisdom and his life long service of protecting our civil liberties and rights. On this special day we ponder how the Senator would react if he were faced with today's political atmosphere.

Wayne Morse was well known long before he was elected to political office. Respected for his strong moral character, fairness, and deep knowledge of our Constitution, He was appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt to arbitrate crises between labor and management. The Senator was recognized internationally from the 1940s to the 1970s.

An enlightened man, Senator Morse understood that our Constitution demands that the direction our country takes must be based on a civilian order of law nationally and internationally. The positions he took indicate that quite vigorously. He hammered home his points on the duties and limitations of government consistently by pointing out that "Article 1, Section 8 vests the power to declare war in the Congress, not the Administration." He believed that our foreign policy should reflect the "decency of the American people" and that we should be "exporting bread and literacy rather than bullets and bombs." His statements that "our money is making the oligarchs richer and

the poor poorer" and that the "American flag should precede the dollar sign, not follow it," are current and powerful and typical of his timelessness.

His dissent from "imperialistic foreign policy" was consistent with his dissent from domestic policy if those policies did nothing to promote the public welfare. Four Presidents appointed him to resolve labor/management conflicts and he had the courage to disclose the unfair legal disparity between the worker and the powers of corporations.

His record on equality for all Americans without regard to race, financial status, religion or culture is a shining example to be envied by anyone of moral conscience. Before and after the Civil Rights Movement he fought for equal distribution of law. Locally, he is remembered as a populist and fearless champion of the people.

He was born on a farm in Wisconsin October 20, 1900. Although adopted by Oregon, he was a child of Wisconsin and as such he was influenced by the populism of "Fighting Bob LaFollette," and he referred to him throughout his life. He lived as a farmer for most of his life, and provided a healthy rural environment for his wife and three daughters. He was active in local food cooperatives and competed in and won many prizes from county fairs all over the state over several decades. He prized his Blue Ribbons over his many political awards.

Senator Morse would travel great distances to stay in touch with the youth and grass roots of Oregon. He dissented from public policy that "sold out" the family farm to large corporate interests.

The policies that Wayne Morse dissented against during his terms in office are on the front burner of American politics today, just as he said they would be. He died in 1968 while campaigning in an election that could have returned him to the Senate.

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

*Wayne Morse is one of two U.S. Senators who voted against giving President Lyndon Johnson authority to go to war in Vietnam in 1964, the infamous 'Tonkin Resolution' which has since proven to be a companion in deceit to the war in Iraq.*

ing your leadership because you were there for them. We do get the government we deserve, you see, and the crowd standing behind us in critical times is the crowd we have served through the years. People will not speak up about global warming, I assure you, until they first have a warm house for their own children.

So here are my two thoughts. We must help people see the mental traps that they are victim to, and we must do this by telling it like we see it, by asking them to see that the pro-life, pro-war movement is really a cult of death, that fundamental Christianity represents the opposite of Christ's teachings, that authoritarian control and elite profiteering are the strings of the far right's puppet show.

Let us indeed believe that all people are equal, but let us not assume that all political opinions are equal, for some are

toxic and sociopathic and require loving intervention. Let us intervene. Let us stand up in church gatherings, let us confront our friends. Let us use the tools of mass communication to awaken people to the lies that bind them.

And let us return to real politics in the neighborhoods — especially those neighborhoods where we are most needed. As it stands now, people who do not receive the support they need from an ever-receding community are turning to the very churches that have been killing those needed government services. This is a dangerous tailspin that we can only arrest with a political return to the neighborhoods. Let us demand of our Party leaders that we move from the electoral to social organizing, so that there is more rock and less hot air under our candidates as we move into the future.

These are big projects. Do we have enough energy remaining for this sort of thing?

What is it to our souls when we have to just keep slugging through dark places? Why, after all that has happened in America, from stolen elections to the destruction of our necessary institutions of mutual help, are you, personally, still at it? Why, after seeing our country become the international symbol of irresponsible conduct, of torture, of political imprisonment, of destruction to the global ecosystem, are your spirits not smeared across the plaza under the treads of these tanks?

Are your hearts perhaps stronger and your souls deeper than you imagined? Yes, this is what you came here to do. There is no greater gift than to be given a life of meaning. There is no greater heroism than to bravely represent love in a dark time of fear and danger.

We are resolved to help each other. We are resolved to represent love in the world and follow our national dream.

So look at the situation wisely and know that a happy ending is not found under the paper moon of child's brief play. Accept and celebrate the fact that we are deeply engaged in a long, hard drama of global meaning. We welcome the fight. We welcome it, and by George, we are up to it.



*95 year old Doris 'Granny D' Haddock is the author of "Granny D: You're Never Too Old to Raise a Little Hell" (Random House). In her 90th year, she walked across the country for campaign finance reform. Her website is <http://www.granny.com/>.*