

MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE®

ISSUE NUMBER 54

LATE OCTOBER, 2016

! EXTRA !

FOR MOST SPECIES LIFE, ITSELF, IS THE GIFT, THE GAME AND THE PRIZE AND ITS DAILY IMPERATIVES ARE SHARED PEACEFULLY EXCEPT WHEN REORDERED BY THE DEMANDS OF FOOD, TERRITORY AND PROCREATION. MAN INTRODUCED THE NEW ELEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE WHICH INCLUDED CONCEPTS OF TECHNOLOGY, WEALTH, RATIONAL THOUGHT, POWER, SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, LANGUAGE AND OTHER CAPABILITIES PROVIDED BY OUR ENLARGING BRAIN.

ONE EARLY SUCH EXERCISE WAS THE COMBINING OF INDIVIDUALS INTO GROUPS TO MULTIPLY THEIR FORCE, WHETHER TO DEFEND THEMSELVES OR TO ATTACK OTHERS. THIS IS THE ROOT OF THE POLITICAL POWER THAT ORIGINATED AT TRIBAL LEVELS AND IS NOW GLOBALLY PRACTICED. IT CAN BE EXPRESSED IN VARIOUS WAYS — THROUGH DIPLOMACY, RELIGION, TRADE, WARFARE AND GENETICS — BUT USUALLY IS UNDER THE CONTROL OF AN INDIVIDUAL SUCH AS A PRESIDENT, KING, GENERAL, EMPEROR, OR CLERIC WHO COMES TO OFFICE BY ELECTION, APPOINTMENT, INHERITANCE OR PUBLIC ACCLAIM.

IN OUR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY WE CONCEIVED A NEW WAY OF GOVERNMENT AND A POLITICAL PROCESS TO SUPPORT IT AND ENABLE ITS CONTINUATION. WHILE OUR SYSTEM HAS MOSTLY WORKED WELL AND HAS MANAGED TO GET US THROUGH SOME VERY DIFFICULT TIMES, OUR PRESENT ELECTION COULD DO GREAT DAMAGE TO OUR ALREADY WEAKENED, DIVIDED AND CORRUPTED GOVERNMENT.

IT HAS ALL THE TRAPPINGS OF A CONTEST OVER POLITICAL POWER AND, INDEED, IT WILL HAVE EXTRAORDINARY POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES, BUT IT IS AN ELECTION DEVOID OF POLITICAL ISSUES. FOR, DESPITE THE MANY SERIOUS ISSUES FACING OUR NATION, THERE IS NO DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THEM OR SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR RESOLVING THEM. INSTEAD THEY ARE RELEGATED TO THE “BACK BURNER” AND WHAT FUELS THIS CAMPAIGN IS THE CANDIDATES’ QUESTS FOR PERSONAL POWER.

THE CHARACTERS OF BOTH ARE SERIOUSLY FLAWED, AND IN OUR OPINION NEITHER CAN BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP THAT AMERICA SO DESPERATELY NEEDS. FOR TRUMP, THE PERSONAL POWER OF THIS CAMPAIGN SUPPORTS AND COMPLEMENTS HIS NARCISSISM , WHEREAS FOR CLINTON IT SEEMS TO BE A PRIZE THAT COMPENSATES FOR THE UNREALIZED AMBITIONS OF HER POLITICAL CAREER AND, PERHAPS, HER CHILDHOOD. EACH ENDLESSLY ACCUSES THE OTHER OF BEING “UNFIT” TO SERVE AS PRESIDENT, AND IN OUR OPINION BOTH ARE RIGHT. WE MAY WELL WISH FOR GREATER POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT ALONG REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT OR LIBERAL/CONSERVATIVE LINES, BUT IT HAS BEEN ABANDONED IN FAVOR OF JUGULAR PERSONAL ATTACKS.

TRUMP HAS BEEN WIDELY CRITICIZED FOR CRUDE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND COMMENTS AND CLINTON FOR LYING AND ABUSING HER OFFICE AND, ALTHOUGH THESE QUALITIES ARE CERTAINLY REGRETTABLE, THEY HAVE NOT ACTED AS A BAR TO WHITE HOUSE OCCUPANCY IN THE PAST. WE VIEW THE CHOICE AS A VERY POOR ONE DOMINATED MOSTLY BY NEGATIVES WITH ONE IMPORTANT EXCEPTION — TRUMP’S DETERMINATION TO BREAK THE GRIP OF THE STATUS QUO/ BUREAUCRACY ON OUR GOVERNMENT AND COURTS AND RETURN A MEASURE OF GOVERNMENT TO THE PEOPLE.

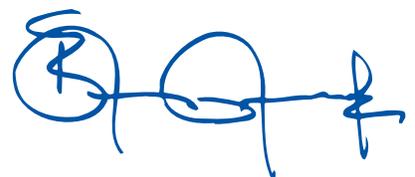
THIS WILL NOT BE EASY. WE HAVE DUG A VERY DEEP HOLE FOR OURSELVES. WE HAVE AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT HAS BOTH LOWERED ITS STANDARDS AND LOST ITS IDENTITY. THIS HAS ALLOWED OUR YOUTH TO BECOME HOSTAGE TO THE MONEY/DRUG/SEX/GLITZ/SPORTS/CELEBRITY CULTURE OF OUR MAINSTREAM MEDIA.

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE IS FAILING; OUR NATION'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM HAS BEEN CONVERTED TO SERVE SPECIAL INTERESTS; OUR DEBT IS OUT OF CONTROL; OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IS BECOMING MORE EXPENSIVE; OUR FOREIGN POLICY IS IN SHAMBLES; AND MORE. THERE IS MUCH WORK AHEAD IF WE WANT TO SOLVE OUR COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS WHICH CAN ONLY BE DONE BY A RESPONSIVE AND DETERMINED PRESENCE IN DC ——— IN ALL THREE BRANCHES OF OUR GOVERNMENT ! WE DO NOT THINK HILLARY CLINTON WILL SERVE AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE. WE THINK TRUMP WILL TRY, BUT THE TASK IS ENORMOUS AND THE OUTCOME, GIVEN OUR DIVIDED STATE, IS UNCERTAIN AT BEST. THE PLAIN TRUTH IS THAT OUR PROCESS AND STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN SO COMPROMISED THAT TO REPAIR THEM WILL REQUIRE A VERY LONG AND POWERFUL COOPERATIVE EFFORT, PERHAPS SOMETHING ON THE SCALE OF WW II'S WAR PRODUCTION BOARD OR MANHATTAN PROJECT.

WE ARE HEMORRHAGING MONEY, OFTEN SPENDING OUR NATION'S WEALTH ON PROJECTS OR CAUSES FROM WHICH THERE IS NO CHANCE OF A RETURN; AND DECENCY IS NO LONGER EXPECTED OR HONORED IN THE CONDUCT OF OUR GOVERNMENT WHERE OUR TRADITIONAL IDEALISM, INCLUDING OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR CONSTITUTION, HAS GIVEN WAY TO THE VALUES OF POLITICAL PRIVILEGE.

TO REPEAT: REPAIRING THE STRUCTURE AND OPERATING SYSTEMS OF OUR GOVERNMENT WILL ENTAIL A MASSIVE AND PROLONGED COOPERATIVE EFFORT WHICH AT SOME POINT WILL HAVE TO COALESCE AROUND A CENTRAL FIGURE'S OR GROUP'S LEADERSHIP. WHAT CAN CAMPAIGN 2016 CONTRIBUTE TO SUCH A COURSE ? PROBABLY NOTHING SPECIFIC, AS NEITHER CANDIDATE HAS IDENTIFIED GOVERNMENT OVERHAUL AS A NATIONAL PRIORITY ON THE SCALE WE HAVE CITED. TRUMP, HOWEVER, HAS STATED THAT CHANGE IS NECESSARY AND THAT HE IS WILLING TO TAKE ON THE SPECIAL INTERESTS THAT HAVE INCREASINGLY COME TO CONTROL THE METHODS AND RESULTS OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM. CLINTON HAS NOT ADDRESSED THE MATTER OF GOVERNMENTAL CHANGE, BUT INSTEAD HAS PROMISED A CONTINUATION OF THE OBAMA POLICIES. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT TRUMP CAN OFFER THE KIND OF LEADERSHIP REQUIRED TO LAUNCH A MAJOR RESTORATION OF EFFICIENT, TRANSPARENT AND ETHICAL GOVERNMENT, BUT, IF HE WERE ABLE TO MAKE JUST A FEW CORRECTIONS THAT COULD POINT US IN THAT DIRECTION AND HAVE THE STRENGTH TO SURVIVE INTO A SUCCEEDING ADMINISTRATION, CAMPAIGN 2016 COULD PARTIALLY REDEEM ITSELF.

NOTE: IN THE PRE-MAINSTREAM MEDIA DAYS OF NEWSPAPER NEWS COVERAGE, IMPORTANT STORIES WERE COVERED BY "EXTRA" EDITIONS WHICH WERE LOUDLY ANNOUNCED ON THE STREET BY CRIES OF "EXTRA ! EXTRA ! READ ALL ABOUT IT".

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "R. G. F.", written in a cursive style.