



The Truth

Aletheia Group weekly newsletter

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“Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, until He has mercy on us.” (Psalm 123:2)

“The Office of the Vice President has meant different things to different presidents. The last two Vice Presidents, Dick Cheney and Joe Biden, have played a noticeably more active role in promoting the President’s agenda. The key to being a good Vice President is not looking beyond being #2.” –Dave



Mitt Romney’s selection of Congressman Paul Ryan as his running mate has energized many in the Republican Party. I will say that I was surprised and somewhat impressed with Governor Romney’s choice as I would have never expected him to pick a running mate who was in many cases stronger than himself. But the selection is no doubt calculated in that the main issue in the general election has put the role of government front and center.

For some of my readers who abhor the thought of a Romney presidency, please understand that this newsletter should in no way be considered an endorsement.

I’ve decided to dedicate this issue to looking at the Office of the Vice President and making it a teachable moment on both the Founders intent for the office, what it has evolved into, and what should be

expected of the second highest office of the land.

Paul Ryan has many faults and had he ran for the GOP nomination he would not have won my support because of his positions on TARP, debt increase, and his support of [ENDA](#), to name just a few. To speak of him positively, his most famous six minutes came when he addressed Barack Obama (see video here: [Paul Ryan: Hiding Spending Doesn't Reduce Spending](#))

Mitt Romney’s campaign has gained a big head of steam going into the Republican National Convention. The question is: can it sustain its momentum to unseat Barack Obama and have coattails long enough to carry Republicans to victory in the Senate.

Once the Democratic National Convention is over in the middle of September, then the real campaign will begin and the mudslinging will be like nothing we’ve seen in some time. And I believe Mitt Romney supporters are in for a very rough ride.

FROM THE FOUNDERS



It stands to reason that the Office of the Vice President would be much more palatable to the irascible and irreconcilable Vice-President John Adams. It is a certainty that he would have been in great favor of the 12th Amendment and had had the opportunity to select his own running mate. .

"My country has in its wisdom contrived for me the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived." John Adams, *First Vice-President of the United States*

My dear Mr. Adams hated the job of Vice President. He at first took it very serious, considering being the President of the Senate as an active position, more than ceremonially or relegated to tie-breaking a deadlocked vote. He took it so serious that the Senate passed a rule to prohibit him from speaking. As much as I love our second President and to me the most influential Founding Father when it came to our independence, I cannot say that I would not have voted for the rule.

It takes a special character to be the Vice-President. I think the best we've had is Dick Cheney in that he never had his eyes on the office of the presidency. He was there to advise and support President George W. Bush. I would have to also say that John Adams, as much as he abhorred the position, nevertheless sought to bring dignity and distinction to the office. But before the 12th Amendment, you really had no choice but as runner-up in the presidential election but to be #2.

The 12th Amendment superseded a portion of Article II, Section 1 in that after all the electoral college votes were read by the President of the Senate, the candidate with the highest number of votes would be President, and the second highest would be Vice-President. Because this was a recipe for strife within a president's administration, some even fearing a possible coup d'etat, it was decided that the President and Vice-President should be elected as a ticket. This at least minimized the possibility of the Vice-President trying to take over the presidency by having the President eliminated.

It all makes for an interesting political thriller! Hmm? Perhaps I should write one...

FROM THE PULPIT

“John answered and said, ‘A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, “I am not the Christ,” but, “I have been sent before Him.” He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.’”

(John 3:27-30)

The key to being a good number 2 man is to never have your eyes on the number 1 job. As a noncommissioned officer in the US Army you learn this real quick in your career. Your job is to implement the commander’s vision for the unit and to make him or her as successful as possible.

This does not mean you become a “yes” man and no good leader should want that from their number 2, but a valued advisor who is capable of stepping in and leading in your absence. Writing in Federalist #68, Alexander Hamilton reminds us:

The other consideration is, that as the Vice-President may occasionally become a substitute for the President, in the supreme executive magistracy, all the reasons which recommend the mode of election prescribed for the one, apply with great if not with equal force to the manner of appointing the other.

John the Baptist was the quintessential number #2 man and Jesus called him the greatest man ever born. John was Jesus’ best spokesperson and did the work needed to be done to make his Lord, his King successful.

Now of course John was not really given the same responsibilities, but the qualifications of a good number two man are similar. At the blog RightSpeak.net, writing under the pen name Publius Nemo, this blogger gives a good list for “What makes a good Vice President:

1. Qualified and capable of taking the reigns of government.
2. Able to execute policy of the POTUS.
3. Grant competent advice and counsel.
4. Must be politically satisfied with being Vice President of the United States.

That’s a good as a list of qualifications I’ve seen published.

TO THE STREETS

It is understandable that many Republicans were thrilled with Mitt Romney choosing Paul Ryan as his running mate, and I'm going to end this issue with some reasons why and why we need to raise the high bar.

1. The prevailing wisdom was that Mitt Romney was going to pick someone safe and more milquetoast than him like Rob Portman or Tim Pawlenty so Ryan was a huge surprise.
2. We are so hungry for any signs of leadership life in the Republican Party that a pick like Paul Ryan, who's voting record was quite RINOish at the angst of many of the Tea Party members, that we cheer like crazy when a good pick looks like a great pick.
3. Before long, and it's already being brought to our [attention](#) by Mitt Romney himself, Americans are going to come to realize that Mitt Romney is still our nominee.
4. I will be completely stunned if the Chicago/Obama Political War Machine does not vet and release Mitt Romney's record as governor which will in no small way, at least to the great hope of the Democrat Party, suppress values/conservative voters.
5. If a presidential nominee has to rely on his running mate to energize the base then that nominee is by all measures wounded at best, and dead on arrival in most cases.

I know how tempting it is to look for a silver lining in a dark cloud or a half-filled glass as that instead of being half-empty. Those cliches are nice to help build and sustain a positive mental attitude, but rarely does that turn out voters en masse.

Just look at the example Paul Ryan's own governor gives. Wisconsin voters, including 45% of union households, voted FOR Governor Scott Walker. People always show up to vote for someone. When it is reduced to voting AGAINST someone, then voter turnout is always going to be low.

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