

9th and 10th Degree Essay MC II Scot Sageser

Contemporary Issues Assailing the Rights of the People through Ignorance, Ambition and Fanaticism

Introduction:

In order to arrive at the proper or correct outlook on any situation or decision in life, we must accept that the correct decision or interpretation of most issues is one of “AND”. By this I mean that many times those within society who are pushing for a particular agenda or outcome will frame the decision or outlook in the form of an either/or decision. Most times this is a false choice. The TRUTH, which we as Masons have dedicated ourselves to pursue, most always comes to us in the form of a synthesis of various points of view and being able to hold truths concurrently within our decision making process, regardless of where those truths come from. There are 3 areas within current society where Ignorance, ambition and fanaticism are being used by groups with specific agenda's that ignore, or intentionally avoid the inclusion of “AND” in order to promote an agenda that is harmful to the freedoms enjoyed in the United States.

A Pension for Ignorance: Security and Self Sufficiency

One of the major rights being assailed by our government is the right of self determinism and limited government. The big issue facing our country is the expansion of government economic systems of support for citizens and their associated unfunded liabilities. This includes Social Security, Medicare, Federal, State, County and Municipal entities and their pensions, healthcare systems and safety net benefit systems. The proponents of big government have created a system whereby a soon to be majority of citizens will be dependent upon some form of government support via pension, employment or benefit and these programs are woefully unfunded and unaffordable. The reality of this crisis is being hid from the public and there is an intentional program of deceit to keep the citizenry in ignorance of the basic math regarding this issue. These programs also fail to promote the goal of self-sufficiency by people becoming dependent upon these transfer payments from the government.

This issue is currently brewing beneath the political rhetoric during this Presidential Election year. It was THE issue in Wisconsin during the recall election and will be what the big fight will be about after the election in November. Behind all of the current disagreements between our political parties is this issue of pensions and healthcare and govt benefits. It will be THESE ISSUES that challenge our financial system going forward. So where is the ignorance? The ignorance is being perpetrated by citizens ignoring the law of large numbers, which states that what is true for the individual is not necessarily true for the group. The pension is good for the individual retiree but destructive for the group as more and more want the benefit. Also by the refusal of our political structure to address and inform and educate the public as to the magnitude of this crisis. Alexis De Tocqueville stated, “The American Republic will endure until the day Congress discovers that it can bribe the public with the public’s Money” We now find ourselves in this situation. The governmental structure is using government benefits as a tool to gain political loyalty while keeping the general public ignorant of the reality of the numbers for the whole. Our current path is unsustainable, but yet the promise is for more and more and that there is no problem. This is a treacherous promise that steals the hope of self sufficiency from capable citizens. We as Masons must look to the symbolic beehive as a rule toward our behavior. We must understand that there is both a role for a satisfying retirement and safety net AND self sufficiency that will evaporate if the current unfunded liabilities are not addressed and the insatiable appetite for a free lunch not curbed. <http://www.usdebtclock.org/>

Ambition: Success and Failure

Another right being assailed in today's America also stems from the expansion of the state, local and federal governments and the co-opting of those government officials by big corporations and big labor. Our masonic teaching informs us that the individual is the focus of life. That government's role is the simple protection of the individual's rights. Our founders in the declaration put it to us in the phrase "all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights". Big business, big labor and Big Government now collude with one another at the expense of the individual and small business in order to satisfy the ambition of both politicians, big corporations and big labor for greater and greater control, power and money. The resulting system penalizes small business and those who have better products, systems, marketing and process' that would benefit humanity by creating a regulatory morass that can only be afforded by the biggest of the corporations, and labor unions.. Peter Schumpeter, author of *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* stated "innovative entry by [entrepreneurs](#) was the disruptive force that sustained [economic growth](#), even as it destroyed the value of established companies and laborers that enjoyed some degree of [monopoly](#) power derived from previous technological, organizational, regulatory, and economic paradigms". This process was termed *creative destruction* and was the process where the new technologies, products, services and systems replaced less efficient forms of production and distribution ultimately creating better products and services at lesser cost to consumers. Our current system has our federal government actively saving and injecting capital into these big corporations and big labor unions. We are ignoring the reality that economic freedom's "AND" is the potential for failure in order to clear the way for more efficient forms of economy.

Fanaticism: Religion and Freedom

Masonry speaks volumes to the third of the threats we are facing in America and the West. That being the onslaught of an intolerant religious system that combines civil government with religion, Islam. Yes, Masonry stands for the freedom to choose one's faith, but its main teaching in relation to governance is the separation of church and state. Unfortunately our Muslim brothers have yet to adopt this basic tenant of governance that has provided more freedom to humanity than almost any other of our adopted freedoms save the right to private property. This is one of the dilemmas that seems to come into play regarding our belief system as Masons. Pike asks the question of whether we, as Masons, are willing to be tolerant of intolerance. The question remains as to how we remain true to our mission of the betterment of the human race while tolerating a religion that would replace our system of individual primacy in the system with one that implements a system of government based upon religious belief or Sharia. Masonry in this degree teaches us that our fanaticism should be for the increased freedom and betterment of the human condition by the expansion of the rights of the individual vs. The state, the church and those who would use those institutions for the subjugation of people. We find ourselves in a physical as well as philosophical war with proponents of a system that fails to meet the litmus test of Separation of Church and State. Should we not question our involvement in countries like Afghanistan given that the nation is now The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Forming a government system based upon the combining of a National Religion and Civil government is entirely at odds with our beliefs as Masons. But, maybe one should not be surprised given that even we Scottish Rite Masons ignore our own teaching as to how we should organize and operate under what is closer to a dictatorship than a Republican Democracy.

We, in this country, will be hard pressed in this battle with ignorance, ambition, and fanaticism until we conform to the masonic system of limited government, the goal of individual self sufficiency, the primacy of individual rights over institutional rights, and absolute necessity for the individual to reclaim his/her position as the focus of economic, religious, civil and social functioning of our society. We as Masons will find it ever more difficult to be relevant to our culture if we continue to ignore our own teaching.