

# VILLAGE VIEW

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What a lot of things there are that we don't know! And even so, we consider ourselves to be so terribly clever. There are times I wonder at us and our consummate ability to hold ourselves in such high esteem.

Wouldn't you think, for instance, that after all the generations of people who've been passing through the world since mankind first evolved, we'd have learned the best ways to bring up children to be responsible, productive and mature individuals who will make valuable contributions to society?

With every generation, new experts emerge to tell us how to raise children so they'll be free of guilt and able to achieve the ultimate in happiness. Yet, as the years pass, class after class of maturing people comes forth from our educational institutions and tells the world how inadequate they feel to make their own way in the world.

Adolescents, and even younger children, explain to their parents, teachers and counselors how difficult they find it to deal with their society, their peers, and the pressures they feel. They confess to being overwhelmed by the availability of drugs, alcohol, sexual freedoms, and they've acquired too little self-discipline to combat these evils. It's not that they don't know them to be evil; it's simply a lack of capacity to resist them.

Are we failing in our parental roles? Can we place all responsibility on our schools? Or on our churches? Or on the children, themselves? Or is the failure a combination of all these elements?

Where does the fault lie? And why, if the fault lies within our power to change, are we not changing to eliminate the fault? If we are, of course, as clever as we believe we are, why haven't we been able to improve our kind?

We use sophisticated techniques to up-grade other forms of life; we breed superior cattle, we grow turkeys with more white meat, we cross strains of wheat and other grains for resistance to disease and increased yield. What do we do to help ourselves become stronger, healthier and happier?

Doesn't it leave you feeling baffled to realize people are still struggling to find the best ways to educate school children? Arguments about teaching methods continue to rage in spite of the eons of experience humans have had with learning.

Children spend thirteen years, starting with kindergar-

ten, attending public schools and then graduate unable to read well enough to understand the directions in their income tax forms. Many have no mastery of spelling and can't differentiate between "quiet" and "quite" or between "their" and "there". English grammar is lost to them. Punctuation and sentence structure are haphazard. Multiplication tables are foreign to them.

Why are the years being wasted, years when human minds are most absorbtive? What are we, all of us, doing wrong? Isn't it unconscionable that we don't really know? How can we allow ourselves to continue failing to provide youth with tools of education and training to enable them to become tomorrow's responsible citizens?

Isn't it frustrating to realize that, for all our brains, we seem incapable of controlling our medium of exchange and keeping it reasonably stable? Time after time, in country after country, currency values fluctuate, usually to the detriment of those who have the least money; and time after time, the lessons of the past are either ignored or forgotten, or perhaps simply unlearned.

Why do we continue to permit the fruits of our labor to be controlled by politicians? Having once determined the value of separation of church and state, why hasn't it occurred to someone that separation of economy and state might be equally efficacious? When politicians control a country's purse strings, attempts will be made to please everyone, and great care will be taken to please themselves most of all.

Is it impossible to meet basic human needs of a population and maintain stable currency? Is it rational to require part of the population to support another part, without requiring the supported segment to contribute what it's able to its own survival?

Can a diminishing proportion of a people continue to assume the burdens of a growing non-contributing and non-productive sub-culture? Isn't there a better way to alleviate human suffering? Haven't some societies, somewhere in the world, at some point in history, found solutions to the problem? Cannot we learn from them?

Nobody wants to see part of our people without the necessities of life; yet no one wants to see working, producing people penalized for their industry. Incentives for achievement cannot help but be eroded in both sectors by such policy.

For thousands of years mankind lived, reproduced and flourished without any fuels but wood and sunshine. Christ was born and crucified in a solar society. The Greeks achieved greatness before a drop of gasoline existed in the world. The Roman Empire waxed and waned without industrialization. And, in our own time, the British Empire rose and fell despite industrialization.

The good life isn't dependent on industry. Haven't we reached any conclusions about the elements of a good life?

Cannot we, with our fine collective intellect, achieve peace in the world and stop killing ourselves off? Or, having overcome scourges of sweeping plagues and a multitude of physical ailments to which the flesh is heir, and having developed methods of food production to feed millions more than has even been previously possible, must we resort to mass murder to control our burgeoning populations?

Is it conceivable the human race will continue to involve itself in wars? Are we so flawed we'll eventually wipe our species from the earth, and snuff out most of the planet's life along with our own? We have that capacity now.

And has that happened, on this planet or some other, at sometime in the past? Could Earth have supported other life-forms, millions of years ago, that advanced (if you can call it that) to the stage where it was capable of self-destruction? And did that happen? What a lot we don't know.....