

Thoughts and Observations Surrounding Voting

by

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We have cast our votes and as the saying goes, “let the best man win.” As we go through several days, possibly weeks, of counting and tallying, and law suits, we may not know who the winner is for various positions.

While all voting seasons are contentious, this one has been even more so with everyone having to deal with the coronavirus pandemic and its associated challenges. We have and continue to go through a survival period very much akin to what our forefathers went through during the Great Depressions of the 1930s.

Regardless of the voting outcome, only history will tell how well the winners did or did not do. We are caught up in the present and being human, we cannot know what the future holds for us. We can guess and we can play the Monday night quarter-back game based on history

When it comes to politics and voting, logical thinking often goes out the window and we lose sight of reality. We become like the six blind men who encountered an elephant for the first time. Each of them had a different interpretation of what an elephant is. As they debated about their interpretation of the elephant, they never resolved their conflict. Politics is very much like this parable of the Blind Men and An Elephant.

Regardless of our party or who wins, in many ways the outcome of our voting is as blind or ignorant as the six blind men in the parable. Preceding our voting, candidates on both sides make statements about their opponents. These statements are often called “sound bites” as they are lifted from more inclusive statements, recordings, reports, etc. For example, one candidate may stated that his opponent “_____ did not support Medicare,” or something like “___ voted against the stimulus package.”

While the sound bites may be accurate, they are also inaccurate in that they do not state the why behind the sound bite. Taking the stimulus package for example, a candidate may not have voted for it because it contained sections where money would go to organizations or agencies that had nothing to do with coronavirus or the pandemic. By taking the sound bites at face value and never asking the question why is irresponsible, foolish, and ignorant.

There is a phrase, "Trust but Verify." As a voter, it is your responsibility to do just that. Don't just take the word of anyone, even those you respect and believe in.

There is another expression or metaphor that we need to also consider when it comes to politics. It is, "Elephant in the Room." This expression is about some topic or issue that everyone knows about but no one wants to discuss it for any number of reasons. Coinciding with this phrase is the so-called etiquette rule, "Don't talk politics, religion or money. . ." If you don't talk about the taboos of the elephant in the room, politics, religion, or money, you are just as blind as the six blind men. By not talking or speaking up, out of fear you are allowing yourself to be suppressed by others. This is exactly what dictators feed on.

For a decade now transparency has been a key word used with regard to government. For transparency to exist, it is incumbent that leaders and candidates be open with their thoughts and opinions. Such was not the case with many candidates when asked a variety of questions. As we go forward, we need to demand and make sure that transparency exists at all levels of government – federal, state, and local.

Some of the people I voted for won and others did not. While we may be disappointed that all of those we voted for did not win, we need to put aside the disappointment. We need to also put aside our differences and work toward making our nation whole and free from outside interference. In essence we need to reinstate the core values of our founding fathers, the US Constitution, and adhere to our Bill of Rights.