

Time Out' for the Blame Game

Since before March 14, when President Trump declared a National Emergency for the United States everyone, in some way, has been blamed for the Coronavirus. With the increasing numbers comes the growing feelings of anxiety, mental stress and the need to place the blame somewhere.

Isn't it time for us 'all' to think about taking a 'Time Out' from the blame game?

As hard as it is to believe, even the all-loving and omnipotent (forgiving) God has been 'blamed'.

For those of us of with faith, Rev. Jason Fairbanks, Pastor of Lake Worth's oldest church, The First Congregational Church, the answer is more acceptable. "Any faith leader that claims that God has caused, or even is using, this crisis to punish humanity or somehow teach us a lesson is committing theological and pastoral malpractice. Viruses, tragedies and challenges happen. They are part of life." God is there for us 'all'.

Mother Nature has taken her share of the 'blame'. She has faced it with sharing with our Florida world some of the most beautiful spring weather. The North and across the Nation, that has suffered a brutal winter, is welcoming the warming breath and the vibrant colors of yellow, pink and purple of Mother Nature.

President Donald Trump, Vice President Pence and the Nation's team of experts are doing, in spite of innuendo and misleading statements, an outstanding job keeping the Nation informed about the crisis that is touching us all.

Even die-hard Democrats are saying "enough is enough" and the acid tongue of Minority Leader, Nancy Pelosi, will be given a 'Time Out.' Both parties are learning that they must work together for a Nation in need, NOT a divided Nation.

We, as a Nation, need to put politics in a "Time Out." We, together, need to let our positive voices of support be heard loud and clear. These support voices need to be so loud that they will drown-out the never-ending fault-finders. This does not mean that we put on 'rose-colored, there is nothing wrong in the world' glasses. But, it does mean we can stop the voices of negativity.

Yes, China was the 'flash-point' of the Coronavirus. No nation with, (as of March 22), the deaths of 81,093, needs to be told. They have and will continue to pay the price.

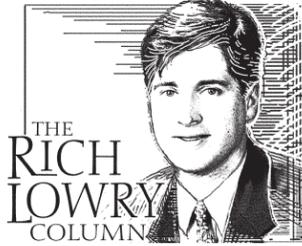
We, as Americans, are a Nation of survivors. We are at our best during adversity. We feel God's power, flowing to ALL of His children of the world. We feel His love reaching out to ALL those in need.

Over the doors, of the entrance to the United Nation's Building, are the words of the 13th century's Iranian Poet, Sa'adi. They might prove helpful to bring a 'Time Out' to the Blame Game... It is time for us ALL to have a 'Time Out'!

Human beings are members of a whole
In creation of one essence and soul
A member is afflicted with pain
Other members unease with remain
If you have no sympathy for human pain
The name human you cannot retain.

Trump Didn't Dictate Coronavirus Response

What happens when the supposed dictator won't dictate? This is the conundrum confronted by the harshest critics of President Donald Trump who have gone from warning he is a budding despot to complaining he hasn't done enough to impose his will during the coronavirus crisis.



They can't believe that he didn't urge sports leagues to cancel their seasons, call for school systems to close, or tell bars and restaurants to shutter before this wave of closures began.

As a New York Times report put it, Trump "has essentially become a bystander as school superintendents, sports commissioners, college presidents, governors and business owners across the country take it upon themselves to shut down much of American life."

Ordinarily, tyrants aren't bystanders. They don't give other political players and civic institutions wide latitude to make their own decisions. They don't have to be pushed to declare a national emergency unlocking various powers. They don't have to be lobbied to call out the military to deal with a domestic problem.

Trump has now declared an emergency and issued national guidelines against gatherings of more than 10 people, but his initial instinct was to urge people to stay calm and carry on.

The problem with Trump's mode of governance isn't that he's a would-be authoritarian. Rather, he has a highly personalized view of the presidency and an abiding belief that he can talk his way out of any difficulty -- including, initially, a public-health crisis not susceptible to spin. This deeply flawed approach contributed to his early stumbles in the coronavirus response, but it doesn't make him a falangist.

What we're likely to find is that Trump ends up leading a characteristically American effort against the outbreak. As Yuval Levin of the American Enterprise Institute points out, we usually fumble around in the early stages of a national crisis before bringing to bear massive resources to wrestle it to the ground.

For better or worse, the Great Depression prompted the creation of the most far-reaching economic programs in our history after a period of passivity and drift. We responded to the perceived crisis of the Soviet Sputnik launch with the Apollo program that soaked up 4% of GDP. Hurricane Katrina overwhelmed New Orleans and initially FEMA, before we put an army general in charge of the relief.

The initial indications of a financial crisis in 2008 were greeted with denial and half-measures. Then, the federal government responded with a historic bailout of the banks and the Federal Reserve undertook an unprecedented program to pump liquidity into the economy.

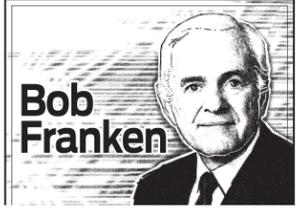
The outlines of a similar response to the coronavirus are already evident. The move from relative normality to large parts of the country being shut down was remarkably swift -- it happened in the space of about a week. Testing has been slow to come online, but is ramping up now. If hospitals are overwhelmed, we will see the rapid retrofitting of additional space. The Federal Reserve and the federal government are embarking on major stimulus and relief programs.

Such is our robust, multi-layered society and system of government that much of this doesn't depend on the president, let alone a dictator.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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Testing Our Society

Admit it. Many of you who heard that President Donald Trump had finally decided to take a coronavirus test were rooting for it to come back positive, meaning he had contracted the disease and at the very least would have to self-quarantine.



That is not acceptable, people. We can't wish harm on anyone -- not even Donald Trump, not anyone. Period. The very fact that so many were wishing for the worst for him is a reflection of how toxic the atmosphere has become in our society, thanks in great part to where he has taken us. But repeat after me: The negative result for Trump is a good thing, like it would be for any human. Unfortunately, too many humans are being threatened by this new pestilence that a malicious Mother Nature has unleashed on an unprepared world.

A few of our leaders have been heroic, but all too often they have not, to put it mildly. Through blithering incompetence they have retreated to wishful thinking, ignoring the warnings of the true experts, like Tony Fauci, who has been around worldwide public health crises for decades as director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. (Put him in the heroic category).

In addition, they are saddled with a U.S. health care system that could be charitably described as rickety, made worse by a series of past decisions that were based on politics or budget considerations. As a result of this absence of well-thought-out analysis, future catastrophes were inevitable -- like this one, where we are clearly unprepared.

Glossing over these many shortcomings just won't cut it. The lack of tests and hospital emergency equipment are just some of the examples of the current breakdown. Finally, officials are scrambling to catch up. That is inherently difficult, particularly in an environment polluted by self-serving infighting instead of the pulling together that is vital if we are going to address this problem effectively, before it overwhelms us.

Isn't it clear that the cave-in of the investment markets is really a vote of no confidence in our leaders? Is the latest Fed drop to near zero interest rates enough to ignite a recovery? In desperation, the captains of industry are getting involved. They are following the decisive actions of those who control the sports world, who literally stepped up to the plate by shutting down.

Not only that, but the players with their deep pockets are sharing their wealth with the thousands of anonymous support workers who have no pockets at all, meaning the money they earn by working the games is what pays for their families' food on the table. In some cases, the team owners are following suit. This kind of good behavior is also contagious.

On the other side we have the sleazebags, who see this situation as an opportunity to run scams. They are out there in cyberspace with their wacky conspiracy theories, such as my personal favorite that this is all really a concoction of the media trying to bring down Donald Trump. Frankly, Donald Trump is bringing himself down. For the most part, we reporters are merely the bearers of the bad news.

So far, the coronavirus has been too much for many of our leaders. Our only hope is concerted action by the rest of our community, in spite of them.

Bob Franken is an Emmy Award-winning reporter who covered Washington for more than 20 years with CNN.

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