

Questions to consider

1. What is citizenship? Why is it used in such terms as "global citizenship" and "corporate citizenship"?
2. Why does citizenship matter today?
3. Do I believe that citizenship should be an important value in my life?
4. Do any of my post-secondary plans touch on citizenship?

Hand It to Them - Rediscovering American Scripture.

by Jay Nordlinger

Looking idly at my bookcase the other day, I fixed on a volume I had never noticed before: *The American Citizens Handbook*. It had come to me, I realized, from an old friend who was moving and unloading some books. It had sat on my shelf, ignored, for years. As I fingered this book, it seemed a relic from a distant, and glowing, past. What's more, it was the product of—could this be true?—the National Education Association (NEA). Coming to know this book made me practically weep for a liberalism that has been lost, and an Americanism, too.

I did some poking around, and soon learned that I was not the first "conservative" (as descendants of Jefferson are now forced to call themselves) to take an interest in the Handbook. Michael Farris, the home-schooling leader in Virginia, discovered it in the mid 1980s. Then the education secretary, William Bennett, used it in a speech. He challenged the NEA to reissue the book, or, if it would not, to permit others to do so. The association responded flummoxed and embarrassed. One spokesman explained, "The world has changed a lot" (ah, and so has the NEA). Another sniffed, "We've got lots of other books if [Bennett] wants to pay for them."

Some years later, Lamar Alexander, running for president, mentioned the Handbook as a "virtual user's guide to America." Mike Farris tells me that he once met the man hired by the NEA to destroy the final 10,000 copies of the book. Had he been asked to burn them? asked Farris. That would be too good to be true—and it was. The man had buried them.

The NEA should hardly be embarrassed by this volume; it may be the highest service it has ever performed. The book first appeared in 1941, to coincide with National Citizenship Day (September 17). It went through six editions, of which I have the last, published in 1968.

The book was the project of Joy Elmer Morgan, a Nebraska-born educator and writer who lived from 1889 to 1974. For several decades, he was editor of the NEA's *Journal*. (I should affirm here that Joy Elmer Morgan was, indeed, a man. When I was quite young, I knew an old man named Shirley, who one day confided to me, "Everything was fine in my life till that damn Shirley Temple came along.") Morgan's name is seldom mentioned today, although he is reviled in certain right-wing publications as a proponent of world government and all-around threat.

If Morgan could stand as the "Left," however, conservatives would dance in the streets.

The Handbook is a great treasury. It was originally intended to prepare young citizens for their responsibilities as voters, and as adults generally. It is a compilation of just about everything that is significant and outstanding about the United States. The work is serious, earnest, heartfelt. It is, as the NEA noted in the 1968 edition, both "inspirational and informative." It is, of course, patriotic, but in the most thoughtful way. There is nothing blinkered or rah-rah about it. The book might appear to the contemporary reader quaint—something on the order of a girl's memory album, circa 1909—but, as I absorbed its pages, I was startled by the power it carried. It puts forth an American creed, although this creed is a big and generous one, waiting to be embraced by anyone, or rejected by anyone—including the NEA.

At the end of his introduction, Morgan exhorts: "Read this book carefully; study the documents on which your rights as a citizen are based; memorize its songs and poetry." A body could do worse.

The opening essay, as well, belongs to Morgan: "Your Citizenship in the Making." Its most striking quality, along with wisdom, is gratitude: "It is a high privilege to be a citizen of the United States. There are those in less fortunate circumstances who would gladly give all they possess for the mere chance to come here to live." That is a bracing statement, and an obviously true one. Try out a couple more of Morgan's bracing, obviously true statements:

Democracy can find its fullest expression in the roots of religion, which has ever emphasized the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. For democracy to reach its highest fruition, our society must include that larger liberty and justice preached so eloquently by the Hebrew Prophets and by Jesus.

No one would contend that the Constitution is a perfect document. The very men who framed it were conscious of its shortcomings. . . . We have our difficulties agreeing among ourselves as to what we want the Constitution to be and how we want it to be interpreted or administered. But these are small matters as compared with the great fact of the Constitution itself, standing between us and chaos, between us and a return to the brutalities and confusion of earlier centuries.

Talk like that can, today, get you laughed out of school-quite literally.

The next section of the Handbook lays out the "Characteristics of the Good Democratic Citizen." (A lot of these titles cannot help provoking present-day giggles, which is part of our problem.) In 1949, a branch of the Defense Department asked a branch of the NEA to come up with a description of the "good democratic citizen." A committee was duly formed, and a document resulted, listing 24 characteristics, with subsets for each. What is most remarkable about them is the balance they achieve. They are a beautiful melding of the "liberal" and the "conservative." For example, under "Respects and upholds the law and its agencies," we have, "[The good democratic citizen] respects and supports officers who enforce the law, but does not permit his zeal for law enforcement to encourage officials to infringe upon guaranteed civil rights." (We also read, "understands what perjury means and testifies honestly"-ahem.) On the international front, we have, "Knows about, critically evaluates, and supports promising efforts to prevent war, but stands ready to defend his country against tyranny and aggression."

Several of these characteristics, the NEA would choke to enunciate today. "Since the people are intelligent enough to govern themselves, they do not need protection by censorship"-this would appear to preclude campus speech codes. Furthermore, that good democratic citizen "rejects all group claims to special privilege"-bad news for affirmative action. And get a load of this one: Under "Puts the general welfare above his own whenever a choice between them is necessary," we read, "avoids the abuse of public benefits (e.g., the misuse of unemployment compensation by a process of malingering)." This is truly a foreign language.

This section, like the Handbook itself, is hardly naive or unrealistic. The effect of the whole is not at all treachery or goody-goody. Yet it is a strong antidote to cynicism and the suffocating cloak of irony: Our good democratic citizen "is critically aware of differences between democratic ideals and accomplishments, but works to improve accomplishments and refuses to become cynical about the differences."

An essay by Henry Steele Commager comes as a hell of a jolt. If anyone represents the old liberalism-the liberalism of this volume-it is Commager. The gulf between him and, say, Eric Foner today is enormous. Of course, Professor Foner is no liberal; we simply have to call him that, in accordance with a foolish and misleading political taxonomy. (Angela Davis, the Communist Party official, is often described in the

press as a liberal, as we Right-types have long liked to note.) In "Our Schools Have Kept Us Free" (another of those titles), Commager makes a stirring case for common education, and in particular for its assimilative power. "How, after all, [are] millions of newcomers to become 'Americans'-in language, in ways of life and thought, in citizenship?" The common school, he writes, has served "the cause of American democracy." The truth is, this most heterogeneous of modern societies-profoundly varied in racial background, religious faith, social and economic interest-has ever seemed the most easy prey to forces of riotous privilege and ruinous division. These forces have not prevailed; they have been routed, above all, in the schoolrooms and on the playgrounds of America.

Commager wrote these words in 1950. And how are the "forces of riotous privilege and ruinous division" faring now? Pretty well, huh? This is what compels us "conservatives" to retreat to school choice and let-a-thousand-flowers-bloom, the common school, which bound the country together, having crumbled, not least because of the illiberal urgings and practices of the NEA.

The Handbook is stocked with key documents (the Magna Carta, the Gettysburg Address), portraits, mini-bios, aphorisms, telling facts, assorted tidbits. Its second half is dominated by the "Golden Treasury" (sigh, snort), which is an anthology of literary and other items with which civilized people should be acquainted. It begins with the Bible, moves on to Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, et al., and continues in a glorious potpourri, a storehouse of pluralism and diversity (a good word stolen and perverted by a race-obsessed New Left). We have in this book the evidence of a nation, and a civilization. Here, the bond holds firm; the salt retains its savour.

But who will taste? America is a young country, as everyone says, but we seem to have lost so quickly our . . . our nationhood. Our cultural and spiritual nationhood. This handbook was last published in 1968, but it might as well be an archeological find, a dusty curiosity. An NEA statement produced in the book-"Education for All American Youth"-seems almost reactionary today. Why? How did what was liberal become "conservative" (or worse) so fast? How did it happen that "liberals," in the late 1990s, rallied around-with pulsing passion-a president who had a) used a 21-year-old intern for sex, b) perjured himself in court proceedings, c) abused his office, d) tampered with witnesses, e) cheated, lied, defamed, f)-but that is another rant (though a clearly related one). The good liberal fashioners of The American Citizens Handbook could never have been Clintonites.

This little book-or not so little: over 600 pages-undeniably did something to me, and for me: It stirred what some guy once called "mystic chords of memory." It would do the same for others. And if that memory were totally absent, the book would install it.

I tell you, I will never give up my copy-I would fear not finding another. I would like to share it with children. While reading it, I refrained even from

making notes in it, unwilling to deface it. It is sick, though-positively sick-that I should feel this way. That I should feel that I possess something rare and talismanic, something quasi- forbidden, almost underground. This stuff should be as common as water- and it was. It should be again. It could be again, if people wanted it, demanded it. All those volumes that lie a-molderin' in their grave: We should dig 'em up.

Taking Control of Our Lives Again.

by Michael S. Joyce

The essence of citizenship - or at least so it seems from the hectoring swarms of voter education and turn-out drives that descend upon Americans every election year - is to vote faithfully and thoughtfully, after becoming acquainted with all the policy prescriptions of the various candidates for office. To be a good citizen, in other words, demands that individuals wade through mind-numbing charts of policy positions regularly published each election year that set Candidate X's 17-point plan for reducing the deficit side-by-side with Candidate Y's 21-point plan for doing the same.

Citizenship thus understood is necessarily an episodic, infrequent, to say nothing of onerous duty. Its chief purpose seems to be to turn over to supposedly qualified experts the "real" business of public life - namely, designing and launching public programs of all sorts, which will bestow upon the victims of poverty or AIDS or discrimination or some other insidious force the tender mercies of bureaucrats, policy experts, social therapists, and others who claim to be uniquely able to cope with such problems by virtue of professional training. Once a citizen has voted, he or she is supposed to get out of the way and let the experts take over. Small wonder, then, that Americans today feel profoundly alienated from the realm of public life.

Genuine citizenship involves active participation in that vast realm of human affairs known as civil society. This is a far more expansive field for human endeavor than the political sphere, for civil society encompasses all the institutions through which people express their interests and values, outside of and distinct from government. Thus, civil society includes acquiring private property, holding a job, and earning a living. It includes what is done as loving members of families; as students or concerned parents within schools; as worshipful members of neighborhood associations, clubs, and voluntary organizations of all sorts. This broader understanding of citizenship also encompasses the full range of philanthropic activity, including committing energy and resources to helping others.

Clearly, citizenly activity within civil society occurs not episodically or infrequently, as with voting, but regularly and constantly, in countless small ways that are so much a part of the texture of everyday lives that people are almost unaware of them. Every time individuals attend church, go to a PTA meeting, help a

charity drive, or perform faithfully and well a task at work, they are being decent citizens. In further contrast to voting, which supposedly engages chiefly abstract reasoning and objective judgment about candidates and policies, citizenship in this larger sense engages the full human being. That is, the institutions of civil society appeal to and sustain spirit and heart, as much as mind.

Heart and spirit are nurtured by the songs and fairy tales of home, the lessons of Sunday Bible class, the instruction at school, and the gentle advice and perhaps criticism of a neighbor, mentor, or friend. Through these countless, subtle, daily interactions, civil institutions give form and substance to the everyday qualities and values without which life itself would be impossible - honesty, perseverance, self-restraint, personal responsibility, service to others - by rewarding them when they appear, punishing when they don't, and mercifully and willingly sustaining those who may fall behind, in spite of good-faith efforts to live by civil society's rules. Sound civil institutions ensure that those cherished values are passed on to the next generation by surrounding the maturing child and young person with constant, quiet messages of reaffirmation and reinforcement.

Through this vast, complex web of civil institutions, in short, individuals grow and develop into complete human beings - learning to suppress often chaotic and destructive impulses, express connectedness and mutual obligation to each other, and reach beyond themselves to higher aspirations, reflecting nobler impulses.

The collapse of civil society

That America was blessed with a robust, vigorous civil society once was understood to be vital to its health and success. Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is the classic expression of wonder and admiration at the incredible energy generated by the vast array of civic institutions spread across the face of the young nation. Everywhere he looked in 19th-century America, he noted that its citizens had formed associations, committees, and clubs to tackle one or another of the problems facing them in this undeveloped wilderness. Through such citizenly activity, Tocqueville believed, Americans expressed and sustained their civil freedom, accomplished an enormous range of tasks, and, most important, developed fully as rooted, connected human beings.

Tocqueville's admiration for the liberty-sustaining, life-affirming energy of civil society by no means is shared by the nation's intellectual and cultural elites today. Instead of citizenship as a vigorous, multifaceted participation in civil society, Americans are urged to constrict their view of citizenship to the lonely, sporadic act of the isolated voter. What to Tocqueville appeared as a vast, pluralistic upwelling of groups expressing boundless civic energy appears to the nation's elites to be a wasteful, chaotic, misguided jumble of amateurish groups meddling unwelcomed in social policy. What appeared to him as vigorous, coherent, value-affirming civic associations appears to them as oppressive, stultifying, retrograde, rights-violating social tyrannies.

To the intellectual and cultural elites, the virtue of the constricted, "citizen-as-voter" notion is clear. It quietly and neatly removes public business from the messy world of active citizens and civic institutions, placing it instead into the neat, rational, smoothly humming world of the centralized, professionalized bureaucracies, wherein the elites prevail. Indeed, it might be said without exaggeration that their central project is nothing less than the abolition of civil society.

In *The Quest for Community*, sociologist Robert Nisbet maintains that modernity assails civil society both from below and above. From below, the authority of family, church, neighborhood, and school quietly is eroded by the proliferation of individual rights of all sorts, especially self-expression - that is, expression of self with utter disregard, or contempt, for civil society. From above, civil institutions are pressured to surrender authority and function to the professional elites of the centralized, bureaucratic state. Caught in a pincers movement between individual rights and the central state, Nisbet points out, the intermediate associations of civil society struggle and languish.

What has been the result of the modern assault on civil society? Look at the vast array of social ills bearing down upon the U.S. - the explosion of illegitimate births and single parenthood, spread of sexually transmitted disease, dramatic increase of violent crime in the streets, rise of drug abuse, decline of public education, and spread of irresponsible behavior in every realm of personal and professional conduct. What is the common thread? Very simply, it is the collapse of civil society - the decay of its institutions and values, and the loss of control they once exerted over human behavior.

Instead of trying to rejuvenate civil society, the nation's elites call for more government programs - more bureaucratic experts and professionals to

minister to the hurts allegedly inflicted on hapless victims by industrialism, racism, sexism, etc. - in the course taking away yet more authority from citizens and civil institutions. This leads to the vicious cycle described by Nathan Glazer in his essay, "The Limits of Social Policy." He notes that the expansion of government social policy doesn't solve problems; it only makes them worse. Government intervention undermines and weakens the authority of the very civil institutions that had kept undesirable behavior within reasonable limits in the first place. As government programs push into an area, civil institutions weaken further, and the problem is compounded - as is the demand from the elites for more government programs. This cycle - the prime example of the doctrine of "unintended consequences" - is perhaps the central paradox of modern times.

I believe, however, that we are nearing the end of this futile cycle. As Irving Kristol wrote in a *Wall Street Journal* oped piece, people increasingly are disenchanted with the manifest impotence of government - its utter inability to perform even the most rudimentary duties assigned to it, such as securing unmolested passage down the streets for its citizens. He cited the strong revival of religious sentiment as evidence that Americans once again are beginning to appreciate the vital role played by civil society's religious institutions and values in maintaining a decent, orderly society.

Other encouraging signs are to be found in recent election returns and surveys of public opinion. Reflect for a moment on the signals there: a massive, palpable discontent with all major governing institutions; the success of term limits and tax-and-spending limits in referenda across the nation; and, above all, the immense popularity of calls to return government directly to the people. The message is clear. Americans are sick and tired of being treated as if they are incompetent to run their own affairs. They are sick and tired of being treated as helpless, pathetic victims of social forces that are seemingly beyond their understanding or control. They are sick and tired of being treated as passive clients by arrogant, paternalistic social scientists, therapists, and bureaucrats who claim exclusive right to minister to the hurts inflicted by hostile social forces. They are sick and tired of supporting the bloated, corrupt, centralized bureaucracies into which social therapists are organized to ensure that power and accountability flow to them, rather than to the citizens of the U.S.

Americans clearly are willing and eager to take control of their daily lives; to make critical life choices for themselves, based on their own common sense and folk wisdom; and to assume again the status of proud,

independent, self-governing citizens intended for them by the Founding Fathers and denied them by today's social service providers and bureaucracies. In short, they are ready for what might be called "a new citizenship" that will liberate and empower them.

This impulse toward a new citizenship is nothing more - or less - than a return to the older, far more encompassing notion of citizenship that figured so prominently in Tocqueville's teaching. If properly channeled and directed, this impulse may lead directly to the resuscitation of civil society - a regeneration of that vast network of vibrant, liberty-sustaining, life-affirming institutions that once covered the face of this nation.

A revitalization plan

What sorts of measures will be required to accomplish this revitalization of civil society? First, we must be prepared once again to regard ourselves as genuinely self-governing citizens, willing and able to reassume control of our daily lives and make critical choices for ourselves. We must not allow others to dismiss us as helpless victims or passive clients.

Second, we must seek to restore the intellectual and cultural legitimacy of citizenly common sense as a way of understanding and solving problems. This suggests an effort to re-establish the dignity of traditional folk wisdom and everyday morality, with renewed emphasis on teaching and nurturing personal character - the customary guideposts of everyday life. This will mean taking on intellectually the radical skepticism about such "unscientific" approaches propagated by professional pseudo-scientists eager to preserve their intellectual hegemony.

Third, we must re-invigorate and re-empower traditional, local institutions - families, schools, churches, neighborhoods - that provide training in and room for the exercise of genuine citizenship, pass on folk wisdom and everyday morality to the next generation, and cultivate and reinforce personal character. This will require efforts to reform such local institutions, for today's churches, schools, and related "mediating structures" often have succumbed to the view that Americans are mere clients or consumers of therapeutic social services.

Fourth, we must encourage the dramatic decentralization of power and accountability away from the bureaucratic "nanny state" in Washington and back to the states, localities, and revitalized mediating structures. We also should strive to re-invest moral authority in such structures, rather than in corrupt intellectual and cultural elites in education, the media,

and popular culture who regard traditional mediating structures as benighted purveyors of reactionary prejudices.

Finally, we must challenge on all fronts the political hegemony of the "helping" and "caring" professionals and bureaucrats who have penetrated so many aspects of our daily lives and profit so handsomely from the nanny state. We must dramatize their status as entrenched, corrupt special interests, more concerned about advancing narrow ideological agendas and protecting political prerogatives than about serving the public. This will require not only traditional approaches like policy research, but more innovative approaches as well - for instance, media and writing projects that capture the vivid, compelling human stories of those who suffer at the hands of paternalistic, arrogant bureaucrats and professionals, and the equally compelling human stories of those who have launched successful grassroots citizens empowerment projects.

What are the chances of successfully revitalizing civil society through this kind of active citizenship? It is easy to be pessimistic. After all, the entire weight of modernity seems to be behind the destruction of independent civil society. Nevertheless, I am hopeful. Tocqueville, after all, was not unacquainted with the destructive effects modernity would have on civil institutions. Indeed, his purpose in writing *Democracy in America* was precisely to warn mankind about the impending storm of modernity and to tell it that the old, established institutions of civil society were in danger.

In America, however, he witnessed the remarkable spectacle of hitherto unrelated individuals - complete strangers - coming together to form wholly new types of civil institutions in the very teeth of the modern storm. He understood and appreciated the fact that the impulse toward voluntary association and yearning for genuine citizenship within civil society are not so easy to destroy.

World events of the past decade confirm Tocqueville's optimism. No movement ever undertook the eradication of civil society with more zeal or determination than Marxism. Yet, beneath the seemingly smoothly humming state bureaucracies of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, there sprouted the seeds of civil society - churches, civic associations, unions, dissident groups, free presses. Even as the resolve of the free world halted Marxism's outward thrust, it began to decay and crumble from within as the nascent institutions of civil society flourished and spread. The liberation of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union soon made it

apparent that communism's "final offensive" against civil society had failed utterly.

Americans should take heart both from these events and from Tocqueville's hopeful teachings as they

undertake the revitalization of civil society. There can be no more urgent task than the resuscitation of the civic sphere, which alone makes genuine citizenship possible.

Breeding Citizenship.

by Eric Schaps, Catherine C. Lewis

Through Community in School

How can public education help prepare our youth to sustain a just and humane democracy?

This question is not new. From Horace Mann to John Dewey to Ernest Boyer, our leading thinkers in education have been as concerned with citizenship and character as with academic matters. In fact, for most of our history as a nation, preparation for citizenship has been the primary goal of public schooling. Only since Sputnik has concern for academic achievement eclipsed the focus on character and citizenship.

The Good Citizen

Any answer to questions about what schools can do to foster good citizens rests on how the essential qualities of citizenship are conceived. While this topic is best treated at book length, three qualities are central to most conceptions of citizenship.

First is deep regard for self and for others. Good citizens are neither doormats nor narcissists, neither blindly self-sacrificing nor ruggedly self-serving. They speak up strongly for what they believe and want, but they also try hard to hear, understand and accommodate the needs and perspectives of others. Good citizens are tolerant, even appreciative, of the many differences among us because they have learned to see transcending commonalities and underlying complexities.

Second, good citizens are personally committed to the core values of justice and caring. They try to align their heads and hearts--their words and deeds--in service of the values broadly shared across diverse American communities, values such as fairness, honesty, kindness, responsibility and compassion. Good citizens work to develop in themselves the considerable thoughtfulness and self-control needed to achieve this alignment.

Lastly, good citizens strive to always be civil and considerate in their interactions with others. In small as well as large ways, their interpersonal behavior reflects their values, and their considerate actions prompt others to respond in kind. Thus, good citizens' daily behavior provides both lubricant and glue in our diverse, fast-paced society.

These elements of citizenship have cognitive, affective

and behavioral dimensions, all of which are learned. This learning is gradual and diffuse, beginning in infancy and continuing throughout life--not just in school between the ages of 5 and 18. But school is the first public venue most children experience, and the most important in terms of intensity of exposure and consequences for later success.

Schools inescapably influence children's civic development through the content they teach directly and, perhaps more importantly, through the hidden curriculum of relationships with others, classroom management and discipline and organizational climate and policies.

A Sense of Community

Many current school improvement initiatives recognize in some way the school's potential to promote civic development. These initiatives may require, for example, students to participate in service learning activities such as local clean-up programs or assistance to the elderly, or they may advocate character development through direct teaching and modeling of core values in school.

Another priority, which is much less recognized but equally important to citizenship, is building students' sense of community through their experience of the school as a caring and inclusive community. Over the past 17 years, this emphasis has become central to the school improvement work of the Developmental Studies Center because our research has shown its significant positive effects on many aspects of children's social, ethical and civic development.

What is a sense of community? It is a student's experience of being a valued, influential, contributing participant in a group whose members are committed to each other's learning, growth and welfare.

We and our colleagues have measured students' perceptions of their schools as caring communities with questionnaires that assess their agreement with statements such as: "People in this school care about each other," "Students in this school help each other, even if they are not friends," "I feel I can talk to the teachers in this school about the things that are bothering me," and "My school is like a family."

Our research shows that students' sense of community has two major components: (1) their sense of influence

or "say" in the classroom and (2) their experience of the classroom and school as supportive. The higher a student's sense of community, the more likely the student is to show a wide range of positive characteristics, including many directly related to the major dimensions of citizenship, such as empathy, concern for others, enjoyment of helping others, kindness and helpfulness, skills in conflict resolution, altruistic behavior and social competence.

Students who demonstrate these traits are also less likely to feel lonely at school or to use alcohol or marijuana.

Why does experiencing a school as a caring community benefit students in these ways? Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, in their book *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*, pointed out that belonging, control over the environment and a sense of competence are basic human needs. A school that is a caring community helps students meet all three needs by providing them with an environment rich in friendships and connection, a say in shaping that environment and meaningful, important learning. In turn, students come to care about their school and to take its values seriously.

Creating Caring in School

Our research and work with schools suggests several practices that create a caring community within the classroom. These practices include:

- * Regular class meetings in which children help shape classroom norms and practices and engage in problem solving;
- * Opportunities for students and teachers to get to know one another as people and to build a sense of unity, by creating class traditions, class books or art projects.
- * A disciplinary approach that fosters students' desire to do what is right and engages them in active self-improvement, rather than relying primarily on rewards and sanctions;
- * Collaborative learning that emphasizes challenging academics and respectful treatment of fellow students; and
- * Curricula that engage students in studying the ethical issues at the heart of history and literature, such as what it means to be a principled, compassionate person and what values enable diverse individuals to live together.

A sense of community can be fostered schoolwide through policies that promote intimacy, such as keeping a school small or dividing it into houses, keeping students together with the same teacher for more than one year and minimizing tracking and pull-out programs.

Schools also promote community by providing opportunities for younger and older "buddies" to get to know and help one another in projects ranging from school beautification to science experiments. And community is strengthened through programs that boost parents comfort and involvement at school and "homeside activities" that have students interview family members about topics studied at school.

However, implementing these activities will not automatically build community. The activities must be designed with this goal in mind. Our research has shown, for example, that small-group learning benefits children socially, intellectually and motivationally only if students within a group are helpful, friendly and show concern for each other. Therefore, we advocate models of cooperative learning in which students discuss the democratic values that should guide group work and reflect on whether they lived up to them. For example, students reflect at the end of a science lesson on what they learned about decomposition and whether they showed responsibility and kindness in their group.

Importance of Community

It is striking to note how similar community building in school is to the process by which, until 50 years ago, most Americans believed virtue developed in an entire citizenry. According to the political theory that prevailed from this country's inception through the mid-20th century, the motivation for an individual to be virtuous stemmed from "a sense of belonging, a concern for the whole, a moral bond with the community whose fate is at stake," according to Harvard Professor Michael Sandel's article, "America's Search for a New Public Philosophy," in the March 1996 *Atlantic Monthly*.

That bond was thought to be cultivated, Sandel adds, by "deliberating with fellow citizens about the common good and helping to shape the destiny of the political community." In essence, methods for building community in school are an age-appropriate translation of the civic processes envisioned by Thomas Jefferson, Jane Addams, Louis Brandeis and many others. As such, sense of community has a long and distinguished record as the foundation for a caring, principled citizenry.

One Cautionary Note

Until recently, we were confident that building students' sense of community naturally enhanced students' academic learning along with their social and ethical development. The logic seemed compelling: The more strongly students bond to a school, the more committed they will be to its norms and goals, including academic achievement. But we are no longer so sure that this synergy between academic and civic learning is inevitable.

Our recent experience suggests that in working to build community, some teachers and administrators initially de-emphasize academic learning. For example, they may try to demonstrate caring for students by accepting poor work. However, as educators become proficient at building community, they find ways to show a fuller caring by conveying high academic standards.

Our recent intervention study with six school districts across the United States found that all schools that succeeded in building community improved students' civic, social and ethical outcomes. However, only one district showed accompanying academic gains. This district was the only one that strongly emphasized both academic achievement and student community and measured both through performance assessments.

We do not know whether it was the sustained emphasis on academics and on community as a vehicle to build citizenship, their performance assessment or the two factors combined that accounted for the gains in this case. But the synergistic power of a dual focus

on academics and student community is suggested by recent work on Japanese education. It is sobering to note, however, that despite the demonstrated power of student community as a vehicle to achieve citizenship and character and the relative ease of assessing student community, few U.S. districts emphasize and assess it in a sustained way.

Principals and district leaders today find community-building activities attractive because most are non-controversial and effective. School community-building activities offer logistical ease of organization and supervision compared with off-campus service projects, and they can be embedded in school routines in ways that may be difficult to accomplish with outside service learning activities. But perhaps the most basic argument in favor of careful, deliberate attention to community building is the alternative- that schools fail to recognize and harness this critical influence on citizenship.

As Yale child psychiatrist James Coiner has said, "In every interaction, you are either building community or destroying community." Schools have no choice about whether to shape citizenship and character. Every aspect of school organization and climate-from discipline policy to fund-raising strategy-does so. The only choice is whether to do it well.

Eric Schaps is president of the Developmental Studies Center, 2000 Embarcadero, Suite 305, Oakland, Calif. 94606-5300.

The Job of Active Citizenship.

by Newt Gingrich

THE GREATEST single challenge facing the new citizens' activist movement—which is really a citizens' opportunities movement—is the re-establishment of involved citizenship as everyday behavior. An exciting, prosperous America can be created by the end of the 1990s only if individual Americans are willing to invest the time, energy, and courage needed to rethink and rebuild their own country.

No government bureaucracy will win the war on drugs, or nurture a generation of educated, hard-working citizens in the inner city. Only an outpouring of civic energy and commitment can bring about that level of change in individuals, families, and communities.

No bureaucracy can move quickly enough to take advantage of the revolution in biotechnology. Only millions of engaged citizens can develop the new approaches that will combine better preventive medicine, home-based services, and user-friendly technologies in order to bring about a comparable revolution in cost and availability of health care.

Finally, no bureaucracy will create the caring, humanitarian, common sense system that must replace the bureaucratic welfare state. Only individual Americans, working through voluntary associations and local government, can generate the ideas and experiments needed to invent the America that can be.

This vision of a citizens' movement providing a new model of energetic, committed civic activity is nothing new for Americans. The Committees of Correspondence during the Revolution were a citizens' movement. The Federalists were a loose citizens' organization dedicated to replacing the Articles of Confederation with a more effective government.

The American as Activist

IN EARLY America, our greatest civic enthusiast was Benjamin Franklin. In a way, he is the model of the American as creative activist. Franklin published a newspaper, wrote the most famous Almanac of his day, organized a businessmen's civic group, and founded a public library, a volunteer fire department, the American Philosophical Society, and a small college which became the University of Pennsylvania. As a private citizen, he proposed plans to pave, clean, and light streets and to protect them with a nightwatch.

Benjamin Franklin personified honest hard work. He

would have understood thoroughly the essence of the new reform movement's message: Applying common sense focused on opportunities and success will lead to a more prosperous America.

While Franklin was the most inventive, most creative, and most active citizen of his era, he typified an attitude shared by ordinary Americans. When Americans saw a need, they filled it first and called on government later, or not at all.

Active citizenship is fundamental to American life, as Alexis de Tocqueville explained over 150 years ago in *Democracy in America*. According to the Frenchman who first predicted America's rise to world leadership, the genius of America lay not in its government but in its free associations—churches, neighborhoods, and voluntary local activities. "A government could take the place of some of the largest associations in America," he wrote. "But what political power could ever carry on the vast multitude of lesser undertakings which associations daily enable American citizens to control?" That's President Bush's "thousand points of light," circa 1840.

But Tocqueville also foresaw the temptation, and the pitfalls, of a bureaucratic state: "A government, by itself, is equally incapable of refreshing the circulation of feelings and ideas among a great people, as it is of controlling every industrial undertaking. Once it leaves the sphere of politics launch out on this new track, it will, even without intending this, exercise an intolerable tyranny. For a government can only dictate precise rules. It imposes the sentiments and ideas which it favors, and it is never easy to tell the difference between its advice and its commands." Elsewhere, he writes: "The more government takes the place of associations, the more will individuals lose the idea of forming associations and need the government to come to their help. That is a vicious circle of cause and effect."

Isn't that what we've been doing? For a century we have been draining power away from local citizens' groups, local governments, and town hall meetings, and shifting them to the state capitols and to Washington, D.C.

I first came truly to appreciate the disease of central bureaucratic control in 1981, when a school-board member in Douglas County, Georgia, told me she felt powerless. She felt that federal regulations, state

regulations, and deals between the state legislature and the teachers' union meant that she and her school board had almost no impact on education.

Institutionalized Apathy

IF AN elected school-board member feels trapped and powerless, is there any wonder the average

The bureaucracy picks textbooks, national commissions set graduation requirements, and state law establishes a tenure system that protects even the worst teachers, it is very reasonable for parents to conclude they have lost control. The American people are pretty smart. If they can't affect something, they tend to ignore it. But this institutionalized apathy lets the bureaucracy focus on its own values and its own convenience; it allows it to fail standard of citizenship we have come to accept. Walesa climbed the wall to go back into the Gdansk shipyard, knowing he risked imprisonment or even death. Havel was a political prisoner last October and was offered the presidency in December. Both men risked their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor for the cause of freedom.

Both Walesa and Havel thanked America for our commitment to freedom. Walesa started his speech to Congress with "We the People." The first three words of our Constitution are as precious in Warsaw as in Washington. Havel quoted from the Declaration of Independence and cited the Founding Fathers' willingness to spend their lives translating their words into deeds.

These men stand as an inspiration and a challenge to all Americans. We have held up the torch of freedom and changed Central Europe and the Soviet empire. Now we must hold up that torch in our own cities and towns, We must rally our country to create opportunities for our citizens. Only then can we reclaim the right to be "the last best hope of mankind."

So when a businessman tells you he can't get involved because he might offend a customer, remind him of Walesa climbing back over the wall. When a citizen tells you she doesn't have time to vote, remind her of Havel's time in prison. Americans must start acting like Americans again.

We hold these truths: a statement of Christian conscience and citizenship.

***First Things* magazine**

Following upon the intense public discussion occasioned by our November 1996 symposium on judicial usurpation, Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship and Father Richard John Neuhaus convened a meeting of Christian leaders in Reston, Virginia, to consider the development of a statement on "conscience and citizenship" relative to the American constitutional order. After months of drafting and consultation, it was decided to release the statement on the Fourth of July. Historians of American religion have observed that "We Hold These Truths" represents an unprecedented range of Christian leadership addressing together a question of great public moment. Although many others have indicated their support, the list of names appended here is limited to the original signatories. The text of the statement was agreed upon before the decisions of the Supreme Court discussed in this issue's symposium were announced at the end of June. However one may evaluate the significance of those decisions, they do not substantively change, and indeed may make more urgent, the questions addressed by We Hold These Truths."

On this two hundred and twenty-first anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, we join in giving thanks to Almighty God for what the Founders called this American experiment in ordered liberty. In the Year of Our Lord 1997, the experiment is deeply troubled but it has not failed and, please God, will not fail. As America has been a blessing to our forebears and to us, so will it be a blessing to future generations, if we keep faith with the founding vision.

Invoking "the law of nature and of nature's God," the Founders declared, "We hold these truths to be self-evident." This Fourth of July Americans must ask themselves whether they hold them still. We, for our part, answer emphatically in the affirmative. We affirm that before God and the law all are equal, "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." In recent years it has become increasingly manifest that these truths cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, there is ominous evidence of their rejection in our public life and law.

As leaders of diverse churches and Christian communities, we address our fellow citizens with no partisan political purpose. Our purpose is to help repair a contract too often broken and a covenant too

often betrayed. We recall and embrace the wisdom of our first President, who declared in his Farewell Address: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens." Religion and morality are not an alien intrusion upon our public life but the source and foundation of our pursuit of the common good.

It is in the nature of experiments that they can succeed, and they can fail. President Washington said in his First Inaugural Address: "The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered, perhaps, as deeply, as finally, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people." We urge the Christians of America to join us in a candid acknowledgment that we have not been as faithful as we ought to that great trust.

Nations are ultimately judged not by their military might or economic wealth but by their fidelity to "the laws of nature and nature's God." In the view of the Founders, just government is self-government. Liberty is not license but is "ordered liberty" -- liberty response to moral truth. The great threat to the American experiment today is not from enemies abroad but from disordered liberty. That disorder is increasingly expressed in a denial of the very concept of moral truth. The cynical question of Pontius Pilate, "What is truth?," is today frequently taken to be a mark of sophistication, also in our political discourse and even in the jurisprudence of our courts.

The bitter consequences of disordered liberty resulting from the denial of moral truth are by now painfully familiar. Abortion, crime, consumerism, drug abuse, family disintegration, teenage suicide, neglect of the poor, pornography, racial prejudice, ethnic separatism and suspicion -- all are rampant in our society. In politics, the public interest is too often sacrificed to private advantage; in economic and foreign policy, the lust for profits overrides concern for the well-being of families at home and the protection of human rights abroad. The powerful forget their obligation to the powerless, and the politics of the common good is abandoned in the interminable contention of special interests. We cannot boast of what we have made of

the experiment entrusted to our hands.

While we are all responsible for the state of the nation, and while our ills no doubt have many causes, on this Fourth of July our attention must be directed to the role of the courts in the disordering of our liberty. Our nation was constituted by agreement that "we the people," through the representative institutions of republican government, would deliberate and decide how we ought to order our life together. In recent years, that agreement has been broken. The Declaration declares that "governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." In recent years, power has again and again been wielded, notably by the courts, without the consent of the governed.

The most egregious instance of such usurpation of power is the 1973 decision of the Supreme Court in which it claimed to have discovered a "privacy" right to abortion and by which it abolished, in what many constitutional scholars have called an act of raw judicial power, the abortion law of all fifty states. Traditionally in our jurisprudence, the law reflected the moral traditions by which people govern their lives. This decision was a radical departure, arbitrarily uprooting those moral traditions as they had been enacted in law through our representative political process. Our concern is both for the integrity of our constitutional order and for the unborn whom the Court has unjustly excluded from the protection of law.

Our concern is by no means limited to the question of abortion, but the judicially imposed abortion license is at the very core of the disordering of our liberty. The question of abortion is the question of who belongs to the community for which we accept common responsibility. Our goal is unequivocal: Every unborn child protected in law and welcomed in life. We have no illusions that, in a world wounded by sin, that goal will ever be achieved perfectly. Nor do we assume that at present all Americans agree with that goal. Plainly, many do not. We believe, however, that democratic deliberation and decision would result in laws much more protective of the unborn and other vulnerable human lives. We are convinced that the Court was wrong, both morally and legally, to withdraw from a large part of the human community the constitutional guarantee of equal protection and due process of law.

The American people as a whole have not accepted, and we believe they will not accept, the abortion regime imposed by *Roe v. Wade*. In its procedural violation of democratic self-government and in its substantive violation of the "laws of nature and of nature's God," this decision of the Court forfeits any

claim to the obedience of conscientious citizens. We are resolved to work relentlessly, through peaceful and constitutional means and for however long it takes, to effectively reverse the abortion license imposed by *Roe v. Wade*. We ask all Americans to join us in that resolve.

The effort of "we the people" to exercise the right and responsibility of self-government has been made even more difficult by subsequent decisions of the Court. In its stated effort to end the national debate over abortion, the Supreme Court in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992) transferred the legal ground for the abortion license from the implied right of privacy to an explicit liberty right under the Fourteenth Amendment. The Court there proposed a sweeping redefinition of liberty: "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." The doctrine declared by the Court would seem to mean that liberty is nothing more nor less than what is chosen by the autonomous, unencumbered self.

This is the very antithesis of the ordered liberty affirmed by the Founders. Liberty in this debased sense is utterly disengaged from the concepts of responsibility and community, and is pitted against the "laws of nature and of nature's God." Such liberty degenerates into license for the oppression of the vulnerable while the government looks the other way, and throws into question the very possibility of the rule of law itself. *Casey* raises the serious question as to whether any law can be enacted in pursuit of the common good, for virtually any law can offend some individuals' definition of selfhood, existence, and the meaning of life. Under the doctrine declared by the Court, it would seem that individual choice can always take precedence over the common good.

Moreover, in *Casey* the Court admonished pro-life dissenters, chastising them for continuing the debate and suggesting that the very legitimacy of the law depends upon the American people obeying the Court's decisions, even though no evidence is offered that those decisions are supported by the Constitution or accepted by a moral consensus of the citizenry. If the Court is inviting us to end the debate over abortion, we, as Christians and free citizens of this republic, respectfully decline the invitation.

The Court has gone still further in what must be described as an apparent course of hostility to democratic self-government. In *Lee v. Weisman* (1992), the Court seemed to suggest that an ethic and morality that "transcend human invention" is what is meant by religion that is constitutionally forbidden ground for law. In *Romer v. Evans* (1996), thousands

of years of moral teaching regarding the right ordering of human sexuality was cavalierly dismissed as an irrational "animus." It is exceedingly hard to avoid the conclusion that the Court is declaring that laws or policies informed by religion or religiously based morality are unconstitutional for that reason alone. In this view, religion is simply a bias, and therefore inadmissible in law. Obviously, this was not the belief of those who wrote and ratified our Constitution. Just as obviously, the Court's view is not accepted by the people today. For the Founders and for the overwhelming majority of Americans today, ethics and morality transcend human invention and are typically grounded in religion.

If the Supreme Court and the judiciary it leads do not change course, the awesome consequences are clearly foreseeable. The founding principle of self-government has been thrown into question. Already it seems that people who are motivated by religion or religiously inspired morality are relegated to a category of second-class citizenship. Increasingly, law and public policy will be pitted against the social and moral convictions of the people, with the result that millions of Americans will be alienated from a government that they no longer recognize as their own. We cannot, we must not, let this happen.

Questions of great moral moment for the ordering of our life together will continue to demand deliberation and decision. The Court's justification of the abortion license under its debased concept of liberty has brought us to the brink of endorsing new "rights" to doctor-assisted suicide and euthanasia which threaten those at the end of life, the infirm, the handicapped, the unwanted. We are confronted by a radical redefinition of marriage as courts declare marriage to be not a covenanted commitment ordered to the great goods of spousal unity and procreation but a mere contract between autonomous individuals for whatever ends they happen to seek. Under a specious interpretation of the separation of church and state, our public schools are denuded of moral instruction and parents are unjustly burdened in choosing a religious education for their children. These are among the many urgent problems that must be addressed by a free and self-governing people.

Washington spoke of "the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people." We cannot simply blame the courts for what has gone wrong. We are all responsible. The communications media, the entertainment industry, and educators bear a particular burden of responsibility, as do we Christian leaders and our churches when we fail to instill the hard discipline of ordered liberty in the service of the common good.

A most particular responsibility belongs also to our elected officials in state and national government. Too often, legislators prefer to leave difficult and controverted questions to the courts. This must be called what it is, an abdication of their duty in our representative form of democratic government. Too often, too, Christian legislators separate their convictions from their public actions, thus depriving our politics of their informed moral judgment. The other side of judicial usurpation is legislative dereliction. We must believe that the Constitution bequeathed us by the Founders does not leave us without remedies for our present unhappy circumstance.

The crisis created by Roe and its legacy is not without precedent in our national life. Our present circumstance is shadowed by the memory of the infamous Dred Scott decision of 1857. Then the Court, in a similar act of raw judicial power, excluded slaves of African descent from the community of those possessing rights that others are bound to respect. Abraham Lincoln refused to bow to that decision. It was in devotion to our constitutional order that Lincoln declared in his First Inaugural Address that the people and their representatives had not "practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal." Today we are again in desperate need of political leaders who accept the responsibility to lead in restoring government derived from the consent of the governed.

Let no one mistake this statement as an instance of special pleading for Christians or even for religious people more generally. Our purpose is to revitalize a polity in which all the people of "we the people" are full participants. Let no one fear this call for our fellow Christians to more vibrantly exercise their citizenship responsibilities. We reject the idea that ours should be declared a "Christian" nation. We do not seek a sacred public square but a civil public square. We strongly affirm the separation of church and state, which must never be interpreted as the separation of religion from public life. Knowing that the protection of minorities is secure only when such protections are supported by the majority, we urge Christians to renewed opposition to every form of invidious prejudice or discrimination. In the civil public square we must all respectfully engage one another in civil friendship as we deliberate and decide how we ought to order our life together.

The signers of this statement are by no means agreed on all aspects of law and public policy. We are Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants of differing convictions on many issues. We are conservatives and progressives of various ethnic and racial identities and

with differing political views. We are agreed that we must seek together an America that respects the sanctity of human life, enables the poor to be full participants in our society, strives to overcome racism, and is committed to rebuilding the family. We are agreed that government by the consent of the governed has been thrown into question, and, as a result, our constitutional order is in crisis. We are agreed that -- whether the question be protection of the unborn, providing for the poor, restoring the family, or racial justice -- we can and must bring law and public policy into greater harmony with the "laws of nature and of nature's God."

Not all Americans are agreed on the implications of those laws, and some doubt that there are such laws. But all can exercise the gift of reason to discern the moral truth that serves the common good. All can attempt to persuade their fellow citizens of the truth that they discern. We Americans are a political community bound to one another in civil argument. Such is the experiment in ordered liberty that has been entrusted to our hands. That experiment is today imperiled, but we are resolved that it continue and flourish, for as it was said two hundred and twenty-one years ago so also it is the case today that "We hold these truths."

How to Make an American.

by John Fonte

Browsing through my grandmother's citizenship textbook from the 1930s one day, I found Lesson 61 on the Americanization policies of Theodore Roosevelt:

[Roosevelt] loved America above all else and his last public message was a plea for the "complete Americanization" of our people in which he said: "... [if] the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the man's

b
e
c
o
m
i
n
g
a
n
A
m
e
r
i
c
a
n
,
a
n
d
n
o
t
h
i
n
g

b
u
t
a
n
A
m
e
r
i
c
a
n
.
T
h
e
r
e
c
a
n
b
e
n
o
d
i
v
i
d
e
d
a
l
l
e
g
i
a
n
c
e
h
e
r
e
.
W
e

h
a
v
e
r
o
o
m
f
o
r
b
u
t
o
n
e
s
o
u
l
(
s
i
c
)
l
o
y
a
l
t
y
a
n
d
t
h
a
t
i
s
l
o
y
a
l
t
y
t
o
t
h
e
A
m
e

r
i
c
a
n
p
e
o
p
l
e
.
"

The textbook captured the spirit of Americanization--that immigrants are expected to assimilate patriotically and become loyal Americans. More than one hundred years earlier George Washington had written to John Adams that he envisioned immigrants "assimilated to our customs, measures, and laws," and because of this, Washington declared, native-born citizens and immigrants would "soon become one people." This sentiment is roughly the view of the majority of Americans today, but clearly not the opinion of many American elites. As Samuel Huntington argues in this issue (see page 20), elites in government, business, education, academia, and the media have for decades been actively involved in efforts to "deconstruct" the American nation and its traditional concepts of assimilation and citizenship.

Huntington explains in his new book, *Who Are We?*, that arguments over multiculturalism, bilingualism, ethnic and gender group preferences, dual citizenship, history standards, transnationalism--and immigration and assimilation are all part of the same conflict over the nature of the American liberal democratic regime. He is right to maintain that a "deconstructionist coalition" challenges the core principles of the American nation on all fronts. At the end of the day, the deconstructionists would transform an American nation based on the principles of individual citizenship, equality of opportunity, and self-government within Constitutional limits, into a new form of regime built on ethnic, racial, and gender group rights with decision-making increasingly in the hands of unelected elites.

While Huntington provides the comprehensive macro

view, Jan Golab examines a micro case study of the problem in his essay on the politics of Indian casinos (see page 26 in this issue). What is ultimately at stake is whether the traditional American regime will be transmitted to future generations intact or wholly transformed.

Clearly, all of this means that the issue of immigration/assimilation (and these two issues should always be considered as one) must be examined within the broader context of the leftist assault on traditional American political principles. To help clarify the problem, let us explore a series of assimilation-related issues that will soon confront both elite and popular opinion. These include initiatives to revise the oath of allegiance, design a new citizenship test, and, most significantly, legalize the status of illegal immigrants.

Implicit in Huntington's thesis is that just below the surface of the policy debate there exists unapologetic public support for vigorous Americanization policies that would explicitly promote the patriotic integration of immigrants into what was once called "the American way of life." Besides public support, there appears to be a bloc in Congress (a counter-elite within the elite) strongly interested in patriotic, as well as economic and linguistic, integration. Last year when the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) wanted to simplify the citizenship oath, some members of Congress immediately protested, and the USCIS pulled back. Worried that the traditional oath (in which new citizens promise to "renounce" their old allegiances and "bear arms" on behalf of the United States) will be weakened, Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Congressman Jim Ryun (R-KS) have introduced legislation to codify it into law.

In addition, it appears that the forces of patriotic renewal are being heard in discussions over the development of a new citizenship test. The USCIS plans to revise the history/government and language portions, with the goal of making them fairer and more meaningful. Advocates of patriotic integration in veterans groups, think tanks, and Congress make the following arguments:

They declare that we must start with first principles by asking: What is the purpose of the history/government citizenship test?

Then they point out that the law states that applicants for citizenship must have: (1) "a knowledge and understanding of the history, and of the principles and form of government of the United States" and (2) possess "good moral character, attachment to the principles of the Constitution, and he well disposed to

the good order and happiness of the United States."

This leads naturally to the conclusion that the purpose of the test as a whole is not merely to get new citizens to know certain facts, but also to be "attached" to the principles of the Constitution--evidence of the explicit normative purpose of naturalization.

The citizenship naturalization process should be a life-altering experience, a rite of passage, such as a wedding, graduation, first communion, or bar mitzvah, which fosters emotional attachment to our nation and strengthens patriotism. The revised test should also include the neglected subject of America's military history and heroes. Citizens, new and old, should be aware of the sacrifices made by America's soldiers to preserve our freedom and way of life. As the classicist Victor Davis Hanson has noted: Without the military successes of Grant and Sherman against the Confederates, the slaves would not have been freed; and without the victories of Eisenhower and Patton over the Nazis, there would have been no civil rights movement.

At the end of the naturalization ceremony, the applicants take an oath of allegiance to the United States and renounce all political allegiance to their birth nations. Hence, questions on the meaning and significance of the oath should be part of the test. The oath is especially crucial to American democracy, because citizenship in America is not based on race, religion, or ethnicity, but on political loyalty. In taking the oath, the new citizen transfers allegiance from the land of his birth to the United States.

Oath-takers have a moral obligation to give up all political loyalty to their birth nations. True, the oath is sometimes violated by those who retain old citizenships, just as wedding vows are sometimes broken. Yet, the oath of allegiance, like wedding vows, represents not only a moral obligation for individuals, but a norm for our democracy, regardless of any technical loopholes allowing dual citizenship.

If it becomes routine for large numbers of new citizens to keep old political loyalties, the nature of American citizenship will be transformed, just as, say, legal polygamy would transform the nature of marriage. The principle that we are a people united by political allegiance rather than the ascriptive characteristics of race, ethnicity, and birth would be effectively repudiated.

After the November elections, national politicians will address immigration proposals designed to legalize "undocumented workers," or provide amnesty to illegal aliens (depending on your point of view), and

put millions of them on the path to green cards and citizenship. The discussion to date has been almost entirely in economic terms with little or no reference to issues such as Americanization and patriotic assimilation.

"Patriotic Renewalists" on Capitol Hill could very well demand that before raising immigration quotas by embarking upon another legalization-cure-amnesty plan (the last one in 1986 was unsuccessful), we should get serious about patriotic assimilation. Rather than ignoring dual citizenship, we might want to take steps to limit this form of civic polygamy by, for

example, enacting legal sanctions against naturalized American citizens who are elected to foreign legislatures in the land of their birth on anti-American party lists (as occurred on July 4, 2004 in Zacatecas, Mexico).

Like Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, we should insist that immigration policy be combined with serious Americanization initiatives and that immigration levels remain dependent on how well we integrate newcomers patriotically. After all, we are a nation, not just a market.

Bird's Eye guest author John Fonte is director of the Center for American Common Culture, and a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

This installment of The American Enterprise was commissioned by Karl Zinsmeister and edited by Daniel Kennelly and Karina Rollins.