

Opinion

No money, no win

By Lindsay Renick Mayer

Three-term Sen. Joe Lieberman finds himself as a third-party candidate in Connecticut this year. He has raised at least \$15 million.

Todd Chretien is also an independent running for U.S. Senate, but in California. How much has Chretien raised? He has raised all of \$58,000, and his war chest—if you can call it that—is far more typical for a third-party candidate than Lieberman's.

Classic independent and third-party candidates face a whole host of challenges, from raising money to getting their names on the ballot to participating in debates and marketing their platform.

"We're talking about some very high hurdles here that need to be climbed," said Micah Sifry, author of the book "Spoiling for a Fight: Third-Party Politics in America."

The nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics has found that the 74 federal third-party candidates still in the running this election cycle have raised a total of just \$3.1 million, according to campaign finance data available Oct. 19. (This includes only those candidates who would be new to Congress and who have reported raising at least some money to the Federal Election Commission.)

Together, Republican and Democratic candidates—including incumbents and challengers—have raised 337 times that amount.

"A third-party candidate is at a fundraising disadvantage because of this perception that he won't likely win a partisan race," University of California-Riverside political scientist Martin Johnson said. "Without a large base of support for door-to-door campaigning or telephone banks, and less money for broadcast messages, third-party candidates have more trouble getting their message out than candidates in the major parties."

Although the Reform, Libertarian, and Green parties are better known, others like the Peace and Freedom, Natural Law and Marijuana parties pop up periodically and can inject a single issue into the larger debate. The only two third-party candidates currently in Congress both come from Vermont—Sen. James Jeffords, who will be retiring at the end of this session, and Rep. Bernie Sanders, who is running to replace him.

In fundraising, minor-party and independent candidates are seemingly stuck in a Catch-22. The candidates need money to educate the public about their views, but because they rarely have national-party support, they can only raise money if the public is already familiar with them.

"In order to win an election, not only do I have to convince voters I'm the best candidate, I have to let them know I'm a candidate at all," said Michael Badnarik, a Libertarian candidate for Texas's 10th Congressional District and, with more than \$393,000 in receipts, the second-largest third-party fundraiser remaining in the midterm elections. He comes in behind Bruce Guthrie who is running for the Washington Senate seat, mostly with \$1.2 million of his own money.

Most third-party candidates receive the bulk of their contributions from individual donors, rather than from political action committees of corporations, labor unions and other interests. So far this election cycle, those 74 remaining ones have received 39 percent of their contributions from individuals, compared to less than 1 percent from PACs and 58 percent from their own pockets. The Reform Party actually calls for the elimination of political action committees as part of its platform.

Third-party candidates receive so little from PACs because the committees are interested in investing in winners, Sifry said. "PACs are in the business of buying access and influence. They don't make idle bets. Their money flows to incumbents and people they expect to be incumbents," he said.

Because of the way third-party candidates are perceived, and because of the challenge of raising money, many of these outsiders must seek creative new ways to educate voters about their platforms and what their party offers that the major parties don't. Eric Eidsness, a Reform Party candidate in Colorado's 4th Congressional District, uses both an interactive blog on his web site and newspaper editorials to share his opinions on such issues as immigration, energy dependence and the war in Iraq.

"The great benefit of [being a third-party candidate]," Eidsness said, "is I am utterly liberated to speak from my heart without any restraint whatsoever."

Speaking without restraint, but also without money, such candidates may find that it's hard to be heard.

Lindsay Renick Mayer writes for CapitalEye.org, the newsletter of the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan research organization in Washington, D.C., that tracks the influence of money on elections and public policy. Distributed by MinutemanMedia.org



Bitter or better

Sunday, my church celebrated Martin Luther's action of nailing 95 Theses to the front door of a church in Wittenburg, Germany in 1517. That action prompted what historians call the Reformation.

The Protestant Reformation, also called the Protestant Revolution or Revolt, was Luther's effort to reform the Catholic Church in Western Europe during the 16th century.

Posted Oct. 31 that year, Luther's Theses centered on the practice of indulgences. In November 1517, Luther sent the 95 Theses to various religious authorities of his day, for a movement which ended in division and establishment of new religious institutions.

The four most well known traditions being the Lutheran, Reformed/Calvinist/Presbyterian, Anabaptist and Anglican. It also led to a Catholic or Counter Reformation within the Roman Catholic Church.

All this history aside, one of the most important thoughts coming out of Sunday's celebration about the world-changing divisional event was how even today it can impact our lives.

Do we let things which happen to us influence us with a Biblical viewpoint, or with the world's viewpoint?

Like Luther's effort to bring about reform, do we as residents of northwest Kansas let things



Jan Katz Ackerman

• From Where I stand

make us better or bitter?

For instance, Sheridan County just sustained the most powerful tragedy to hit it in the past 100 years with last week's shooting death of Sheriff Jim Johnson. Will residents become bitter or better in its wake?

According to God's word and His love for us, we are to become better people: "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angles nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:37-39.

If we look at the purpose of our lives from the world's viewpoint we think the main purpose of the church is to provide us a place to worship.

But looking at it from the Bible's point of view our lives are meant to develop disciples of Christianity.

Going back to the recent tragedy in Sheridan County, if we look at the world's viewpoint seeking comfort we want our own comfort no matter the cost. But from the Biblical viewpoint, God is more interested in our character than our comfort.

Most, if not all of Sheridan County's residents are grieving the deaths of the sheriff and the man who shot him. Only the test of time will prove whether the world's viewpoint or the Biblical viewpoint surfaced because of this tragedy.

Will Sheridan County residents seek their own comfort no matter the cost? Or will they show the character God wants to see through it?

It's like Luther, he took a stand for what was the reforming thing to do and nailed the 95 Theses to that church door.

What will Sheridan County's door have hanging on it?

A sign saying it's a bitter place to live or a better place to live? It's the residents who will write the message and post it.

— Jan Katz Ackerman is a reporter for the Colby Free Press

What is the proof?

The popular mantra of the day is We are a Christian Nation!

A popular song says, "They will know we are Christians by our — —".

Do the lyrics of that song say "because we say so"? Do they say "because we are Baptists or Methodists or Catholics or whatever"? Or maybe they will know we are a Christian nation because a particular political party holds majority power? Is it because we have a moral majority that says so? Or maybe, it is because a particular political party is not, presently, in power.

Just what is the proof of our being a Christian Nation?

Is it because we spend more on our military than the rest of the world put together? Is it because we have a higher percentage of our population incarcerated for crimes against society than any other nation? Is it because we are near the bottom of the scale or graph showing infant survival rates? Is it because we consume much more than our share, by population percentage, of the world's natural resources? Is it because we authorize what ever it takes to make a prisoner tell us what we want to hear? Is it because we don't allow same sex marriage? Is it because we allow no fault divorce? Is it because over 50 percent of our households are either single parent or nonmarried partnerships?

What about that moral majority who claim their near divinity in judging right and wrong? I

Ken Poland

• Ken's World

always thought a majority meant over 50 percent. Where are we finding the moral standards? Does the Bible indicate parents of out of wedlock children or nonmarried conjugal relations are pleasing to God? I'm not sure where the United States ranks with other nations on those issues. If we are not as bad as some other nations, does that qualify us as a Christian nation?

Does committing sins disqualify us as Christians? If so, then there aren't any Christians in this old world, Democrat, Republican or whatever. That puts Angella Harris, the Senatorial candidate from Florida in a jam. She just won't be able to vote, not even for herself!

Oh yes! I remember, it is because the constitution was written by a devout group of Christians who relied on the Bible for all the do's and don'ts that would tell us how to conduct our affairs as a democracy. Hmmm? I wonder, did they use the King James Version, the Douay Version, or the Tyndale? Or maybe they didn't rely on any of those and went right back to the original writ-

ings and based it (our constitution) on the correct understanding of it all. Of course for many today, it had to have been the Authorized King James Version. Thank goodness, none of these corrupted modern versions were available then. I'm not sure how many of the King James only folks are aware that their bibles do not, usually, contain the 14 books, known as the Apocrypha. They were included in the original King James. They were removed sometime in the 1880's.

My intention here is not to discredit the value and influence of the Bible and Christianity in our nation. But, ignoring or accepting war, torture, pedophilia, and a host of other immoral activities because we are, self proclaimed, God's chosen and blessed people is not convincing the world of our righteousness. In fact, it is an affront to the millions of people around the world who are truly attempting to be Christ-like in their everyday lives.

Those millions of people are representatives from all political parties, Christian denominations and nationalities. Your political party or denomination is not The Authorized Representative of God's will. That means the Republican party is not the exclusive Christian party! God will not take away your salvation, just because you voted for a Democrat! Nor will voting for a Republican be the unpardonable sin.

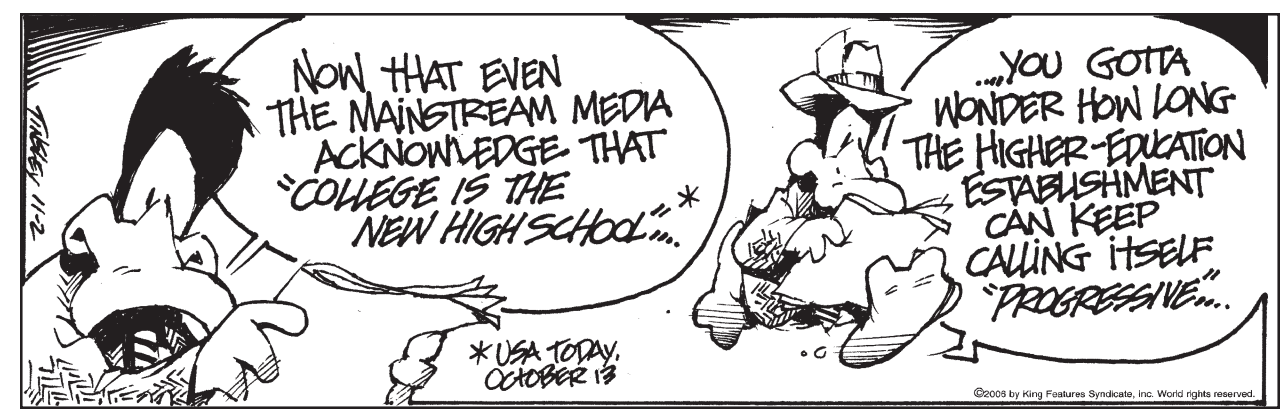
— Ken Poland occasionally contributes to the Colby Free Press

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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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