



Are you ready for whatever happens in this new year? In the next few days or weeks or months?

Are you excited that Trump won the election so that now we can breathe a sigh of relief and look for positive changes? In just a few days, he'll be inaugurated, God willing, and do we think the long night of insanity will break into a new dawn?

It's tempting, isn't it?

Here are some thoughts of J.B. Shurk on American Thinker, **"The Best or the Worst of Times?"**, 12/29/2024

Will we be able to "Make America Great Again"? Will this be the beginning of a new American "Golden Age," as President Trump suggests? Or will we soon endure economic collapse and war the likes of which none of us has ever seen? As 2024 comes to an end, it is fair to say that uncertainty is only accelerating and that the prospects for peace and prosperity are running neck and neck with their opposites.

I think about these things quite a lot. I've been expecting economic collapse for many years, but I don't understand enough about economics to be able to figure out what games are being played by those in positions of power to stave it off. I just KNOW that we cannot keep printing money and handing it out by the billions to countries like Ukraine and to border crossers without there being a reckoning. When? God only knows, literally.

J.B. goes on: *We are surrounded by creature comforts that our relatives living during the First World War would have struggled to imagine. Flat-screen televisions with enough high-definition detail to transport us onto athletic fields of live sporting events or into realistic*



scenes of whatever shows we happen to be watching. Handheld computers that allow us to track down information and interact with strangers from all over the world. Online markets that link buyers and sellers who never would have found each other even twenty years ago. For most of human history, the wealthiest kings and queens never lived as luxuriously as many of the poorest people in the West live today.

We Americans have been superrich by the world's and history's standards for so long that we've lost perspective at how good we have it. Virtually every person has a smart phone, a necessity in this age of instant communication and gratification. Young adults don't need to borrow Dad's car anymore, because likely they have their own, probably given to them. Just the vehicles themselves are an amazing conglomeration of safety features: the buzz or bong to warn and help, cameras everywhere watching you back



up, or watching the lane lines or regulating your speed by the cars in front of you. Wow.

J.B. again: *Yet there is a darkness burbling beneath all this technological magic. Even before our televisions were "smart," the programs on their screens provided manipulative actors the means*

to "program" what we believe. I refer not to the glitzy celebrities, but rather to those agents in boardrooms and committee rooms who use those celebrities to push messages we don't always consciously see.

Situational comedies have made us laugh for eighty years, but their product placements have subtly influenced what we buy. Their storylines have subtly influenced our opinions regarding politics, morality, and war. We turn on televisions to be entertained, but corporations and governments use television to shape our thoughts and keep us under their control. Mass propaganda does not work without our willingness to disengage our brains and let the "boob tube" do our thinking for us. There's nothing "smart" about that.

I have wanted to shout that from the rooftops for years! Recognizing the danger of allowing so much indoctrination from the TV into the house, my dad challenged us about watching commercial TV at all, and so we quit watching it over 20 years ago. The most obvious way TV shapes our thoughts is through network news, little of which is anything but a mouthpiece of the Leftist viewpoint, rooted in socialism, which itself springs



from the devil himself, God's very enemy. (No, I don't believe I'm overstating it.)

These handheld computers that we call phones are similarly Janus-faced [possessing qualities of both good and evil]. On the one hand, I have felt fortunate to live during a time of intellectual nirvana, when no branch of knowledge lies beyond my reach. . . .

On the other hand, we now see how those who manipulate us for a living will use the tantalizing smorgasbord of information at our fingertips to poison our minds and keep us in the cages they built for us long ago. For a while there, it seemed as if we had broken free from those cages. Governments' monopolies over both mass communication and the availability of information appeared to have been shattered, . . .

Remember the 1980s and 90s, when Rush Limbaugh (a hero of mine) came onto the radio and broke the monopoly that the mainstream media had on the information you were allowed to hear? And then the internet was in its infancy, allowing us to find alternative sources of information and to counter the drumbeat of the liberal left selling its agenda: big government run by the good old boys in Washington; the welfare state; women's liberation (from what??); forced acceptance of unlimited abortion and homosexuality; and much more. Finally we found a way to shout our disapproval. But then, poof! It's being overtaken by those who disdain us, or even hate us.

J.B.: *Now that fire is slowly dying. Libraries and newspapers are retreating behind paywalls. Sources of information that conflict with governments' preferred "narratives" are disappearing from corners of the internet. Government censors work with secretive "non-governmental" organizations to bankrupt independent news sites and criminalize dissent. Once-contrarian websites . . . started toeing the Establishment line — as if they were quietly taken over by ideological enemies or their owners were threatened into sub-*



mission. "Misinformation" and "disinformation" . . . have been elevated to national security bogeymen on par with nuclear weapons, so that governments can justify censorship on an industrial scale. We live both in a "Golden Age" of free speech and access to information and an unstable cauldron of viewpoint discrimination, intellectual



suppression, "woke" bowdlerization [censorship], and State-sanctioned propaganda. (Emphasis added.)

Do you remember how, as recently as 2020, the censors labelled as misinformation anything that spoke of common sense remedies to Covid, like Ivermectin or Hydroxychloroquine? Remember how so many lost their jobs and reputations for stating simple truth or questioning the establishment's narrative?

In this stomach-churning stew of technology-enabled propaganda and censorship, our favorite devices are also our jailers. Our "smart" phones and televisions spy on our conversations, monitor our movements, record our social interactions, and scrutinize our purchases. Our daily "selfies," retinal and fingerprint security verifications, and health-tracking apps collect our biometric information while logging changes in our physical and psychological well-being. Technology companies and their government partners have complete access to our phone calls, text messages, emails, and social media histories. Our digital contacts provide intelligence agencies with a tidy list of our "known associates." And these same devices that permit corporate and government spies to watch everything we do simultaneously allow those agents to bombard us with a constant stream of propaganda in the form of fake news (actual "disinformation" in government parlance).

I think most of us who pay attention know that what J.B. Shurk says is true. We are enjoying all of the pleasures of our technological baubles, like ordering from Amazon from our living room easy chair and then just waiting for it to show up on our doorstep. But at the same time, those baubles are being used against us as they collect data about each and every one of us, data they can save and use against us when it serves their purpose. How long until that happens? Again, God only knows.

I want to be excited without the dread of dire consequences. I want to enjoy Little Red (my 2024 Honda HRV) and my Pixel phone, without which I cannot communicate by phone. I love being able to listen to the Believing pastors and Bible teachers on YouTube, or to gospel groups like The Hoppers sing their hearts out to the Lord. But I am aware of the downside, the threat looming over us as we revel in the neat stuff. **As we use these things we so love, we must realize that they have tricked us into providing them with much information about ourselves, saving them the trouble of forcing it out of us one by one!**

And so, what now? God. Yes, God. He won't necessarily wipe out Satan's followers like I wish He would, or when I wish He would (NOW!), but He won't tolerate it forever, either. So when that time comes, when God does execute His judgment against His enemies and against those who have rejected His offered gift of freedom and eternal life, look out. Be on His side!!

Linda Gammel

LVEDA Meeting
(Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association)
Monday, JANUARY 27th
5:00 pm at the Moose Lodge
on Foothill Road, just west of Tradepost Road.
LVEDA provides an important community forum recognized by County, State, and Local Representatives. Supports real economic development consistent with our rural goals. Opposes projects that harm our land-use integrity and quality of life.
Is something bugging you?
COME TO THE NEXT MEETING TO EXPRESS YOUR OPINION!