

COMMON SENSE II

Capitalizing on the familiarity and influence of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" pamphlets that provided American colonists with exposure to the conversation of great thinkers in the pre-Revolutionary period, this paper assumes the name COMMON SENSE II. Similarly, today's series of pamphlets strives to give a direct response to great political events and ideas of our time.

January 2019

Accountability Issue

Volume 14 Issue 1

What Will They Do?

By Barb Anderson

Now that they are elected and sworn into office, what are they really going to do? When they were out campaigning, they heard about the many needs such as:

- ◆ Healthcare access and reform,
- ◆ Infrastructure repair and expansion,
- ◆ Climate change recognition and positive action,
- ◆ Strong international alliances,
- ◆ Immigration reform based on facts not bigotry and slogans.

Are they going to continue blaming Obamacare for the healthcare problems, or are they strong enough to do what we all want, healthcare for all, not just for those who can afford it? Is there enough money left from the Trump give away to the top money people to really work on our infrastructure? Does science mean anything to those who ran for office and won?



Global warming is a fact, and we, the people who live on this Earth, are to blame, which includes all of the government. We are the people who have to change our way of doing everything that affects the Earth. Our President and everyone on down has to face the truth and help all of us to know what to do, how to do it, and the reasons for what we do, and enact the bills

that will force us all to live the way we should to protect our world. We know most of this, but sadly we have to be pushed, prodded, and forced to do the right thing.

That involves the other countries of the world. Let's not forget the treat-

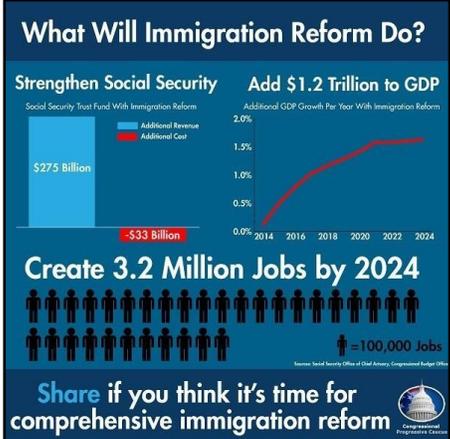


ment of those other countries and the world alliances that we used to work with, not against. I often think of Paul Wellston's statement, "We all do better when we all do better." Trump wants to be the most important or boss of the world. What has been done to us is because we have treated others unfairly and other countries no longer want to deal with us. Trump wants to spend so much money on the military with the idea that when we have the best trained and equipped

military we will be the strongest, and other countries will leave us alone. Earned respect and mutual efforts are not even considered.

Our immigration policies have to be changed. I challenge everyone to search his/her genealogical history. If you are not a Native American, where is your family from? How did they get here? Why did they come? Understanding ourselves will help us to deal fairly with others.

My hope is that those just taking office will want to be truly American and treat others with the fairness and respect they deserve. Fair treatment for all is the basis of true solutions to our needs.



COMMON SENSE II is published by the Itasca Progressive Caucus in Grand Rapids, Minnesota

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Stuck between Realities

By Bob Passi

Our reality seems to be stuck in some kind of limbo. Part of the government is now shut down, Congress is dysfunctional, and some kind of partisan standoff seems to be the modus operandi for much of the rest of society.

Things have not been all that good in our political system for quite a while, but the entire process seems to have come to a grinding halt since the 2016 election. Looking at it from the perspective of the psychology of victimhood helps explain the dynamics of the situation.

Think about our day to day processes of living and understanding our world as a kind of reality bubble we create for ourselves based on some narrative we have created or that the society has created for us to make sense of the world. That reality provides a way for us not to have to try continually to put all the pieces together on a daily or a minute by minute basis. We lived in such a reality before the 2016 election. It told us how our politics worked and how our processes and institutions could be expected to react.



The 2016 elections shattered that reality bubble, and we were faced with a new situation that did not compute. In fact, the results of what had happened seemed impossible to many. It looked like some

kind of cosmic error or bad joke.

When something traumatic happens to us, we often retreat into another, tentative and undefined reality bubble for a time to give ourselves the opportunity to begin to make sense of the new and unforeseen reality that faces us. We are temporarily victims of unforeseen events and have lost our bearings, our basic orientation to the world.

After the initial shock, we begin to notice that our former reality is now missing in action. One of the first tendencies is to want it back to provide some stability to our lives. At that point it is very easy to begin to focus on the unfairness of the change, how our reality has been ripped away from us without our permission. It is just not right!



So our next order of business is to begin to look for causes of that unjust disruption and especially who or what caused it with the magical belief that if we can just explain how it all happened and/or who is to blame, we can retrieve our old reality still fully intact. We can blame the world or life, but that is a bit amorphous, so it is more satisfying to search out people or organizations to blame. Once we have done that, we can get down to the process of demonizing them and searching out ways to correct the imbalance with punishment or vengeance. In fact, we can become quite obsessed with that process, ignoring nearly



everything else in our quest for righteous restoration. We are also helped along by those who agree that our change of reality without our permission is unjust and unfair and who glorify our efforts to get revenge and to demonize and punish. We are now

just a short way from the pitchforks and torches, and the energy grows in a very satisfying way. (Does this begin to sound vaguely familiar?)

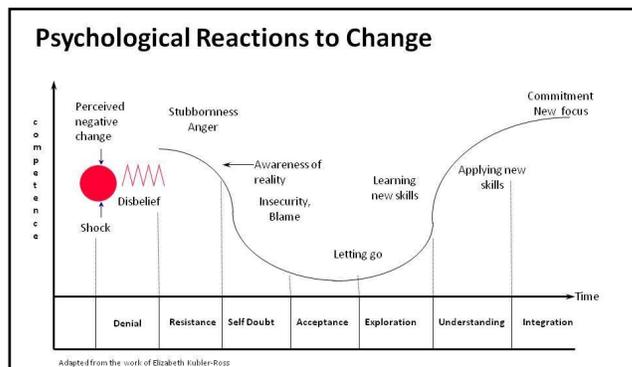
We are now sure that if we punish the evil-doers, we can

restore the old reality once again.

However, back in the real world, life goes on. Our transition bubble of victimhood has not stopped the world from continuing on its course. Events take place, nature continues to thrive, and the universe moves on with or without our participation.

The reality in that continuing world is that there is now a new reality for us to deal with and all the procrastination and dithering about its rightness or fairness mean nothing. The new reality is just that: the new reality. We will need to begin to construct a new reality bubble for ourselves to be able to deal with it.

That job is somewhat daunting but necessary. We have done



things like that before—every time our world has shifted—a trauma, the death of a loved one, a new job, a new relationship, parenthood, recovery from an operation or from an addiction, the need to deal with new limitations because of aging. If we had lost our arm in a tragic accident, we would at some point need to stop feeling sorry for ourselves for the loss of our old two-armed reality and find what resources we have at our disposal to create a new and workable one-armed reality for ourselves. We take stock, make a tentative plan, and put it into action, adjusting as we go.

In doing so, we choose to become a part of the new reality and to engage with it to play our new role in dealing with it humanely and effectively. We simply need to give up our anger, our negativity, and our illusory hope that we can restore what is now gone. No matter how temporarily satisfying that quest might have been, we need to find a way to interact positively with that new reality, recognizing that we can now take part in defining that new reality.

We must rise above the emotional aspects of change and stop feeling put upon. We need to give up that strange security of victimhood to accept the new reality, whether we like it or not. In doing this we are choosing to play a part in shaping the future. Our new reality bubble and the narrative that will define it is up to us. And it is up to us to rise to that challenge and move on if we want to create a better world.

We must let go of the old which is now gone and become part of the new which is full of energy and potential and is the only way to find a way to renew ourselves and to once again play an effective role in constructing a world which will be humane and sustainable. Time to get back in the game! The future is ours to define, but only if we choose to participate realistically.



An Idea

By David Bolstorff

I have an idea. I think that we should build a wall on the southern border, across the mountains, down in the valleys, and across the desert; then we should build a wall on the northern border, over the Rockies, through the forests, across the plains; then we should build a wall on the western seashore right next to the water so no one can sneak in by kayak or submarine; then we should build a wall on the eastern seashore right next to the water so no one can sneak in by sailboat or paddle board; then we should build a wall on the southern sea-



shore right next to the water so no one can sneak in by a wealthy oil company's tanker or yacht; then we should build a wall around every airport in the country with one small entrance/exit door for the people we deem to be okay, primarily according to color with no doors for others. If we do that, if we, descendants of immigrants, keep those immigrants out—those people who are desperate and asking for help—plus if we continue to cause hurt to some of the people who are already in, won't God praise us? And won't He especially praise the 88% of Congress who say they are Christians and that they are followers of Jesus—the Jesus who said that, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. And the second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."



Yes, won't He praise us!

- ◆ Won't He praise us for choosing power over love?
- ◆ Won't He praise us for choosing control over Justice?
- ◆ Won't He praise us for choosing winning over fairness?
- ◆ For choosing exclusion over inclusion; for choosing bigotry over equality?

Yes, won't He praise us!

When we betray our profession of faith by betraying our neighbor, and by betraying our neighbor we betray God, yes, won't He praise us!

But to many, winning is more important than God, so they don't care about Him except maybe when needed!! Yes, won't Jesus, who said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments," (meaning you can separate church and state, but you cannot separate faith and life) praise us? Especially for all the walls we can build.



We already know someone who likes to be a wall builder, not just with concrete or steel but with bigoted words, with prejudicial words, with hateful words, with sarcastic words, with name calling words, with vulgar words, with



self-centered words, and with untrue words. But the real question is which one are we: a wall builder or a wall remover, someone who hurts or someone who helps, especially if we call ourselves "Christian"? Or, as someone else might say, are we just "Fake Christians"?

A Government For the People

By Valerie Conner

I don't know about you, but I'm pretty disgusted with the refusal of the Republican elected officials in Washington to govern and when they do take a stab at it, do so with such maddening incompetence. These are the same people who expect teachers, nurses, police officers, and others in service professions to be accountable for things beyond their control. Meanwhile, the government is shut down because Senate Majority Leader McConnell refuses to bring easily passed legislation to a vote because he has forgotten that Congress is a separate and equal branch of government set up to serve as a check and balance to an out of control, emotionally immature President who has no sense of responsibility or accountability much less the knowledge, desire, temperament, and capability to govern.



Our only hope of preserving our democracy and world peace is the Democratic majority in the House, which has been dealt a weak hand from a stacked deck. Although we eked out a bare survival in the first two years of the current regime (I can't call it an administration), much of the damage done is irreversible. And it is only getting worse. I hope that our traditional allies understand we are being led by an evil ignoramus and are willing to tolerate his misguided "diplomacy" and resume relations as usual once our long nightmare is over and that our adversaries not implement their plans against us. Trump's talk of getting out of NATO truly scares me.

Yes, we have problems, but we also have ways of dealing with them. We need to be willing to invest in a possible future instead seeing government as a problem, not a solution, and seeing funding not as an unnecessary cost but as a wise investment. Think of the possibility of the Green New Deal Vicki describes. Think of affordable, world-class healthcare for all that Barb promotes. Think of economic security and fairness Bob advocates. Think of advanced, state-of-the-art, safe infrastructure we need to stay competitive and to lead the rest of the world. These investments have been deemed too costly by short-sighted, narrow-minded politicians who prefer to accede to their worst angels instead of truly governing for the improvement and preservation of this great country.

Trump ran on the platform of making America great again. When had it ceased to be great? Oh, yes, after January 20, 2017. He wanted to drain the swamp; to do so, he first needed to create the swamp of corruption where it hadn't existed. In this he's done a good job. This country is strong and resourceful, but it is being sorely tested. With our eternal vigilance and political activism, we can overcome this threat on all sides. We must. It is up to us. Now.



At the Pearly Gates*

(Continued)

By David Bolstorff

And what is your name, St. Peter did ask
Don't you recognize me St. Peter without my righteous mask?
I'm the one who proudly used the Bible's word on law to justify
immigration actions.
Oh, I recognize you now, St. Peter did reply
You're the one who created chaos and factions
Not knowing or caring that the greatest law is to love one another
Meaning everyone and not just father and mother
And then St. Peter asked with a sad, reluctant sigh
Waiting for a rationalized reply
Why did you then take children from parents away
Leaving those parents in detention camps to stay
Because God wouldn't call that love, His love anyway.
I thought we got rid of that during World War Two
Even though since some called dictators about love don't have a
clue
Almost like hidden genocide against a select few
Didn't you know how cruel and against God's will that was
Or didn't you really care about what a person does?
But no matter now, it's not only what you say the Almighty does
see
It's more about what you do being the key
And I hate to say it, but it doesn't look good for some
This also I must say, even if you mind
Tell your boss, whoever that might be
That their boss is God
And that they are not God's you see
And that building walls either to keep people in or keep people out
Is not something my Son died for and not something they should
be about
Next!

And who are you St. Peter did ask
What in your lifetime was your greatest task?
Well, I am very proud to say that I belonged to the Religious Right
And I took it upon myself to help God out with His enormous sin
fight
Using myself as the standard by which one has to live
And if one didn't follow, just like me, the godly rules I did give
Then I judged them unfit in God's sight
According to those rules I had made with God's name attached
No matter if they were somewhat farfetched
Then if they didn't abide I judged them unfit and less than me
For I am the kind of person I believe God wants to see
With the only exceptions, the exceptions I, not God, chose to be
That way I could control the issue and that being the key.
You chose abortion and gay rights as primary fights, St. Peter did
reply

But what about the divorce, bigotry, prejudice, discrimination, voting
rights, child abusing, sexual depravity, narcissism, vulgarity, judgmental,
lying, deceitful, manipulative, condemning, greed, and power hunger
that you seemingly deny

Or to those do you hide behind the mask of forgiveness so you don't
lose control

Forgetting that everything done and thought in the dark of one's soul
Will someday be seen in the light of where you want to go

I want you to know, St. Peter went on

That we had people like this in our day too

They were called Pharisees and not just a few

And you should know how Jesus felt, not about them, but what they
were

For in the Scriptures you will see words He used very clear

Hypocrite, viper, deceitful, manipulative, judgmental, and betraying

All just the opposite of what God wants our lives to be saying

Yes, I remember them well

St. Peter went on to tell

Because they were amongst those who betrayed Jesus that day

Because He wasn't one of them, but lived according to God's will, and
not their way

So this I have to say to you before we depart

Whether it is too late or not

Which is something decided by God and not you and me

You are saved only by His grace that His Son died to give

So then to be true to God and to self

You must with grace then live

Next!

And who are you, St. Peter did ask

Behind that ancient mask

And haven't you been in this line many times before?

Yes, but each time the Pearly Gates are closed and I have been
shown the door.

But who are you behind that iron mask, St. Peter asked, as if taking
the mask to task.

I am a conqueror of ancient times, or a dictator of today

One who desires power, control, authority, and people to do as I say.

Do you know what the First Commandment says, St Peter asked with
a sigh?

Yes, I do, was the mask's reply .

What is it then?

And what is its lesson?

I am the Lord, your God. You shall have no other gods before me,
the mask did say.

You must not understand then that other gods means anything more
important than God, St. Peter then replied

And that includes yourself and anyone else you see

But apparently you must not because god is what you are trying to be
Next!

*To be continued

It's Time for a Green New Deal—for a Clean, Renewable, Sustainable Future

By Vicki Andrews

It's a new year and many believe it is our last chance to take climate change seriously and face up to the disastrous consequences of continuing to do little or nothing to save our planet.

In a recent report the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stated that we have just twelve years to get carbon emissions under control before catastrophic climate impacts become unavoidable. Please note: this means we must start now, work hard and quickly, and bring it under control within twelve years. There's no time for more debate. This is real and it's happening now! If you want your children—and grandchildren—to have a future on this planet, you need to get on board now!

We are in luck. We have Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and a bevy of other young, intelligent, enthusiastic new Congressional Representatives moving into the U. S. House of Representatives with directions and purpose—and a plan called the Green New Deal. In very simple terms as stated in a recent article by David Roberts in www.vox.com, it is “a massive program of investments in clean energy jobs and infrastructure, meant to transform not just the energy sector but the entire economy. It is meant both to decarbonize the economy and to make it fairer and more just.” This is meant to effectively and comprehensively tackle climate change and, at the same time, the country's income inequality.



The Green Party US has a poster (GPUS poster Green-New-Deal 2018) that offers a short but comprehensive explanation of the plan which will

- ◆ **“Create 20 million jobs by transitioning to 100% clean renewable energy by 2030,**
- ◆ **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2020,**
- ◆ **Invest in public transit projects, sustainable agriculture, conservation, and restoration of our critical infrastructure and ecosystems,**
- ◆ **Ban fracking, tar sands, and offshore drilling,**
- ◆ **Halt all subsidies for and investment in fossil fuels,**
- ◆ **Redirect funds toward renewable energy and ecological conservation, research and development,**
- ◆ **Build a nationwide grid to provide clean, democratically controlled energy for all.”**

Ocasio-Cortez has a draft proposal posted on her website (<https://ocasio2018.com>) that contains the basic outline, but there's much to be done. We all need to read the proposal and the many articles available online about the Green New Deal, learn all we can about it, and urge our families and friends to sit up and pay attention also. Take time to watch a recent panel presentation, *The Climate Crisis and the Green New Deal*, from The Sanders Institute (available on Facebook). Then on to our political



leaders: write to them, call them, and meet with them to let them know you believe this is essential action that we must begin immediately. We have wasted too much time debating the issue, ignoring the consequences, hoping for some magical solution that will save the Earth without much effort on our part. We have little time left to act. If we fail to take this seriously, we will see unbelievable, unimaginable destruction to our planet in the very near future.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS—GET INVOLVED AND GET IT DONE!

Event	Date /Time	Location
DFL Headquarters Open (326-6296)	Tues & Thurs 2-5 pm	DFL Headquarters
Itasca Progressive Caucus (259-4490)	3rd Monday 6:30 pm	DFL Headquarters
DFL Central Committee Meets	4th Monday 6:30 pm	DFL Headquarters
DFL Social Club & Lunch	1st Wednesday Noon	DFL Headquarters
DFL Pot Luck (Open to the Public)	3rd Wednesday 5:30 pm	DFL Headquarters
Earth Circle	3rd Saturday 2:00 pm	GR Public Library
Deadline for <i>Common Sense II</i>	February 8, 2019	conray@arvig.net