



"A Christian never falls asleep in the fire, or in deep waters; but he is likely to grow drowsy in the sunshine."

—W.G. Burns

**10-Jun-05**

## **A Dull and Compliant People**

Within the past month, I read an article denouncing both government and industry for its use of fluoride in drinking water, toothpastes, mouthwashes, and other dental applications. The main point of the article, besides the author's desire to counter "this fluoride scam," was to warn Americans about a political side effect of fluoride use: Evidently, fluoride acts as a "tranquilizer," producing lethargic, mind-numbed citizens over time. In support, she quotes an Australian parliamentarian reporting on Nazi and Soviet use of fluoride during World War II:

In this scheme, sodium fluoride will in time reduce an individual's power to resist domination by slowly poisoning and narcotising a certain area of the brain, and will thus make him submissive to the will of those who wish to govern him. Both the Germans and the Russians added fluoride to the drinking water of prisoners of war to make them stupid and docile. (Kidd, Devvy, "Germans & Russians Used Fluoride to Make Prisoners 'Stupid & Docile'," NewsWithViews.com, May 14, 2005)

My background in chemistry and biology is deficient to the point that I cannot comment one way or the other on her claims. Whether fluoridation causes people to be dull and compliant is moot, and in the end, it is an unnecessary argument. Yes, if our governments and corporations are involved in a fluoridation conspiracy, it should be stopped, but even so, it is only one area of our modern society's multi-pronged attack on our intellect, emotions, attitudes, expectations, and motivations. If we did not have fluoride making us slow-witted and sluggish, it would be some other chemical, some other habit, some other addiction, some other program.

For instance, a decade ago, parents of public school children began to be concerned about government schools dumbing-down curricula across the nation. Remember ebonics? Remember new math? Remember outcome-based education? Now we have No Child Left Behind, a revamped Scholastic Achievement Test, and billions of dollars in school funding (thanks to the dense Joe Public who keeps voting for school bonds and tax-and-spend politicians). Essentially, though, the curricula have not improved! There may be a greater emphasis on science, technology, and math, but universities are still having to run too many freshmen through remedial courses to get them up to college speed.

Today's curricula are craftily designed—particularly in English and "social studies" courses—to gloss over the nation's achievements, influential leaders, and important documents and to draw attention to people and events of relatively minor stature yet which promote modern, liberal "isms": multiculturalism, feminism, socialism, relativism, humanism, etc. For example, in a recent history textbook, *History of a Free Nation*, Benjamin Banneker, a black surveyor who assisted in surveying Washington, D.C., gets more ink than does President John Adams. Similarly, Molly Pitcher, a woman who heroically took her husband's place at a cannon after he was killed in battle, seems to have been a more decisive player in the American Revolution than was George Washington.

On top of this, we are a TV nation. As Thomas Sowell once sagely commented, "Someone once asked why television was called a medium. The answer was that it was seldom well done." Television is inherently biased toward presenting simplistic themes, plots, emotions, and analyses because

the more subtle and more complex come off as boring and take too long. This is why offerings of these kinds can be found only on public broadcasting and obscure cable stations. The average viewer does not feel obliged to wait or reason during a television show; he wants only to be spoon-fed and entertained. In fact, studies show that a person's brain activity slows down toward the level of sleep while watching television.

The programming rage for the last several years has been the "reality show." These programs pit ordinary people against one another, a course, a location, a series of challenges, or even their own fears and problems, and by the process of elimination, a winner eventually emerges to win a gazillion bucks. And so we have *American Idol*, *The Amazing Race* (perhaps the best of the genre), *Survivor*, *The Apprentice*, *The Bachelor(ette)*, *Nanny 911*, and *The Osbournes*, among scores of others, each more inane than the last. These shows join sitcoms, game shows, soap operas, and cartoons as the average American's daily fare. Talk about being mind-numbed!

Space does not permit covering Americans' fixation on sports and entertainment, their obsession with materialism, or their passion for excess in food, drink, and sex. This is the age-old, tried-and-true, "bread and circuses" method of controlling the rabble. Those in power have learned to keep the people ignorant, fat, and happy, and as such, they will not—cannot—give the authorities any trouble.

And it is working. The American people have essentially rolled over just about every time a once-taboo subject has pricked the collective conscience—whether it is premarital promiscuity, [adultery](#), abortion, homosexuality, pornography, no-fault divorce, public prayer, public display of God's Word, capital punishment, government debt and deficits, personal and public honesty and accountability, etc. A few courageous citizens fight an uphill battle virtually alone in some of these areas, but most stay home, ensconced on their couches, staring wide-eyed and slack-jawed at the boob tube, mere spectators of life in these United States.

[God](#) says of Israel:

Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; . . . then he forsook God who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation. . . . And

when the Lord saw it, He spurned them, because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters. And He said, "I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no [faith](#). . . . I will heap disasters upon them; I will spend My arrows on them. . . . The sword shall destroy outside; there shall be terror within. . . .

"For they are a nation void of counsel, nor is there any understanding in them. Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" ( [Deuteronomy 32:15](#), 19-20, 23, 25, 28-29)

It does not take great intellect to understand what this portends for America in the near future—or have we already grown too mindless and complacent to care?

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Don't Be Indifferent \(1995\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

We need to be sober and alert, realizing that we don't have an infinitude of time to prepare for Christ's second coming. We cannot allow ourselves to become surfeited with the world's distractions, being lulled off to sleep as the foolish virgins, wasting our precious time. We need to exercise steadfast faithfulness, exercising vigilance as we approach the Day of the Lord in order that we don't let it take us by surprise. Living righteously on a continuous basis will put us in the right attitude, keeping us prepared for this event, causing us to properly have love for His appearing. Sorrow, fear, anguish, and dread characterize those who are unprepared.

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## From the Archives: Featured Article

**[Little Compromises \(2001\)](#)**

by John O. Reid

Compromise is a dirty word to a Christian. John Reid shows that big compromises—and eventual apostasy—begins with little compromises.

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