

Greetings from Tyler,

We're told the country voted for change, and it looks as though our new one-party government is more than anxious to enact it. The truth is, aside from personality struggles and partisan posturing, Washington has for some time appeared to operate as a virtual monolithic entity. But the new administration appears to be in a real hurry to make permanent changes that upend some the basic concepts that made this country what it was.

Whether intentionally or not, the nation's banks are rapidly falling under government management and government ownership. With massive bailout funds issued to Citigroup and Bank of America (to the tune of some \$45 billion each) have come stipulations regarding dividends and other management decisions previously belonging to shareholders. The result is that private investors are getting out as the Federal Government gets in. A 40-year veteran of the banking industry, Jon Bruss is quoted in a Bloomberg article today saying he believes it amounts to "de-facto nationalization."

While a great number of nations are beginning to dig their way out of the disastrous effects of socialism, adopting private ownership and free market principles, our United States is abandoning the concept of limited government and taking ever more control of traditionally private enterprise. But it has to be done, we're told, to avoid immediate and total collapse.

Some analysts predict that there will be little to distinguish us from France in a few short years. Except for maybe the fact that France runs largely on nuclear power, something the "save the planet" crowd has worked to block here in the U.S. Incidentally, one of the foremost advocates of drastic action on the "global warming front," NASA scientist James Hansen, this week declared the President "has four years to save the Earth." It tends to support the concern that many want to attribute almost "messianic" powers to the new president, and the even greater concern that he may think they're right to do so.

With radical change in the air, not only domestically but also in the conduct of foreign policy, it will be interesting to see how events play out particularly in regard to the Middle East. It would probably be unwise to get ahead of events at this time by making projections as to how the U.S. may act as intermediary in the interminable Arab – Israeli conflict. It is of extreme importance to those living in Israel, particularly in light of the fact that Iran is expected to have at least one, and maybe as many as three operable nuclear weapons during calendar 2009.

We are well along in the production of a new edition of 21st Century WATCH. A new monthly letter was completed this week, written as the inaugural bash took its course. Something I didn't know when writing the letter, was that an effigy of President Bush was set up, and party-goers in D.C. actually lined up to throw shoes at it. The official White House website is now reportedly laden with insults directed at the outgoing president, for example, accusing his administration of "unconscionable ineptitude." This would seem to be a breach of protocol between administrations that has been respected

throughout our history (with the one exception of Jimmy Carter's repetitive criticism overseas). We were warned. Change has come to America, and where it stops nobody knows. If you have the opportunity, check out Murray Allat's interesting Update from Sydney this week.

The Garner Ted Armstrong program this week brought 517 requests with two hundred fifty five first time contacts. Response to the monthly letters and the items we are offering is tremendous, and the support very encouraging. Thank you all for your part in doing God's work. As world events play out, and as we begin to see where "change" is taking us, it may be more important than we realize to stay in touch and look after the needs and the well being of each other.

Have a great Sabbath.

Mark Armstrong