

Editorial

Can We Avoid a Tragedy?

There is a popular saying among the U.S. electorate that you can't afford to change horses in mid-stream. The problem with that idea is that the current horse that we in the United States are riding, is headed straight into Armageddon. Better to change horses, than to ride straight into the gates of Hell.

Ah, but does the majority of the U.S. citizenry realize where we are headed? Or are they too wrapped up in their day-to-day pursuit of pleasure, or temporary survival, to realize where we as a nation are going?

At election time, it is crucial to step back and look at the big picture, not only that which shows us where we stand today, but where we stand historically. That is extremely difficult for the current generation, which has increasingly lost its touch with history. It is equally difficult for those who simply respond to what the mainstream news media puts on their plate, and thinks that such fare represents reality. But if you do take a historical view, and look at the nation as a whole, the threat of disaster is clear.

Start with the physical reality. From one coast to another, we can see the collapse of physical infrastructure, the dilapidated bridges, the crumbling highways, the broken sewer systems, and devastated city centers. We see the abandoned family farms, and the abandoned rail lines. Clearly we are in the midst of a decline which makes our lives less efficient and less pleasant, and, in an increasing number of cases, under threat of disease or death.

Next, look at the state of the population itself. Look at the increase in poverty, of obesity, of drug-consumption. While it appears as though many people have much more money, or credit card debt, available to them than in the past, these same people are spending more time at work, and are putting themselves more and more into debt. And if you look inside, you'll see a degree of pessimism and distrust on a level unrivalled in recent decades.

Then, look at the political choices being offered by our government. For the most part, they don't address any of the obvious problems we have laid

out above. Where are the proposals for massive infrastructure construction, to improve our water, power, and transportation systems? Where are the plans for creating high-paid jobs, which would actually permit people to rise out of poverty? Where are the grand visions of national purpose, which would inspire our youth, and everyone else, to build a better future?

For the most part, these are absent. Instead, we see our government offering us perpetual war against the "enemy," but no prospect of peace. We see our government offering more financial benefits for the wealthy, but nothing to bring the common person out of poverty. We hear praise for the accumulation of money, but virtually nothing about building up the physical economy upon which the very survival of our nation depends.

If Americans were willing to look that reality in the face, there is little question but that they would demand a change. But are they ready to face the truth?

While stepping back to look at the nation in its historical perspective, the citizen is also compelled to look at his or her self. Is he or she prepared to face his or her own role in creating the disaster into which the nation has fallen? Is he or she ready to go against the "popular news media" if it conflicts with reality? Is he or she ready to *change* his or her traditional mode of operation—be it being apolitical or simply knee-jerk political on some hot-button issue—for the sake of future generations?

The truth is this: If the majority of the American citizenry of voting age decides to stick with the "trend" which has developed over the last 40 years, we as a nation, and as a world, are headed for disaster. Our own cultural flaws, developed as we turned into a self-centered, consumer society, will condemn us to the self-destruction that will be inevitable, if Bush and Cheney return to the White House. We have an opportunity, with this election, to change both horses, and direction, back toward the noble mission of this nation, and mankind. Will we, today a little people, rise to greatness again? The answer will make history for decades to come.