

NINE MONTHS TO NOVEMBER

A few days ago, in the restroom of a public library I was asked, “Do you think we (America) will be okay”

Since the beginning of time, man has typically resolved to do better after reflecting on his prior year’s deeds and the success or sadness with which he governed himself. History tells us that the founding fathers did at least as much as they amalgamated their spot-on insights on man’s nature while crafting a conservative, “federalist” style of governance. Wisely, they incorporated federal elections at regular intervals as a cornerstone of our constitutional republic.

New presidents assume the helm of the ship of state in late January. Biannually in November, large portions of the deck chairs of the “Titanic” or lifeboats of “U.S.S. Liberty”, (depending on one’s political viewpoint), get rearranged.

Riding swelling seasonal tides of hope for goodwill and harmony, the post New Year’s period of a first term presidency provides a perfect time to reflect. With a year under our belt or up our craw, we have nine months left to go before that wondrous womb of change, the ballot box, comes to full term either delivering us from evil or granting promise or some combination.

Very smart people will always hold fundamentally different views about the nature of man and what governance best suits us ‘coat of many colors’ creatures. These different views are not only seminal to how you attempt to fabricate your future. They also drive the rise and fall of nations. Disagreements about the nature of man and his governance spark wars, fuel terrorism and bleed balance sheets of nations as red as battlefield rivers; all in the name of man knowing what’s best for his fellow man.

However, all disagreements aside, this dangerous planet’s history argues that the safety and survival of our species is most assured when it is owned by an educated and informed electorate demanding governance be resolved to right wrongs, responsive to the governed and be free.

As November federal elections approach, it is a daily task of every citizen, with open head and heart, to assess how is it all working out? What are the odds it will get better? Are you surprised at the choices leadership has made and the responses of the world? Do you see a pattern? What and who have been rewarded or are about to be and why? How responsive has governance been and most importantly are you doing your job?

Do you see a future ensuring a safer world, a growing population of smarter, better thinking, well rounded and broadly educated patriot-citizens in stable families in a land of rigorous moral standards without stifling self righteousness?. Is there a modus operandi of reward for hard work, respect for private property in a free market system, equal opportunity bringing enlightenment and education rather than entitlement breeding enfeeblement and dependency in a land of spiritual and physical fitness where servant leaders are accountable for decisions that equally affect them?

Listen. Is there a sound missing; the appealing sound of the bells of liberty, of joyous unions, of victory against great odds and the enticing call to school in session?

Or is it the sound of a funeral? One way or the other, those bells toll for you.

Read your constitution and what the founding fathers believed. Listen to a broad swath of news. Read the papers and other print media carefully. You will soon decipher obvious bias or spin. For America's sake, get informed and engaged. America's existence disproves the nihilistic argument that an engaged public makes no difference.

I closed my answer in that library restroom by introducing my questioner to a new friend. Pointing at the mirror, I urged him to invest in reflecting on the world's most important newly engaged citizen, themselves!

Kevin Ryan is a retired Colonel, physician, musician and author who lives in Fairfield.