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## **The Candidates**

by *Rick Joyner*

The most frequently asked question that I receive is for my opinion of the Republican Presidential candidates. There is much evidence that people are more engaged in the process this time and have a resolve to know the candidates. Many believe that President Obama did not get vetted by the media or even his challengers, and there is good evidence the citizens of the U.S. will not allow that to happen again. This engagement is cause for hope.

The following is a brief personal perspective of the present candidates. This is personal, and may or may not be the view of the other leaders or members of The Oak Initiative. I hope you find them useful, and I will give them in alphabetical order.



### **Michele Bachmann**

I first met Michele Bachmann at a lunch that Gen. Boykin and I had with about twenty conservative congressional leaders in early 2009. At the time, I had never seen or heard of her, but after the lunch I told Gen. Boykin that she and Mary Fallin (now Governor of Oklahoma) had more leadership than maybe all of the others combined. Shortly after that lunch, she rose dramatically in visibility and influence, and my opinion of her has not changed. She is a remarkable leader with uncommon intelligence, character, and tenacity.

Even with little chance of winning against the juggernaut of the Obama agenda when he first came into office, Bachmann fought with courage and resolve for her principles. She stood resolutely against Obamacare and the lack of regard for due process in the way legislation was being passed, without even giving legislators time to read what was in it. She deserves the increasing influence she has gained in the national debate.

Congresswoman Bachmann is a sincere Christian with rare depth to her convictions. She was a lawyer and a prosecutor, which comes across in her aggressiveness in

attacking both issues and other candidates. In the debates, this did not go over well as her attacks started to seem personal more than about the issues, and this may have cost her any real chance she might have had at the nomination. However, this is a great and necessary quality in going after crime, and I think she would make a great Attorney General.

### **Herman Cain**

If there is one candidate who seems to have been prepared especially “for such a time as this,” it would be Herman Cain. Because he was virtually unknown, and there is much vetting yet to do, there is far more to him than has yet come out. He is one of those rare people who the more you find out about him the better he looks. The following are some of the important bullet points of his resume that has just recently found its way onto the Internet.

- His father was chauffeur for Robert Woodruff of the Coca-Cola Company, and his mother was a maid.
- He was literally a rocket scientist and rose to the top of his field in computer and technology management. He then rose to the top as a banker, then in the franchise restaurant business, accumulating a vast knowledge of some of the most important economic issues now facing America.
- He has a Bachelor’s Degree in Mathematics.
- He has a Master’s Degree in Computer Science.
- He was a mathematician for the Navy, where he worked on missile ballistics (making him a rocket scientist).
- He was a computer systems analyst for Coca-Cola.
- He became VP of Corporate Data Systems and Services for Pillsbury (being in charge of information systems for a major corporation is the top in this field).
- He achieved all of the above before reaching the age of 35.
- After reaching the top in the information systems world, he changed careers to become a business manager.
- He took charge of Pillsbury’s 400 Burger King Restaurants in the Philadelphia area, which were the company’s poorest performers in the country, and after just three years, he had turned them into the company’s best performers.



- He was then asked by Pillsbury to take charge of their Godfather's Pizza chain that was on the verge of bankruptcy and he made it profitable in just 14 months. This ability to identify problems and turn losers into winners may be the single most important asset of the next President.
- In 1988, he led a buyout of the Godfather's Pizza chain from Pillsbury making him the owner of a restaurant chain.
- He became chairman of the National Restaurant Association during this time, which is the primary government interface for the restaurant industry, giving him possibly some of the best experience he could have received about how the government works and doesn't work.
- He then became an adviser to the Federal Reserve System on how monetary policy changes would affect American businesses.
- He was then named Chairman of the Kansas City Federal Reserve Bank. This is just one step below the Chairmanship of the Federal Reserve that many consider the most powerful position in the world for economic policy. There could hardly be a better position than this to understand the political forces that impact the monetary system and our economy.
- After reaching the top of the banking industry, he changed careers for a fourth time to become a writer and public speaker. His books include *Speak as a Leader*, *CEO of Self*, *Leadership is Common Sense*, and *They Think You're Stupid*.
- He then became a radio show host on WSB in Atlanta, the largest talk radio station in the country.
- Herman Cain is a committed Christian.

America is facing some of the most serious crises in our history, but the most deadly one has been the mismanagement of our economy. Cain likely understands the economy better than any of the other candidates and has practical, workable ideas about how to fix it that have been tested in the fires of real experience.

Even so, having the right plan is only part of the package—you must also have the courage, resolve, and endurance to accomplish it. No one else presently in the field has Cain's track record for all of these together. This is why I think there is not another candidate who seems to be so perfectly fitted "for such a time as this."

This is not an endorsement, but an observation. By any measurement he is a remarkable leader with remarkable brilliance combined with practical, down-to-earth common sense. He has a strong moral compass and uncommon clarity of speech. When he answers questions, you can tell he's digging deep to convey what he believes rather



than just responding to what might be politically expedient. He is a leader, not a politician. If we do return as a nation to the course, then professional politicians will become an extinct species and we will again be led by leaders. This must begin at the top.

Herman Cain also has a deep understanding of some of the most crucial issues facing our future, such as Islam and the strategy and intent of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as the importance of our ally Israel. It is understandable that the excitement about Herman Cain's candidacy is growing. There is still a long way to go in the campaign, and we have to expect that having never been in a political race before, he will make some mistakes. Even so, to date, Cain has conducted himself and his campaign with remarkable wisdom and grace. The fact that he is African-American is a bonus, but I think people would like him if he were green. He is a very impressive American and has certainly raised the stock of the Republican Party.

### **Newt Gingrich**

Former Speaker of the House Gingrich is considered to have the best grasp of the whole spectrum of issues facing the country. He is a thinker with depth and clarity, and of all the candidates, he probably knows best how the government works or doesn't work. He also has practical ideas about how to get it working again. He has some of the most brilliant insights about how healthcare can be reformed, greatly reducing costs, and raising the quality. He also has very sound ideas about how to take some of the biggest shackles off of the economy.

There is a strong consensus that Newt Gingrich is the most brilliant and knowledgeable of the candidates, but is not electable because of personal issues. Perhaps, but after Obama got elected we may never be able to say again that someone is not electable. When everyone thought Newt Gingrich's campaign was dead with the mass resignations from his staff, he did not quit, but showed impressive resilience and endurance and is now rising in the poles again.

As a main contributor of "The Contract with America," he balanced the budget under Clinton and even started paying down the deficit, Newt's credentials for getting the job done, which is one of the main challenges facing the nation at this time, is unequalled. He worked with President Clinton to accomplish the first true Welfare Reform that worked, reducing those on entitlements by the greatest margins ever. He does know how to get some of the important challenges now facing the nation resolved. He also has a good grasp of the challenges of Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood and has not been afraid to address them with boldness. His stand for Israel has been consistent. That is courage, and that is leadership.

If Newt does not get the nomination for President, he would be a significant asset in the Administration. He would make great HHS Secretary. He could fix healthcare from this position and some of the other great challenges facing America domestically. However, Newt's knowledge and experience is so vast in so many areas that having him



in the cabinet where his insights could benefit the President, who will be facing major challenges from many directions at once, would be a major benefit to the country. Newt Gingrich is a national asset and should be given a seat at the table. He may not have the best chance to be the candidate, but we should not rule him out either.

### **Ron Paul**

Congressman Ron Paul has been consistent in his positions in taking on some of the important issues on the times. He has many good ideas about domestic policy, and some about foreign policy, which need to be considered, but he also has some that are considered too extreme and too much of an isolationist for him to get the nomination. Maybe so, but again, after Obama's election we should not count anyone out.

Ron Paul's opposition to the Federal Reserve Bank is starting to get traction. Certainly the Fed, which can have a major impact on the economy of the nation and the world, should at the very least be audited, and have some oversight by Congress. However, with Congress being so incompetent itself, the only thing scarier than not knowing what the Fed is going to do, would be having Congress controlling our central banking. This issue needs to be resolved, but with great care and wisdom or we could create much worse problems.

Ron Paul is someone conservatives love and hate at the same time. He is extremely conservative in some areas, and extremely liberal in others. It is a rare combination and appeals to many. However, his isolationist views, and some of his statements that seem to blame America for 9/11 and other terrorist attacks, will be hard for most to ever get over. He is a factor, and although it is unlikely that he will ever get beyond the level of support he now has, that support is deep and devoted, even if small. If you can get by some of the things that are extreme, he does have a lot to say that deserves to be heard.



### **Rick Perry**

It is refreshing to see a major national politician be so upfront and unapologetic about his Christian faith. This kind of honesty about who he is was certainly one factor that thrust him to the front of the pack right out of the shoot. The other major factor is that he brings a very strong record of accomplishment as Governor of Texas, one of the brightest success stories in the country since the debacle of 2008. Now to the major issues.

### **Tort Reform**

The Texas Tort Reform is one of the main factors that has made Texas one of the brightest economic stories and a true jobs powerhouse. It has helped to draw many large and small companies to the Lone Star State, and if enacted nationally, could draw many companies back to America. It is one of the most important factors needed to get our

economy going again. After the “Damocles’ Sword” of Obamacare and the deficits that are hanging over the economy, there is possibly no other single factor that could so energize the economy of the nation like tort reform would.

This is not to imply that there are not other major shackles on the economy, but up to a third of the cost of many big ticket items, as well as just about everything else, is liability insurance because of potential lawsuits. This is a huge weight on the economy and could cut the cost of healthcare by as much as one-third. The impact of putting such a large amount of the resources back into the hands of entrepreneurs and consumers would be major.

### **Illegal Immigration**

Illegal immigration is presently the main issue that has stopped Governor Perry’s campaign momentum. This is a major issue for the Republican Party and America. Hispanics are almost all conservative, pro-life, pro-family, and should be natural allies of the Republican Party. Hispanic citizens are being hurt the most by illegal immigration, and they too want the problem fixed, but the rhetoric from many conservatives has them frightened and alienated. If the Republican nominee can address this issue in a way that fixes the problem, as well as gain the trust of the Hispanic community, they probably could not lose the election. If they do not do this, and the Hispanic community goes strongly for Obama, it could make the difference in getting him re-elected. That’s how important this is. There are workable and just solutions to this issue.

Governor Perry has not said that we do not need a secure border, but rather that the fence has proven to not be effective, which is basically true. The fence may help a little, and it has hardly slowed illegals from crossing where it’s been erected. Putting the resources into more border agents, and drone surveillance aircraft to seal the border, could be far more effective in securing the border, just as Perry seems to be recommending.

Now let’s look at the Texas law that helps pay college tuition to children of illegal immigrants. Texas is one of the most conservative of our states, and this was a popular law in Texas. Why? This should cause us to investigate the reason why a little more deeply than just react to it. This is not to say that it would be good for the country, but we should dig a little deeper before using it to attack Governor Perry.

Texans are conservative in general, and they do tend to have big hearts. That has been an oxymoron for the left, but it is true of many conservatives. However, for Governor Perry to say that those who would not want to do this don’t have a heart could be a major anchor on his campaign that will be hard to get rid of. Conservatives are always accused of not having a heart, just like liberals are accused of not having common sense. We need a combination of both, but to say this will likely be hung around Governor Perry’s neck throughout the primaries.

It was the immigration issue that likely kept Governor Huckabee from the nomination



in the last election, and Governor Perry has not handled this one very well so far. Even so, it can be overcome if he comes up with a clear and acceptable plan for dealing with this issue nationally. One major factor great leaders have is to turn setbacks into victories, and here is a chance to see what kind of leader Governor Perry is on the national level.

### **Imposed Vaccination**

The imposing of the HPV vaccination on young girls was a bad and scary. Governor Perry has admitted it was a mistake, but he did it so casually that it did not give much confidence that he really understood how bad this was. To use an executive order to do something like this was such a serious overreach that this will be hard for almost any conservative, who fundamentally believes in limited government, especially in our personal lives, to get over. Again, this is going to take uncommon grace and wisdom on the part of Governor Perry, so it is another opportunity.

The other issue here is that Governor Perry made the excuse that he was lobbied by a young girl suffering from cervical cancer, and he was so touched emotionally that it compelled him to issue this executive order. Without question, compassion is a great and important characteristic in any human being, but when it is not linked to sound reasoning so that its application is wise, it has led to many of the biggest problems we're now facing as a nation. Such reasoning, or lack of it, is at the root of the whole sub-prime meltdown that created the economic mess we're still mired in. Not many liberals understand this, but conservatives do. This is why it is understandable that they would be alarmed by a chief executive who would react so emotionally on something like this that they do not think through the consequences of their actions.

If someone really understands a mistake, and truly repents of it, I think they can be trusted even more afterward rather than less. This may be why Jesus gave the keys to the kingdom to Peter, the one who made some of the worst mistakes, but he also had the boldness to use the keys. Even though it does not seem that Governor Perry presently knows just how great a mistake this was, he knows it was a mistake, and sometimes it takes a while to fully grasp how bad they are. He won't be given a pass on this, but it is another opportunity to build trust if he handles it right, it is real, and not just to appease political expediency.

### **Social Security “Ponzi Scheme”**

Governor Perry's statements about Social Security being a Ponzi scheme is true even though it may not have been good politically to say it quite like that. The definition of a Ponzi scheme is: *a fraudulent investment operation that pays returns to its investors from their own money, or the money paid by subsequent investors, rather than from any actual profit earned by the individual or organization.* Do you know of anything that so fits this definition as the Social Security System?

If you have pause about the word “fraudulent” then just a cursory study of Social



Security will make it sound increasingly appropriate. Any honest mathematician or economist who studies it will tell you this (the key word here is “honest”). It is one of the biggest rip-offs of the American people in history, even for those who got a payout. What would you say to me if I told you I would take your money and make 5-10% return on it and give you less than 1% on just a fraction of your principle, if you live long enough to get it? That is essentially what our government has been doing to the American people with Social Security. Actually, it is much worse than that.

The architects of the Social Security System did build it on the plan that Charles Ponzi used, thinking that they had a perfect situation where it would work. At that time, no one could conceive of a time when the population growth would level off as it has. As long as the population kept growing, more would be coming in and paying the fewer who were getting benefits. However, right after the baby boom economists starting sounding a warning that when this group started retiring, there would be problems. That time is now. It used to be about one hundred people paying in for everyone who received benefits. Now we're getting closer to five paying in for every one receiving benefits, and the trajectory is going exponential fast.

When the architects of Social Security set the age at 62 when your money could be drawn out, the average lifespan was 60. Now the average lifespan is over 80 and still rising, meaning more will start getting the benefits than they expected, and getting them for much longer than they expected, greatly stressing the system. On this trajectory it will very soon be doomed.

This is why some who are aware of what we're facing would think this was a major reason for the “death panels” in the healthcare bill. Using triage to deny healthcare to seniors to remove those who are no longer productive citizens, but are consuming the resources of the system, is a strategy unashamedly written about in books that are popular in progressive circles. This is not to imply that all progressives or liberals hold to this, but many do.

Another way that Charles Ponzi's scheme was the model for Social Security is that the money accumulated in this account was not invested so as to build it, but it was used by the government who paid less than 1% interest. This did not even keep up with the rate of inflation, so Americans were losing part of their principle every year. Worse still, the government has drained the Social Security Trust, and now the money is gone. They're making the payouts by borrowing, and the borrowing is going to have to increase at a fast pace to keep up, putting even more stress on our deficits.

This is where Marc Nuttle's “Debt Wall” is so important to understand. We can keep raising the debt ceiling as much as we want, but there is only so much liquidity available in the world for buying sovereign debt, and once we hit that wall, interest rates will soar. This can, and likely will, quickly get out of control. This will immediately cut off smaller and weaker countries from getting capital, and dramatically raise our own deficits even faster. This will kick inflation into high gear.



Without immediate and dramatic action, the world economy is headed for a meltdown. Even if you get your Social Security check, it will very likely not even buy you a loaf of bread. Without basic changes, the Social Security System is going to fail very soon, and the whole economic system is in grave jeopardy. Any honest politician will tell you this. The key word here is “honest,” and we don’t have many. Governor Perry should be commended for having the courage to be honest about this, and some of the other candidates should be ashamed of themselves for their lack of courage, and even their dishonesty in some cases.

Even so, Social Security is not an entitlement, but people being paid their own money back that the government has been using without even paying them interest. As bad as this problem is, Social Security can be fixed if addressed soon enough. It can be made sustainable, and we should have a basic commitment to seeing our seniors live their last years with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Along with the honest discussion about the failure, we need to present workable solutions. Because government has proven incapable of managing anything now without extreme and intolerable waste and inefficiency, Governor Perry and other candidates’ recommendations about letting people manage their own accounts is a sound one. Even a 15 minute instruction to a taxpayer could help them make a safe investment decision that would pay many times the return we’re now getting by letting the government manage it. The payout could then be far more than it is now.

Calling the Social Security System a Ponzi scheme may not have been the smartest thing politically, but it was the most honest, and I personally appreciate Governor Perry for doing it and hope that he does not back down.



While we’re on this encouraging subject, one of the biggest economic and social problems we will be facing very soon is the fact that many state pension funds are either underfunded or not funded at all. The benefit packages many government employees now have, some of them getting fully vested retirements after just twenty years of service, is going to exacerbate into a major national crisis very soon, and someone needs to be looking ahead for solutions.

## **Foreign Policy**

There are some who would otherwise really like Governor Perry as a candidate but do not think that he has a grasp of foreign policy. He especially seems to be ignorant of one of the most important issues of these times, Islam, radical Islam, and the strategy and encroachment of the Muslim Brotherhood into America, not to mention understanding their role in the Middle Eastern uprisings.

Because Governor Perry has not addressed this, it does not mean that he does not understand it, but even some close to him think that he has been influenced by the same people that President Bush was, which opened the door for Islamic extremists to gain

important positions of influence in our own government, including Homeland Security, the Defense Department, the FBI, and the CIA.

The education of America to this threat has now become so widespread that it is no longer dismissed as the beliefs of a few paranoid extremists, but is now grasped by an increasingly large cross-section of Americans to the point where it will be an issue in this election.

I have not personally met Governor Perry, but I do think there is much more depth to him than comes across in the debates, and his book deserves to be read. He is still a serious contender, and don't expect him to go away quickly, though he does have issues that will have to be overcome. These are all opportunities and could make him into an even stronger candidate if he handles them well.

### **Mitt Romney**

The debates have helped former Governor Romney look like a strong candidate that conservatives could accept, though it is not likely they will ever be excited about him. He seems to be strong in understanding the economy and entrepreneurs. He no longer seems to be shaky on abortion, but few would consider him a leader of the pro-life movement either. He is an intelligent, clear thinker, and seems to handle himself well under pressure, with clear thoughts and speech.

RomneyCare is a major anchor on his campaign that has not been answered well enough yet. He says he would repeal Obamacare, but has yet to give voters the confidence that he would actually do it, but he is making progress here. Trust has to be earned. However, this is much more than a 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment issue.

Romney is the choice of the Republican establishment because they think he is the most electable by those who want anyone but Obama. Romney is perceived by many as one who will change his positions to what is politically expedient. I think there is evidence that he is changing some of his positions because his mind has been changed about them, and that is a good thing reflecting that he is still maturing and growing.

My personal opinion is that it would not be such a tragedy if Romney became the Republican nominee. In normal times Romney might be the best choice, but these are not normal times, so it is hard for me to see him as the best in the present field.

The next President will very likely face the worst crises we've ever faced as a nation, from many different directions. It is going to take a bold, decisive leader of uncommon intelligence, resolve, and endurance, as well as an uncommon devotion to the core principles that America was built on that will be threatened. In that seat, Romney could rise to the occasion and excel, but at present it is hard to see the depth of conviction that would have to be a primary compass through these times. However, in every debate it does come across as a little deeper and more real, and there are reasons why he is, and



has been, in the top tier of contenders for the Republican nomination.

If not the nominee for President, Romney should be candidate for Secretary of the Treasury, which will be one of the most important positions in our government for the foreseeable future. Like all candidates who say they are not running for Vice President, or a cabinet position, Romney may be the most honest when he says this, but I think he sincerely loves this country too much not to take such a position that is so critical at this time.

### **Rick Santorum**

Former Senator Santorum is a true conservative who seems to have been consistent throughout his career. He has a strong moral compass and clear speech that comes from convictions, not just political correctness. He has not yet stumbled in the debates, but gets more attention and following with each one. He is a viable candidate, and is gathering fans even among those who support other candidates. He is not just a politician, but a principled man, and certainly deserves a position of leadership and influence in a Republican Administration if he is not the nominee. I'm sure he is being honest when he says this is not what he's running for, but he too loves his country too much not to do what he could in these critical times, and he could do a lot.

### **Jon Huntsman**

I have a very superficial knowledge of former Governor Huntsman, and he seems to be left of the rest of the field on most issues, but has an uncommon depth of knowledge and wisdom on foreign policy.

### **Summary**

As I'm writing this, Governor Christie is again considering whether to be a candidate or not. He deserves to be the hero that he is to many for what he has accomplished in New Jersey. He also made one of the most refreshing statements of any candidate or non-candidate in this election cycle when he said he thought he could run and win, but he was not yet ready to be President. I think that was an honest statement, and if he runs, it is because he does not think anyone in the field is more ready.

I know we all "see in part, and know in part" so I would never presume to have the whole picture. These are my personal observations, or the part that I see at this time. I would very much welcome insights and/or challenges to any of these positions. I am not a pundit and do not have the time to do the kind of research I would if this were my profession. I know very well what it is like to be judged by those who only have partial information, or wrong information, but that is necessarily all I have now about these candidates at this time. My basis for the above has come from watching the debates and



reading as much as I could about the candidates. There are other candidates that I know so little about, I did not think I should write anything.

Overall, I think those running for the Republican nomination are an impressive group. If they could all be a part of the Administration, it would be a very potent team, and one of the most important abilities of the President is team building and team managing. The job of President is far beyond what any one person can do.

In almost every conversation I've had with people since the campaign began, the conclusion has been that they just did not see that "the one" was in the field yet. This may be, but it seems that since the Florida Straw Poll, there has been an excitement about Herman Cain that I have not seen before about a candidate, and it's growing. I personally think the most impressive candidate at this time is Herman Cain. He is refreshing as a leader, not a politician, which is needed at this time.

Like many, I had not heard of Cain until the first debate, but I called friends right afterward to try to find out more about him. No one gave him a chance, but he does have a chance, and could very well be the Republican nominee. If so, I expect him to run away with the general election. He will be attacked, and there will be a major effort to marginalize and discredit him, but Herman Cain is a stereotype buster and a fresh breeze on the national political scene that I expect to continue rising.

The campaign for the Presidency is one of the most grueling there could possibly be. It is designed to wash out all but the most resilient, and that is a factor any President must have in these times. The campaign itself makes the candidates stronger, better, and wiser, so even among those who may not yet seem to be of Presidential stature we can see them emerge and grow into it. Therefore, I would not count anyone out until they drop out.

For each of the last three elections I have said that they were the most important of our lifetime, and that each subsequent one would be even more important. I think I have been right about this, and this is the most important election yet. If the good do not get engaged in these times, then the consequences will be increasingly costly. Get engaged.

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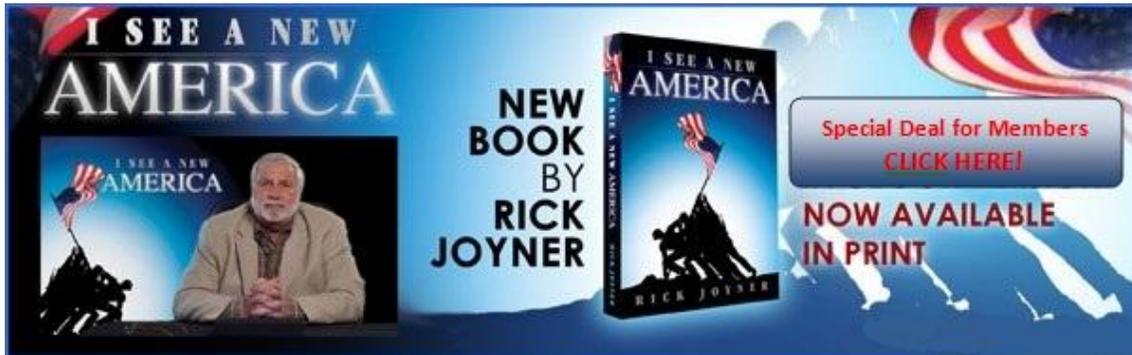
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