

English politician Edmund Burke gave a speech in 1775 regarding conciliation with the American colonies: "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together."

A few nights ago we held an auction at our church to raise money for Betty Chinn and for our youth who are traveling this summer to a Christian school in Tokyo. The event went very well and I'd like to thank all those who planned it, attended, donated, and the auctioneer: none other than the indefatigable Rex Bohn.

Speaking of Rex, there were quite a few community leaders there, many of whom are running for political office. Have you noticed that today everybody hates politicians, but everybody loves politicians. The approval ratings for Congress are at rock bottom and perhaps well deserved, but when it comes to a local event and who sits at your table, it's apparent to me that most people like the after-glow that comes from sitting next to a well known public figure.

Why were they there? Some are sincere supporters of Betty and the youth of our community; but, in order to get re-elected you have to do that kind of stuff in America. You have to be visible: go to charity auctions, shake hands, kiss babies, look charming, but not too charming, and have a few good ideas in your head about what you have done—or would do once in office. I used to be cynical about such a political process, but I have come to see that the alternatives to our system of government can be ~~so~~ much worse.

The nice thing about a democracy is that people in office can be voted ~~in~~ and they can be voted out. In order to not get voted out, they have to please and persuade a majority of persons to vote for them. This seems so obvious as to be almost trite. But we do well to remember there are millions of people today who would give anything to live in a country where politicians hustle to attend your local church or school fundraiser because they are running after your vote. A tyrant can't be voted in or out of office; they seize the reins of power by force, and only force, or death, can get them out. Recent uprisings in places like Libya, Egypt, Syria and Ukraine remind us that there are plenty of places where people are running from the politicians and their police or army, rather than having the politicians run to them in search of their vote.

Burke also said in that same speech: "Freedom and not servitude is the cure of anarchy; as religion, and not atheism, is the true remedy for superstition."

So, while it may seem that today American politics is a dirty business and you might be tempted to retreat into cynicism or despair, remember the masses around the world who never got to vote—still do not get to vote. If you don't like the politician who shakes your hand, or won't shake your hand, vote for someone else. And then, give thanks that we live in a place where politicians still rule by the consent of the voter and not by brute force.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment