

## **J. Michael Locke**

### **Musings**

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#### **#68: The Loss of Trust in our Institutions**

##### **May 30, 2020**

I worry about a development in our society. We are losing faith and trust in institutions. Not just one but many. Hard for society to work that way.

Start with church. There has been a drastic decline in church membership over the last two decades from 70% to about 50% according to Gallup. The child abuse scandal within the Catholic church has gone to the core of trust. Not only were there “bad actors”, the institution by and large attempted to cover it up. We personally have sharply reduced our church going due to travel soccer (Sunday morning not protected anymore) and the politicization of our pulpit. Sad.

Move to law enforcement. Hard to digest the George Floyd video. Tragic. Laquan McDonald was shot 16 times unnecessarily and then the police in Chicago tried to bury it. How can you blame the African American community for not trusting the police? This anger has been amplified due to the Covid crisis. Much has been written about the disproportionate impact of the Coronavirus on communities of color. This is not only a health comment but an economic comment. Times are fragile. However, this doesn’t excuse looting and violence. We need a modern MLK right now.

I don’t know what was going on with the FBI and the Michael Flynn investigation but doesn’t seem like a group you should totally trust.

Move to the news. We live in parallel universes if you watch CNN then turn to Fox. They seem more like advocacy channels rather than neutral reporters. Listen to the language chosen when covering a story – the words imbed a bias. Where is Walter Cronkite? At least Judy Woodruff appears close.

How about school leadership? The Chicago Public Schools Superintendent (Barbara Byrd Bennett) was caught cutting a lucrative side deal with a company that was then receiving a huge contract from CPS. From my viewpoint, the teachers union is about the teachers and not about the kids.

Many have commented about my “distrust” of government which has come across in these musings. My experience has been that government is not a source of good. Unelected bureaucrats yield enormous power with unlimited resources. How about the CFPB (accountable to no one) going after auto lenders for racism based on a statistical model of “assumed race” based on zip code and last name?

Mike Madigan has been running the House of Representatives in Illinois for decades. He had an “attractive” challenger file to primary him – articulate, Harvard-educated Hispanic man. What did Madigan do? He had his cronies get two additional Hispanic individuals on the ballot so voters might be confused.

By and large we still have trust in our judicial system but it is delicate. Trump criticisms of individual judges is dangerous. I am with Chief Justice Roberts: *"We do not have Obama judges or Trump judges, Bush judges or Clinton judges, What we have is an extraordinary group of dedicated judges doing their level best to do equal right to those appearing before them."*

Hard for society to work well if the institutions at its core are not trusted. Obviously, one "bad actor" does not mean an institution is bad but there are too many bad actors in the system right now. Too many pedophile priests, over-aggressive cops and shady politicians. We need to call them out and get them out.

I believe this loss of trust in institutions is why many consumers are moving to referral-based purchasing. They only trust their network of friends. Seems like the only common ground for our citizens right now are weather, sports, puppies and ice cream.

Society is kind of a tinderbox of emotion right now. I would encourage all readers of these musings to be forces of calm and help others reduce their stress, anxiety and anger.

Back to work.

jml

### *Second Thoughts*

Can't say I agree but an interesting perspective shared with me that professional standards (like the lack of typos discussed in yesterday's musing) perpetuate a white supremacy culture. Here is an article taking that view (thanks Kate McNamara): [the bias of professionalism standards](#)