

CRIBBS NOTES – JUNE 3, 2007

There is great disappointment in the American President and the United States Congress. At a moment when the world waited for something good and wonderful to come from our nation, all the people in the international community received was more of the same. Perhaps there were new words, but the action was the same. War rages on with another \$120 billion allocated to keep up the fighting. Rhetoric about peace and withdrawal slipped into the same old attitude with the same tired results.

It is not just the people of the world who are disappointed as the suffering continues and the race to destruction of ancient cultures speeds up, but the citizens of this country are hurt with broken spirits.

What can we do? Who will listen? How can we change what is happening in our name?

Two years ago during a visit to South Africa, a high school student in Soweto, the township outside Johannesburg, asked a group of United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) pastors, educators and college students if the United States was really a democracy. "Do the people really have a choice?" she asked. She went on with her questions, "Then, why did you re-elect George Bush?"

Many of us were stunned by her directness. We were moved and perhaps embarrassed because she was puzzled and at a loss to fully understand how such a thing could have happened.

In her mind, the people of the United States are smart, kind, caring, and sensitive. It baffled her to put together her image of American democracy and a political outcome that demonstrated no significant regard for the events that turned much of the world against the American government.

What lessons can we learn from people outside our country? Do we even care how they feel? Do we know what conditions they live under as a result of our policies and decisions?

Squandering public funds on an illegal war and dismissing the human suffering puts all of us at great risk. We, the people, must hold our elected officials accountable. We cannot stand back and feel helpless. It is necessary for all of us to determine for ourselves the direction this nation will go.

As people of faith, we are required to stand up for justice and listen to the cries of those most directly affected by acts of violence. We can do better. We have the resources to make a more positive difference.

"Where have all the flowers gone....when will we ever learn?"

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-Pastor Art Cribbs