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C-Span
400 Capital Street, N.W.
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Dear C-Span:

I compliment you on your morning, round-table format. I am able to spend only a short time watching before I must tend to other business but I find the exchanges between guests--and between guests and callers--very interesting.

Assuming that your callers, in particular, are truly representative of the general public, it is an "eye opener" to listen to them. To say the least, there is a significant portion of them who are white males espousing dogma as fact and ideology as solution. These males are single-minded in their views, reject out of hand any view that is a micrometer left of theirs, satanize most everyone of a different viewpoint, and project their own animosities and proclivities to those they despise the most...that dreaded terror, the liberal.

But if I am amused by such concrete and misguided thinking, I am--at the same time--terribly concerned about the growing surge of intolerance and distorted sentiment. These folks, who often claim to be the true patriot and believer, want the entire world to march with them in their narrow rut of acceptance and anti-democratic thought...and the Republicans, who play to such sentiments and who promote fear of disintegration of societal fabric and of the threat from enemies within, have been instrumental in its spread.

I would suggest to those of my countrymen who are conservatives of old or moderate cloth that they watch their step lest this animal they have created to regain political control does not one day consume them in an authoritarian feast on the flesh and thought of fine Americans who have always found diversity in culture and ideas stimulating rather than threatening.

It is true that the implementation of liberal ideas and programs has not always been successful. Sometimes programs are not well developed. Sometimes programs are not well managed.

Sometimes the consequences of certain ideas can't be predicted until they have been implemented for a period of time. And, sometimes these well-intended programs are so encumbered by the law making process[amendment, accommodation, etc] that they are neither recognizable nor practical by the time they become law. In the latter case both sides of the aisle share the blame.

The reason so many of us demonized liberals now support change to many programs is not because our ultra conservative brethren are breathing fire down our neck but because we have realized quite independently that some things just don't work any more. We don't disagree that change is required but, rather, how we ought go about change. I generally do not care for flippancy but after listening to many of your callers I think its fair to say that the ultra conservative viewpoint to change can be best likened to "trashing the sweet little baby because its diaper is dirty."

I would suggest that those who might be interested in the phenomenon of Authoritarianism ought read Bob Altmeyers 1988 book entitled, ENEMIES OF FREEDOM: Right-Wing Authoritarianism, published by Josey-Bass. It presents--for the open-minded--the result of in-depth research on this phenomena and is quite applicable to today's prevailing political winds.

One last comment unrelated to the above: about two weeks ago a gentleman called the morning round-table and suggested that journalists[reporters in particular] ought not interject their opinion or allow their opinion to influence the news reports they prepare. Your older gentleman moderator, smiling wisely, challenged the caller to tell him where it was written that reporters ought do that. The caller didn't know and neither the moderator nor his round table offered an answer. I call your attention to the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics as revised, Section I, Accuracy and Objectivity, paragraph 5: "Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expression of opinions. News reports should be free of opinion or bias and represent all sides of an issue."

I also call your attention to paragraph 4 of the same section which begins with, "Newspaper headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of the articles they accompany." This is an often violated ethic as is the one pertaining to opinion.

Again I enjoy the morning round tables. They broaden my understanding of prevailing political currents.

Sincerely,

