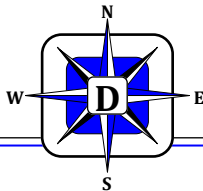


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Archbishop Tutu on Growing Corn and Changing Government; *Tea'd and looking for something to throw overboard*

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"Americans' favorable rating of the Democratic Party dropped to 41% in the latest USA Today/Gallop poll, the lowest point in the 18 year history of this measure."

USA Today/Gallop poll, April 8, 2010



Archbishop Desmond Tutu, winner of Nobel Peace Prize for his work to end apartheid in South Africa, told the following story when he spoke last May at the graduation ceremonies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: *A traveler walking through the countryside stopped to admire a beautiful field of corn. He said to the farmer, "My, you and God have surely created a beautiful field of corn." The farmer thanked the traveler and then said, "You should have seen it when God had it by Himself."*

Tutu built his entire commencement address on the notion that no problem is ever going to be solved unless someone steps up and does the hard work. "God allowed apartheid," he said, "Apartheid was not ended by God. It was ended by His helpers."

This year, we are faced with many great challenges ... especially economic. However, the emerging greatest challenge is leadership ... deciding whose ideas we are going to trust with the problems of the day. Ultimately, the ideas instituted will be those advocated by citizens who step up and do the hard work of winning campaigns. In 2008, it was the Obama camp. Today, it's the Tea Party folks who are stepping up. These folks are tea'd. They are sick and tired of politicians pushing artificial sweetener on them in the form of government programs.

Democrats at lowest point in 18-years

Voters are angry, and there is no one to take it out on but the “ins,” those with the power ... the Democrats in both the state and nation. According to a new USA Today/Gallup poll released yesterday, April 8, 2010, the favorable rating of the Democratic Party has dropped to 41%, “...the lowest point in the 18-year history of this measure.” The favorability rating for both parties is now even, a huge swing from the 11-point advantage Democrats had over Republicans just last September.

Why have voters turned on the Democratic establishment? Because the purveyors of artificial sweetener, those in power in Washington and Raleigh, are spending as they please with a dismissive attitude towards an electorate frightened about the economic stability of our state and nation. Today’s Public Policy Polling news release includes this startling fact from a survey done for the N.C. Center for Voter Education: *Only 9% believe that politicians listen to average voters!* The survey shows that 80% of North Carolina voters think politicians listen more to groups that fund campaigns. Only 9% believe that politicians listen to average voters.ⁱⁱ *For emphasis: Only 9% believe that politicians listen to average voters.* That’s why they are tea’d.

Tea Party detractors doubt the political potential of the movement because it is not organized nationally. Those detractors have forgotten that world history is replete with local insurrections that escalated into full-scale rebellions, rebellions that forced concessions by kings and nobles or the complete overthrow of the high and the mighty. Resentment over matters like “taxation without representation,” the sentiment during the 1770s Boston Tea Party era, grew among the middle and lower classes as the upper class led extravagant lifestyles while all others lived a hard life with little to show for their hard work. That’s where we are in America today.

Here in North Carolina, we see constant news stories about no-bid contracts, elected and appointed officials on the take, millions paid for state cars that are not used, slush funds like the Golden Leaf Foundation operating without transparency or accountability, Medicare fraud, ABC Store management run amuck, and stories about corrupt public officials like former Governor Easley and his sidekick in crime Ruffin Poole. A new investigation by the State Board of Elections is underway, examining whether some of Governor Perdue’s campaign contributions may be tainted by illegal daisy-chain shenanigans, and sadly, there is a constant parade of political leaders going to and from prison for public corruption (almost all are Democrats).

Then there is the matter of public officials like Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight and his “Let them eat fish” indifference about public concerns with his ends-justify-the-means state budgeting philosophy; a budget that includes a \$25 million fishing pier in his district with the contract going to Basnight Construction Company in the middle of high unemployment, a budget crisis and the worst recession since the Depression ... and he claims no knowledge of the deal?

Tea Partiers Say it’s Time to Shake Things up

To set the scene for the Tea Party, this much we know: the Democrats are in the doghouse, the Congress is in the outhouse, the Republicans are regretting putting Michael Steele in as RNC chairman, the health care debate won’t go away, and independents have turned on the president

and the Democrats. We also know that voters are worried about their jobs, the country's financial stability, the national debt and deficit spending, and the perceived indifference of Congress and the State Legislature towards their concerns. Republicans have nothing to gain by working with the Democrats on legislation because they do not want them to be able to say during the General Election races that there was bipartisan support for the legislation. So, Tea Partiers have lots of instability to work with politically ... perfect environment for a revolt.

But who are the Tea Partiers? The Gallup polling organization took a close look at the profile of Tea Partiers and concluded that they are fairly mainstream, albeit skewed right politically. The USA Today/Gallup poll conducted March 26 – 28, 2010, found that 28% of US adults call themselves supporters of the Tea Party movement, with 26% calling themselves opponents of the Tea Party movement and 38% saying neither.ⁱⁱⁱ

The main divergence when comparing Tea Partiers and all US adults is party affiliation. Only 28% of all US adults say they are Republicans, while 49% of Tea Party supporters say they are Republican. A total of 43% of Tea Party supporters claim to be independents, about the same as all US adults. A scant 8% of Tea Partiers are Democrats; 32% of all US adults are Democrats.

Very clearly Tea Party supporters are more conservative than all US adults, 70% as compared to only 40% of the US adult population who claim to be conservative. Only 7% of Tea Partiers are self-described liberals. Tea Partiers are 55% male and 45% female. Eighty-four percent (84%) of Tea Party supporters are in the age 30 or older age bracket; 50% are 50 years old or older.

Despite their demographic differences, it is certain that their concerns are mainstream. The Wall Street Journal carried a story on April 2, 2010, titled *Tea Party Anger Reflects Mainstream Concerns*, in which Juan Williams, NPR and Fox News political analyst, noted that 7 in 10 Americans were dissatisfied with the direction of the country, and 68% viewed big banks unfavorably.^{iv} “Whether you like them [Tea Partiers] or not,” says Williams, “they do seem to have captured the political angst of the electorate.”

In Sunday's Raleigh News & Observer, Erika Franzi, a 37-year-old mother of four from Weaverville and founder of the Asheville Tea Party, said, "We all realized that rallying for the sake of rallying had run its course, and that in order to make a political change we would have to enter the political realm." Franzi then added a statement that is the essence of the American politics. "If you're not affecting change at the ballot box, there's no teeth in what you're saying."

The timing is perfect in North Carolina to change our government for the better. However, as Archbishop Tutu cautioned in his commencement address last year at UNC-Chapel Hill, if you want to change government you have to do the work. He ended his speech by pointing to the upper decks in the stadium and asking, “Will you?” Then he pointed to the lower decks and asked, “Will you?” Again and again he pointed to every section in the stadium and asked the same question over and over, “Will you?”

Tea Partiers are voters who, like our Boston ancestors in 1773, feel like their concerns are not being respected by governmental leaders. Unlike their Boston ancestors, they are looking for something to throw overboard besides tea. So, whether you are Democrat or a Republican, a

conservative or a liberal, and incumbent or a challenger, it would be in the best interest of your political future to invite these folks over for a cup of tea. Will you?

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- i www.gallup.com Search: *Democratic Party Image Drops Record Low*; April 8, 2010
ii www.newsobserver.com Search: *Poll: Most voters think money buys influence*; Pg 3B
iii <http://www.gallup.com> Search: *Tea Partiers Fairly Mainstream Demographics*; April 6, 2010
iv <http://online.wsj.com> Search: *Tea Party Anger Reflects Mainstream Concerns*; April 2, 2010