

# Quid Est Veritas

## Time To Grow Up

By Patrick Weadon

I teach U.S. history at Anne Arundel Community College. Currently we are



covering the subject of the 18th century concept of "republicanism," the idea

that "unchecked power is a threat to liberty and the body politic should forever be wary of attempts by monarchs and aristocrats to quash freedom and reinstitute tyranny." Long-admired American patriots such as Sam Adams and Patrick Henry were confirmed proponents of this philosophy.

With this in mind, during class I made the point that at first glance it would seem that many, if not all, of those responsible for the American Revolution held similar views to those who currently embrace the current Tea Party movement, but the truth is the America of Sam Adams and Patrick Henry is a distant memory.

We no longer live in a world where the government's only role is to make sure the Indians don't overrun the homestead. When someone breaks into our house at night, or our residence catches on fire, or when grandma gets sick, we, appropriately, look to the government to help us to do the things we cannot do for ourselves. Tea Party types don't want to hear this. To them we are still back on the prairie living at our own peril.

This would not be so shocking if those who made up the movement were a bunch of slack-jawed yokels who didn't know any better, but as a recent New York Times/CBS poll revealed, Tea Party supporters are wealthier and more educated than the general public. One of

the most disturbing - and revealing - aspects of the survey is that most people who identify themselves as members of the movement are convinced "the policies of the Obama administration are disproportionately directed at helping the poor rather than the middle class or the rich." Guess what: On this point they are 100 percent correct!

President Obama has indeed worked to implement policies that favor those who are struggling to make ends meet rather than fat-cat bankers and millionaires. I'm not quite sure why they don't like the idea of our nation helping the poor, but I have some opinions. For one, those who worship at the altar of the "Protestant Work Ethic" are forever making the claim that if you are poor it is no one's fault but your own. This is, of course, nonsense.

Most members of the middle class are one, maybe two, checks away from the poor house. In most cases, people become poor not because they are lazy but because of factors beyond their control. However, by making the false assumption that poor people are shiftless, those who have an interest in increasing their own bank accounts can easily rationalize away their responsibility to help all members of our society reach their God-given potential.

And speaking of God, one of most laughable things about a great many Tea Party members is their propensity to call themselves "Christian." Many of them are silly enough to assume that if Christ were alive today, he could not wait to join a militia group and scurry down to Texas to conduct target practice on illegal aliens trying to cross the border. If you look at the gospels, it's pretty clear that JC had a strong affinity for the poor and dispossessed. So, if you believe the United States should abandon poor people, deport hard-

working immigrants and de-fund the social safety net that keeps orphans and widows from falling through the cracks, you might be a member in good standing with your Tea Party minions, but you sure as hell can't call yourself a Christian.

Sadly, most Tea Party aficionados don't realize their day is long past. The future of our nation, like it or not, is not white, but brown and black. As "Newsweek Magazine" recently noted, "In 2004, Texas became the fourth state in the union (after Hawaii, New Mexico and California) to be 'majority minority' — to have a population that is less than 50 percent white. The less dominant whites become in Texas, the more some of them cling to a mythical past of the cowboy and oilman. A lot of these conservatives don't want to change. The ground is moving underneath them, and they don't want to recognize that and don't know what to do about it. So they join a tea-party group and strap on a six-gun and strut around."

Well, my fellow Americans, it is time to stop playing cowboy and attend to the serious matters of finding a way to both raise taxes and reduce entitlements with the ultimate aim of saving our nation; it's time to grow up.

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