

Stand Up, Be Counted

Town hall meetings constitute an interesting exercise in governmental function. I once attended such a session in Madawaska, Maine. Not being familiar with such ways in the South from which I hail, I was amused, intrigued and appreciative of the way that local citizens had in the operation of their town.

In *Charles Kuralt's America*, the author recalls a town meeting he once attended in Strafford, Vermont:

“What happens at a town meeting is pure democracy. Every citizen may have his or her say on every question. For a half-hour that day, for example, they debated the question of whether to go on paying \$582.50 a year for outside health services deemed unsatisfactory by a farmer named Brown.

“The moderator, rail-fence maker James Condict, said, ‘I’m going to ask for a standing vote. All those in favor ...’ and there it came, the Yankee expression that is the soul of the town meeting, ‘stand up and be counted.’

“By a standing vote, Strafford agreed with farmer Brown.”

This Southern boy heard the same challenge by the moderator in Madawaska that day.

To stand up and be counted is both pure democracy and pure commitment. It is not always easy to do the right thing, especially when popular opinion may not favor it. In the workplace, in social settings or even in church activities, standing up and being counted sometimes requires considerable courage.

In the spiritual realm, Jesus calls His true followers to stand up and be counted as Christians. More and more in this country, such a witness will require boldness in the demonstration of our convictions.

--Beecher Hunter