

Race and Religion ... the Unspoken Issues.

by Vic Berecz

I'm afraid ... and I use that word literally ... that when all is said and done, too many of our Presidential ballots will *not* be cast for or against political, economic, and social philosophies and policies -- whether real or imagined -- but rather in support of the mostly-hidden prejudices and hatreds that all too many of us Americans still carry in our hearts. Race, religion, ethnicity ... these won't be mentioned by the candidates or their official campaigns. But, those who are driven by fear of anyone or anything different from themselves are keeping busy spewing messages of hatred.

If you doubt that these prejudices still exist more than a decade into the 21st century, you've been acting like the proverbial ostrich. I'm not going to show pictures or provide web addresses because I won't assist these brazen hypocrites in getting out their misguided versions of reality. Do you really believe that the "satirical website" called the *Landover Baptist Church* is simply for fun, when during this campaign their feature article makes a mockery of the Mormon faith? And, it's not only the Internet. Do you really believe that our neighbors in Florida who fly eight Confederate flags from their house are really "honoring our Southern heritage" as they claim?

This time around both the major candidates carry baggage that appeals to racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural prejudices. None of us who have studied the basic facts of genealogy would ever say "I'm ethnically 100%" anything ... but they take the "single drop of blood" view. None of us that believe in religious freedom would call another's faith "un-American" ... and in any case it would be difficult to find religious denominations more distinctly American than the UCC and LDS churches. None of us who are descendants of immigrants would judge a person by where their father was born, be it Kenya or Mexico. We're not electing a tribal elder or a Pope. We're electing an American President ... who will lead a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-religious nation ... made up almost entirely of the descendants of immigrants from around the world ... along a perilous path toward greater freedom and opportunity for all Americans.

Yes, we Americans value freedom of speech in a way that most of the world doesn't. Whether it's the ranting of neo-Nazis or the infamous *U-Tube* "movie trailer" that recently incited anti-American rioting around the world, we tolerate it in the name of *freedom*. But that does not mean that most of us or our Government support or concur with the usually-nameless parasites who strive to incite violence by waving the flag of hatred to the world. As in other contexts, it's tough to get rid of these vermin quickly. Eventually they'll die off ... and hopefully open eyes and quality education will produce a future with a lot fewer of their ilk.

Pastor Mark, in a sermon alluding to the Benghazi incident, paraphrased a Bible verse (James 3:8): "but no one can tame the Internet – a restless evil, full of deadly poison." All too true! But, it can be and is more. Let's help make the Internet a medium for exposing the glorious truth about most Americans ... we do care about our neighbors, we are willing to offer a helping hand, and we'd like nothing better than to be left alone to build a better life for ourselves and our families.

So, let's only judge our Presidential candidates by the policies they promise, and our assessment of their abilities to keep those promises ... and let's forget the extraneous *BS* – the spoken and unspoken issues, whatever their source.