

WHY AREN'T CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS LIKE THIS?

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By Jim
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Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. First Samuel 12:3-4 WEB (the prophet Samuel speaks at King Saul's coronation)

According to Prof. J. Rufus Fears (whom I quote from time to time) the two biblical books of Samuel are among the first efforts of humans to develop history, not as a litany of facts and continuous funeral services for the honored dead, but as an attempt to understand the motivations of leaders as they make sometimes horrendous decisions, and how these driving forces can better be understood so as to prevent similar mistakes later.

As Saul began his kingship, Samuel reminded the people of what he had earlier predicted when they demanded a king so they could be ruler like other nations. He said this king would imperiously seize their possessions, dominate their lives, and do whatever he pleased with the national resources, including people. Evidently Samuel, who had ruled as a judge directly under the law of God, wanted as he retired to reinforce his innocence from any acts of fraud, falsehood, oppression, or bribery; things the new king would soon undertake with zest and considerable proficiency.

What do you suppose would happen if political candidates today bared their lives to open public scrutiny? One thing for sure is that public servants and pretenders would be much more careful what they did, both in and out of office.

Historical experience shows a distinct connection between private immorality and public

malfeasance. Honesty in a personal life tends toward the same in public life. Yes, there are sometimes exceptions, but in general the principle stands. Look back at the scores of venial kings sitting upon thrones of Europe. Their private sins were exceeded only by their public acts of malfeasance and oppression. The public is never safe from such leadership because the people always pay for the sins of their leaders, whether in blood or in gold.

Considering the way candidates speak of carpet bombing ISIS or escalating the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, one would wonder whatever happened to common sense. Our assumption that the Middle East wants freedom American-style is open to serious question. On the few times Middle Eastern countries have been offered freedom as the empires of their dominators fall apart, they generally slide back into autocracy, usually under leaders taken from clerical ranks, thereby removing any possibility of a separation of church from power. The Middle East does not want freedom; what it wants is stability and order under fairly benevolent autocrats.

Similarly, we learned nothing from the horrors of Viet Nam, a debacle costing over 50,000 American lives plus unknown Asian lives and vast property damage, broken societies, and corruption that lingers some 40 years later. All this because of leaders so anxious to fight that they accepted the manufactured Tonkin Gulf incident as an excuse for war. So a manufactured crisis got us into Viet Nam and another (Saddam's supposed weapons of mass destruction) got us into Iraq so what can we expect from our leaders but more war.

If political candidates and the general electorate would only consider seriously that the people pay for the sins and mistakes of their leaders, things might be somewhat different on the campaign trail. But resorting to military action is bandied about almost as if it had no cost.

As you decide which candidates to vote for, consider some of these things. If you can't make a choice, take the matter up with God, since he's the only one who understands the deepest levels of the human heart and mind.