



"Of the twenty-two civilizations that have appeared in history, nineteen of them collapsed when they reached the moral state America is in today."  
—Arnold Toynbee

**02-Mar-07**

## **What Does It Say?**

- What does it say about a nation that makes an icon of a woman whose only claims to fame are to have posed nude for a magazine, married a nearly nonagenarian billionaire, had a drug problem, and had a string of affairs?
- What does it say about a nation that legally murders over a million unborn children each year?
- What does it say about a nation that, during a time of war, essentially ignores multiple millions of illegal aliens—statistically shown to increase crime, lower wages, and burden government budgets—yet hounds smokers, drinkers, and eaters of trans-fats?
- What does it say about a nation that spends upwards of \$85 billion on gambling each year, more than its citizens spend on the combined sales for amusement parks, spectator sports, movie theater admissions, and video games?
- What does it say about a nation that indulges in pornography to the point that the industry's known revenues, over \$12 billion, roughly double those of all three major U.S. television networks?

- What does it say about a nation that goes out of its way to [offend](#) and hassle its own citizens rather than profile its enemies?
- What does it say about a nation that evicts [God](#) from public schools, public spaces, and essentially all public life yet allows blasphemies to be uttered dozens of times each hour on its public airwaves?
- What does it say about a nation that uses its deployed volunteer army, composed of a broad spectrum of dedicated, patriotic soldiers, as pawns to gain political power?

In aggregate, what these statements of the current situation in the United States reveal is a profoundly sick, confused, and hypocritical society. They expose America as a nation adrift, unmoored to any firm system of beliefs or even of ethics, rocked and buffeted by every new wave of trouble, and at the mercy of cultural winds and currents out of any quarter. In short, it reveals a nation in crisis—in every sense of the term. Yet, too few of us seem to have noticed.

Our fourth estate, whose job it is to inform the nation about what is going on, has succumbed to one of two—or both—failings: 1) The media have changed the emphasis of their reporting from information to entertainment, and/or 2) they have deliberately or unknowingly incorporated partisan biases into their products, becoming organs of political rather than national interests. While it can be argued that from its earliest days, the American media have been partisan, so nothing has changed, today's news outlets have far greater reach and persuasive abilities than did their nineteenth-century counterparts. Whatever the argument, the result is that the typical citizen is unaware of the depth of America's crisis. The news—even the hyped, slick, up-to-the-second product aired 24/7 on multiple stations—has to compete for attention with situation comedies, dramas, movies, video games, and the Internet, and it loses miserably.

America's political representatives fare little better, if better they are. A statesman or -woman who really had the nation's best interests at heart would not be unafraid to take a principled stand against its troubles and to inspire patriots to overcome them. But there are no statesmen or -women, just politicians, desirous of reelection and the accumulation of personal power. We see no truly American leadership from the White House, Congress, the Supreme Court, or really anywhere, for that matter. In Washington,

grandstanding on the Sunday morning news programs or engaging in bitter partisan fights over silly line items or amendments to a bill is what passes for "leadership" these days. And politicians wonder why so few Americans vote?

Christian ministers from coast to coast have virtually rolled over and played dead. Rather than let their voices ring from their pulpits, decrying the rise of so many blatantly anti-Christian cultural trends, they have weakly submitted to their fears of losing their weekly take at the offering basket, and busied themselves in the terribly important work of overseeing the installation of big screens and the latest sound equipment for the Christian rock band that plays during the contemporary service. Worse, most of the mainline churches have backpedaled on biblical morality to the point that they are difficult to label as even nominally "Christian." They may proclaim [Christ](#) as Lord, but they proclaim little that He believed and preached.

Finally, and tragically, the most important leaders in America have also abrogated their responsibilities: parents. American dads and moms have spoiled the few kids that they have, buying them whatever they want, instilling in them little sense of responsibility or [self-discipline](#), and letting them make too many critical decisions on their own. Instead of being parents, they have desired to be best friends with their children, who have, frankly, walked all over them, aided and abetted by big business and the entertainment industry. Thus, the culture caters to the youth, attempting to fulfill all their fantasies without truly considering whether or not they are beneficial for them or their country. With a bit of backbone, parents could have slowed or even stopped the cultural decline, but it is far too late now.

What does it say about a nation that lacks both the heart and the leadership to stop itself from committing suicide? God says of such a situation in [Isaiah 3: 11-12](#): "Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths." In short, He says we are headed for a fall.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[The World \(Part 1\)](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

God has set a pattern of separating people from the world, making a covenant with them, and enabling them to be a blessing to others as an example of faithfulness and obedience to the covenant. Because of Israel's unfaithfulness and disobedience, God scattered them among the nations, causing them to forget who they were, and they blended in with the world. Like Nehemiah, our worldview must be shaped by a fear of God, a love and concern for His people, and a hatred for the world's practices that destroy our intimate relationship with God. We have the sobering responsibility of staying loyal to the New Covenant, keeping the spiritual Temple free from the world's defilement — or lose our spiritual identity as ancient Israel lost its physical identity.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Where Is the Promise of His Coming?](#)**

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

As this world keeps on turning, more people become skeptical about the return of Jesus Christ. The Bible, however, insists that He will come again and quickly. Richard Ritenbaugh advises watchful, sober expectation because the Lord does not delay His coming.

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