

Boycott Chicken!

By Wayne Northey

Sometimes the most obvious things are hardest to see. That President Bush is a tyrant, for instance.

In Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11*, the movie ends with Moore's agreeing finally with the President who said: "There's an old saying in Tennessee. I know it's in Texas, probably Tennessee, that says: 'Fool me once... shame on... shame on you.

[thinks]

Ya fool me... ya can't get fooled again."

In fact Bush has hoodwinked Americans repeatedly, is working diligently at it again for the approaching election. In a July 4th quiz, "Down With King George!", Stephen R. Shalom drew nine amazing parallels to England's tyrannical King George in 1776 and President George in 2004. Take it yourself, and follow the links:

<http://www.tomdispatch.com/index.mhtml?emx=x&pid=1519>.

In Hans Christian Andersen's brilliant fairy-tale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, it takes a little boy with unblinkered eyes to point out "King George's" nakedness. Why are we so willingly duped? Theologian Luke Johnson contends we live with a spirituality of deep fear and insecurity – ultimately of our own mortality. Psychologist Ernest Becker wrote that fear of death leads to "...the disguise of panic that makes [us] live in ugliness..." We are consequently willingly lied to, self-deceived. Desmond Tutu said of white collusion with South African apartheid, not unlike the white Evangelical vote for President Bush: "The former apartheid cabinet member Leon Wessels was closer to the mark when he said that they [South African whites] had not wanted to know [about the terrorist acts of police and military], for there were those who tried to alert them." Like Pilate we easily wash our hands in self-absolution; we choose to look the other way.

Psychologist Sheldon Solomon contends that "fear of death promotes allegiance to charismatic leaders". He writes: "*George W. Bush became a charismatic leader as a result of the events of 9/11; prior to 9/11, President Bush was a not-quite-elected lame-duck in the making with no coherent plan for America and rapidly waning appeal to the American public.*" (Michael Moore depicts scathingly the same truth in his recent movie.)

Then the catastrophe struck, and fully 58% of Americans reported posttraumatic stress symptoms 6 months after September 11, 2001! America was ripe for the "charismatic leader" into which George W. Bush magically morphed. Suffering under what Professor Solomon calls "mortality salience" (constant fear of death) that America has felt since 9/11, "we give knee-jerk votes for charisma.", claims Solomon. Under similar circumstances, he points out, "Hitler and Mussolini were duly elected..." Psychologist John Brand calls people controlled by this mob mesmerism "reptilian", ever given to violence as final solution.

Principal amongst these in America are “born-again” Christians. Theologian Paul Tillich describes religion as two-edged sword: opening humanity up to soul-satisfying transcendence, “the experience of the Holy, of something which is untouchable, awe-inspiring, an ultimate meaning, the source of ultimate courage.... But beside its glory lies its shame. It makes its myths and doctrines, its rites and laws, into ultimates and persecutes those who do not subject themselves to it.” It is no surprise that white Evangelical America, comprising over 80 million believers, voted for President Bush in 2000, and promises the same in 2004. Solomon sees Osama bin Laden in this respect as President Bush’s *alter ego*, observing wryly: “A charismatic fundamentalist in a tie is just as dangerous as a fanatic in a turban!” And the best-known C.I.A.-trained terrorist, notes political scientist Mahmood Mamdani in a counter-intuitive publication on the roots of terror called *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, **is Osama bin Laden**.

Jack Ramsay was a Reform Party Member of Parliament from Alberta when I once discussed at length criminal justice issues with him. He was a former police officer, a born-again Christian, vehement supporter of the return of the death penalty – and use of other harsh punishments. He was subsequently charged and convicted of a sexual offence against a minor, committed years before while an RCMP officer.

I told him of an organization in America that marched annually in a death penalty state. One of those was born-again Governor George Bush’s Texas, whose Huntsville was site of the most “killing fields” in the history of American governors. One could not be a member, I explained, of “Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation” unless one had lost a loved one to murder. When they marched with banners and pronouncements, “Don’t Kill for Me!”, people listened.

Mr. Ramsay retorted: “Then they shouldn’t eat chicken!” To explain, he told of his brother who hated catching, beheading and cleaning chickens – but loved eating them! Likewise, he intoned, one cannot enjoy the benefits of American – or Canadian – citizenship, *and not support killing*: for us and our children. I asked him if that meant two million innocent civilian casualties in over 100 cities carpet bombed by the Allies with napalm in World War II, including atomic bombs unleashed on Hiroshima and Nagasaki – the greatest instantaneous mass slaughter of civilians in the history of humanity. He said without blinking it did. He added that Western civilization rightly continues to do so wherever and whenever necessary.

I said, “You’re a sick man, Mr. Ramsay.” I quoted Jesus whom he claimed to follow: “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’”

You’re a sick man, Mr. Bush. I wish you and your supporters would boycott chicken...