

ECONEWS

Issue #186

Promoting the Vision of a Sustainable Vancouver Island

NOVEMBER 2008

A LOVE LETTER TO AMERICA

Dear America,

It has been so long since we trusted you, and did not feel angry or frightened at the abuse that your political and corporate leaders have been handing out around the world.

It has been so long since we felt that heart-warming sympathy for the courage your citizens have shown in building democracy, abolishing slavery, helping defeat the Nazis and Japanese fascists in World War II, marching by the millions for civil rights, bringing an end to the Vietnam war, and introducing strong environmental legislation in the 1970s.

It has been so long since we were able to share in the pride of your achievements, without also feeling distress at your military bullying, and disregard for other nations.

We are Canadians. We share this amazing continent with you and the Mexicans. We share the same sins of our forefathers in the hurt that was done to North America's native peoples, and we share the same hopes for a very different future. We are brothers and sisters in the same close branch of the human family.

We watch what is happening, and we wonder why so many of your people have become arrogant, ill-informed, and angry. At the same time, we see the poverty and personal difficulties that many of your people live with.

We are fortunate. Our forefathers succeeded in defeating the medical establishment and bringing universal health care to all Canadians. Yours did not – and now 30% of your people have no insurance, and live just one major illness or injury away from bankruptcy.

I am writing this letter because of the amazing events that are happening in your country. In just a few days time, you will elect a new President, and new leaders for your Senate and Congress.

We share the surge of hope so many of your people are feeling, as

your Democratic candidate, Barack Obama, holds steady on the course that may lead – as so many hope and pray all around the world – to victory.

We hope so much that this may be the moment when we can all say, "Let's make a new start".



In this new start, however, please don't assume that we want you to lead the world. Even progressive Americans, dreaming of a sustainable solar future, often say, "Only America can lead the world." We need partnership together, not leadership by one nation.

In a world dominated by hierarchy and power relationships, as Earth has almost always been, there seems to be a repeating pattern that whenever a tribe or nation gets to be top of the pile, dominating the world, its people become ignorant and arrogant, making for a dangerous mixture.

Think of the British, in the Victorian era. Why bother to understand the cultures of people they colonized? British civilization was, by definition, simply *better*. I'm sure the Romans were the same, as they strutted the streets of their empire. Likewise the Ottomans, and Germans and Japanese in the 1930s.

It may be that the human psyche, when deprived of a sense of inner worth, has a weakness for power, especially supreme power. This may be what motivates bullies in schools and

workplaces around the world. Maybe that feeling of supreme power simply goes to the head.

When a nation rises to supreme power, it seems to bring out the bully in some of its citizens, who feel entitled to brag, strut, and dominate. As evidence for these thoughts, the book *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*, by John Perkins, makes for alarming and insightful reading; likewise the Project for a New American Century, with its explicit belief that "American leadership is good both for America and for the world; and such leadership requires military strength..." (See www.newamericancentury.org.)

If this is true, it is not "Americans" who are to blame - it is our own human weakness. If Canada was on top of the pile, I'm sure we'd act the same way.

But something amazing is now happening in your country. A new generation, inspired to work for real and lasting change, is hopefully stepping into power.

At the same time, by the strange coincidence of history, the very foundations of the world's financial order are trembling, and America's economic strength is tumbling.

The old financial order, premised on the assumption that the owners of capital can do whatever they want to make more money, regardless of human misery, ecological cost, or global warming, is crumbling.

Now is the time for true human partnership. Don't try to lead us. Simply join with us - we urgently need your help to build new global treaties to tackle climate change, the destruction of the oceans, the chemical contamination of the world, AIDS, and far, far more.

Let us end, once and for all, this history of domination. Let us be friends as equals at this time of global danger - for Earth urgently needs our help, and not our games of power.

Guy Dauncey